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Protestant Fundamentalists' Political Theology in the Evolution-Creationism Controversy in America's Public Schools

Cheriet Khenssa
University of Skikda 20 Août 1955 -Algeria
Ch.khanssa@gmail.com
0000-0003-4317-4046

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Abstract: *The controversy in American public education over the issue of teaching evolution-creationism is one of the nation's most serious undertakings. While Protestant fundamentalists exhibited strong opposition against all aspects of modernism, Darwin's theory has succeeded to prevail in the scientific circles. The result was a long-lasting contention over teaching either evolution or creationism in America's classrooms. The duty of this article is to examine American Protestant fundamentalists' strategy to interdict the teaching of Darwin's theory. On this account, major Supreme Court cases, various legal decisions, and embedded networks of organizations which aim to support creationism can highlight their option to transfer their rejection of evolution to the political field. Consequently, we assert that Protestant fundamentalists in America opted to shift to politics in order to stop Darwin's theory from mushrooming in America's public schools. Therefore, we may call in question the reason behind their shift in an attempt to resolve the conflict over teaching evolution or creationism. In this humble article we seek to provide a new understanding to this conflict by connecting its roots to the political theology of Protestant fundamentalists in America.*
Key words: *American Public Education, Evolution, Creationism, Modernism, Political Theology, Politics, Protestant Fundamentalists.*

الملخص: أظهر الأصوليون البروتستانت في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية مقاومة قوية ضد الاتجاهات الثقافية الجديدة والتغيرات التي احدثتها الحداثة ونظرية التطور في المدارس العمومية الأمريكية والتي تشكل أحد التحديات الرئيسية التي تواجهها البلاد. ولكن وبالرغم من ذلك فان نظرية التطور تنجح وباستمرار في نيل المصداقية العلمية مما أحدث صراعا مستمرا ومتكررا حول شرعية تدريس نظرية التطور أو الخلق في المدارس العمومية الأمريكية. هذا المقال يستكشف استراتيجية الأصوليين البروتستانت لحظر تدريس نظرية تشارلز داروين. من خلال تسليط الضوء على القرارات القانونية، قضايا المحكمة العليا، والشبكات المضمنة للمنظمات التي تعنى بتدريس نظرية الخلق نحاول أن نبرهن في هذا المقال أن الأصوليون البروتستانت قد قاموا بالتعبير عن رفضهم الشديد لنظرية التطور بنقل الجدل الى الساحة السياسية مما يفتح المجال للتساؤل حول ميلهم لاستخدام السياسة لتسوية

Corresponding author : Cheriet Khenssa

النزاع حول نظرية التطور والخلق. في هذا العمل المتواضع نحاول المساهمة في النقاش الدائر حول تدريس نظرية التطور والخلق في المدارس العمومية الأمريكية وذلك من خلال ربط جذوره بإيمان الأصوليين البروتستانت بسلطة اللاهوت السياسي.
الكلمات المفتاحية: الأصوليون البروتستانت الحداثة، السياسة، اللاهوت السياسي، المدارس العمومية الأمريكية، النزاع حول التطور والخلق.

1. Introduction

The everlasting struggle between science and faith is one of the delicate issues humanity has ever confronted. Although the two subjects appear to be always at war, the underlying assumption is not necessarily precise for it underestimates their active role in shaping human civilizations and culture. In early times both faith and science seemed to work in harmony for striving toward knowledge. However, today they are commonly perceived as being adversaries probably because of recent stereotypes perpetuated by modernists to describe conservative believers throughout the world as those frozen out of the mainstream and modernist principles.

In spite of an explicit division between the religious and governmental spheres in America, religion has fueled remarkable issues in the country. The crusade against teaching new scientific hypotheses about the world origins and human beings has penetrated in American history and marked the beginning that menaced the basis of religion in the country. It was America's dominant Protestant culture which has undergone the most substantial experience with the introduction of Darwin's theory that has threatened the deep down of the Protestant faith. For Protestant fundamentalists, the estimation introduced by Darwin's evolution did not only challenge the Biblical power but also, has raised doubts about the reverent story of creation included in the Bible and the evolution of human life and origins.

Therefore, Protestant fundamentalists' responses to the threats initiated by evolutionary biology have varied from fierce opposition and prejudice to sympathy and accommodation; those who adopted violent reactions are called fundamentalists, and who exhibited greater comfort with the new ideas and trends brought about by modernism are labeled modernists. By the 1920's, Protestant fundamentalists felt the danger of radical notions developed by evolutionary biology and which present an explicit challenge to dogmatic religious beliefs essentially to the story of creation included in the Bible. As a result, a long and recurring conflict arose between fundamentalists and modernists sparring over the extent to which teaching evolution as a new scientific theory could be acceptable in America's public schools.

The so called contention remains a central dispute in America. For a post industrial nation, it is highly unusual how evolution as a typically new scientific theory generated endless quarrels about its legitimacy to be part of public schools' curricula. In fact, Protestant fundamentalists and their strategies to boycott and eradicate the teaching of Darwin's theory of evolution are what provoke inquisitiveness throughout the contention. Their intention to transfer their struggle to the political field demonstrates that their behavior centered on the belief in the ultimate power of the Bible and political theology.

2. Historical Background of the Evolution-Creationism Contention in American Public Education

Darwin's theory of evolution has been given careful consideration and become more visible in the nineteenth century despite the fact that its legacy traces its origins back to the Greek times. Consequently, the term "Evolutionism" has been utilized to describe a new assessment of the origins of the world. It indicates the duty of the straightforwardness of science which has resulted in an intricate and rational process that explains the world origins. By scrutinizing biological systems in organisms that are the product of a concatenation of evolutionary methods, "natural selection" and adaptation to environmental pressures were labeled as the responsible mechanisms through which evolution may occur. In his pioneer theory of evolution, Charles Darwin notes, "I should infer from analogy that probably all the organic beings which have ever lived on this earth have descended from someone primordial form" (2013: 428). This suggests that Darwin alleges that all organisms on earth have a common descent. Moreover, he states that living beings originate from an old ancestor whose inherited characteristics would be transmitted and visibly observed throughout generations. Hence, this will relatively produce new offspring with new ameliorated traits. Darwin explains this as follows:

> In living bodies, variation will cause the slight alterations, generation will multiply them almost infinitely, and natural selection will pick out…each improvement. Let this process go on for millions on millions of years; and during each year on millions of individuals of many kinds (2013: 173).

Charles Darwin explains that variation causes a set of significant and far-reaching changes in the genetic traits of individual organisms through "natural selection." However, it is important to point out that "natural selection" as an evolutionary mechanism occurs throughout tandem generations and not during the lifetime of organic beings. Besides, species are subject to modification and reproduction over time thanks to "natural selection" and adaptation to the surrounding environment.

David K. DeWolf, Stephen C. Meyer, and Mark Edward DeForrest have argued that Darwin suggests the only explanation for organisms' adaptation to habitats is their random variation as a consequence of "natural selection" that is regarded as its actual responsible without the interference of a direct cause (2000: 48). In 1859 and soon after the introduction of "The Origin of Species" Darwin's "natural selection" becomes the core of evolutionary thinking. It may explain the reproduction of new populations out of survived ancestors, firmly who have been able to adjust life in the different environmental conditions, with some characteristics that will be common in those new strains. In his "Summary of Chapter" Charles Darwin (1861) notes,

> If, during the long course of ages and under varying conditions of life, organic beings vary at all in the several parts of their organization, and I think this cannot be disputed; if there be, owing to the high geometric powers of increase of each species, at some age, season, or year, a severe struggle for life, and this certainly cannot be disputed; then, considering the infinite complexity of

> the relations of all organic beings to each other and to their conditions of existence, causing an infinite diversity in structure, constitution, and habits, to be advantageous to them, I think it would be a most extraordinary fact if no variation ever had occurred useful to each being's own welfare, in the same way as so many variations have occurred useful to man. But if variations useful to any organic being do occur, assuredly individuals thus characterized will have the best chance of being preserved in the struggle for life; and from the strong principle of inheritance they will tend to produce offspring similarly characterized. This principle of preservation, I have called, for the sake of brevity, Natural Selection (Dennett 1995: 48).

This passage reveals how Darwin in his summary explains "natural selection" by which evolution may happen, and how it functions.

Therefore, Darwin's theory has provided a new understanding of biological systems within living organisms. It suggests that they all have one common descent; per se, one primitive ancestor who has an absolute set of characteristics passed on and conceived in the next progenies. For such, evolution is a modification that occurs in those inherited characteristics and Darwin has named this variation. It may result in the rise of biologically modified and fittest forms of organisms which could not all possibly survive. Only the one who adapts to survive may succeed in the emergent properties retention to successive generations, and eventually to reproduction. But, would Darwin's idea always remain the anchor for understanding the world's origin and its mysteries?

Darwin's theory and "natural selection" have succeeded to gain the support of scientists like Thomas Huxley, Asa Gray, and Thomas Wollaston with their major reviews of "The Origin of Species" (Francis, 2007: 67). However, major gaps in this theory start to loom on the horizon. Alas, "natural selection" as being the responsible mechanism for speciation and variations, has become no more considered as a sufficient and overarching one. For such, the phrase "The Eclipse of Darwinism" has been first used by the British evolutionary biologist Julian Huxley, in order to indicate the period before the "Modern Evolutionary Synthesis" when evolution as a new scientific theory has relatively lost its shine. Yet, Darwinism has greatly retreated for it lacks an effective mechanism for heredity. Some biologists, as a result, have stopped to accept that "natural selection" is the fundamental process by which heritable biological characteristics could survive and reproduce within a particular population of organisms. Peter Bowler, a historian of biology, once has pointed out in his "Theories of Human Evolution: A Century of Debate, 1844-1944", that the post-Darwinian era has retreated for it lacks an effective estimation on origins along with an actual method for generating variations (1987: 50).

But change was underway. In 1900, a rediscovery of the Mendelian "Inheritance" theory of 1865 has occurred and which has latter formed when merged with Darwin's "natural selection", the "Modern Evolutionary Synthesis" (Neo-Darwinism). This term has been first used in 1942 in Julian Huxley's "Evolution: The Modern Synthesis" in order to spotlight on the modern consensus of biology scientists about their confession that gradual evolution is an entire proof that genetic mutations, having "natural selection" as its vigorous mechanism, virtually exists as Charles Darwin has suggested in 1859 (Mayr & Provine, 1998: 01).

3. Protestant fundamentalists' Responses to Teaching Evolution in America's Public Schools

Despite a plethora of scholarly proofs demonstrating that evolution truly occurs thanks to "natural selection", skirmishes over its teaching in America have increased in the 1900s with the outset of the "Fundamentalist Movement." The rediscovery of Genetics has become the snowball that turns into an avalanche, and Darwin's evolution will not have any chance of ever winning the approval of Protestant fundamentalists to be taught in American public schools. Now, Darwin's theory in their eyes starts to deflect towards profaning common beliefs in supernatural causation. As a result, the question of teaching the origin theory has escalated nationwide. Before the "Modern Evolutionary Synthesis", the idea that all organic beings on earth, except man, are the descendants of a primordial ancestor was widely accepted by the end of the 19th century and at a certain time in history it has been even part of public schools' curricula (Singham, 2009: 10).

The "theory of evolution" propounds a fortuitous world and calls for a lower form of human ancestors; thus, Protestant fundamentalists fear the outcomes it may cause on the students' minds. This idea has made them fear to lose the respect of their children to the Protestant Bible and the Genesis account of creation that are reverent in America's public schools since ever. Thus, allowing their children to study the "theory of evolution" would be probably a system biased against themselves and against the essentials of public schooling and the legacy of Thomas Jefferson and Horace Mann in promoting non-sectarianism in schools.

Similarly, the shadow of Protestant fundamentalists' strong objection to teaching the "theory of evolution" starts to hover over the history of the evolution-creationism contention in America's public schools after that "natural selection" has gained more popularity with the rediscovery of Genetics. Now, even the "creation story" of "Adam and Eve" in the "Garden of Eden" is considered incompatible with modern scientific findings illustrated in Darwin's theory. This was the reason behind the famous "Scopes Monkey Trial" of 1925. A substitute teacher of Biology "John T. Scopes" has allegedly taught the evolution of human beings in the "Rhea County High School" and was arrested for violating the "Tennessee law" that prohibits the teaching of the evolution of human beings in public schools. This event becomes a landmark in the history of the conflict over evolution and creationism in America.

Factually, the repudiation of Darwin's evolution by the Protestant fundamentalists has made them fight overtly for boycotting and eradicating its teaching in public education, be it in the "Butler Act", the "Tennessee Laws", various legal decisions and Supreme Court cases, or creationist organizations' involvement in the issue like the "Discovery Institute." These can depict the strategy they espouse in dealing with such a dispute and which have led to making the origin problem a recurring conflict.

Two "Supreme Court" cases have tried to put an end to the evolution-creationism conflict by arguing that the "First Amendment" to the US Constitution deprives any attempt to set up the stakes of a national religion in America (Smidt & Kellstedt & Guth, 2009: 231). First, the US "Supreme Court" in "Epperson v. Arkansas" (1968) has repealed an Arkansas anti-evolution law that has been passed in the 1960s and aims at outlawing evolution teaching in public schools. Second is "Edwards v. Aguillard" (1987) which has

abolished a Louisiana statute that calls for an equal time for teaching both theories of evolution and creationism in the classroom.

On the authority of "Edwards v. Aguillard", the choice to introduce an alternative to Darwin's evolution with religious endorsement is considered defiance to the "Supreme Court" after its ruling that teaching creationism infringes the "Establishment Clause" to the "First Amendment." Justice William Brennan has noted in his famous majority opinion that teaching creationism is unconstitutional for it advocates religion. Furthermore, he held that, "teaching a variety of scientific theories about the origins of humankind to schoolchildren might be validly done with the clear secular intent of enhancing the effectiveness of science instruction" (Moore & Decker &Cotner, 2010: 303). Thus, by basing their arguments on Justice Brennan's opinion, creationists attempted to adjust creationism acceptance in public schools by replacing the 1980s creation science, with "Intelligent Design theory". Essentially, this new alternative theory claims that the world is irreducibly complex to be understood and perceived as happening by chance and which can only be best explained by a transcendent and intelligent cause.

But not surprisingly, the teaching of "Intelligent Design" theory will also contribute to forming the platforms of a recurring dispute over evolution-creationism. In 2004, the "Dover Area School District" in Pennsylvania introduced "Of Pandas and People", a new textbook of biology which contains the theory of "Intelligent Design", and has required that teachers have to read aloud a statement presenting ID as an alternative to explain the world origins whenever evolution is taught. One year later, the "US District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania" has ruled that teaching "Intelligent Design" is unconstitutional. Moore, Decker, and Cotner have stated that this rule was made on the grounds that ID "is nothing more than creationism in disguise" (2010: 380). This was in the famous "Kitzmiller et al. v. Dover Area School District" of 2005.

3.1 Why Protestant Fundamentalists Should Reject Evolution Instruction in American Public Education

The debate between "fundamentalists" and "modernists" which arose after the meddling of liberals in the integrity of "Scripture" would be incompletely described if not giving proper credit to the impact of Darwinism. The "theory of evolution" escalated the tension of the contention in America and has raised staple questions about church politics and government policies correlations such as public education. The problem evolutionary biology generated in America is its challenge to religion and the violations of divine truth. By presenting new biological evidence and sturdy interpretations of origins, Darwin's evolution seemed to attack the reverent doctrinal foundations of Protestantism. Therefore, the teaching of Darwin's theory in America's public schools is unacceptable and intolerable for Protestant fundamentalists and their strategy to boycott it and to restrain the drift of such a poisonous idea will result in a long conflict over evolution-creationism with some cases that have even reached the US Supreme Court.

In order to analyze the evolution-creationism dispute from a rational basis, a widespread consensus over the incompatibility between faith and science is considered necessary. Guillermo Paz-Y- and Espinosa have argued that evolution as a scientific theory has received a high degree of support among most religious individuals than among the least religious ones (2014: 08) and the reason behind the conflict over evolution and

creationism is derived from the incompatibility found between scientific rationalism and the deep conviction that a transcendent designer has created the universe (2014: 03). Hence, religiosity plays an essential role in shaping the level of evolution acceptance and in classifying adherents from highly religious to atheists and agnostics. This underlying assumption makes us understand why Protestant fundamentalists object to the teaching of Darwin's theory since its subsequent dangerous outcomes may drive students to disbelief. This vision can be found in a cartoon designed by the fundamentalists to urge people about the outcomes of the spread of modernist beliefs which can lead to atheism.

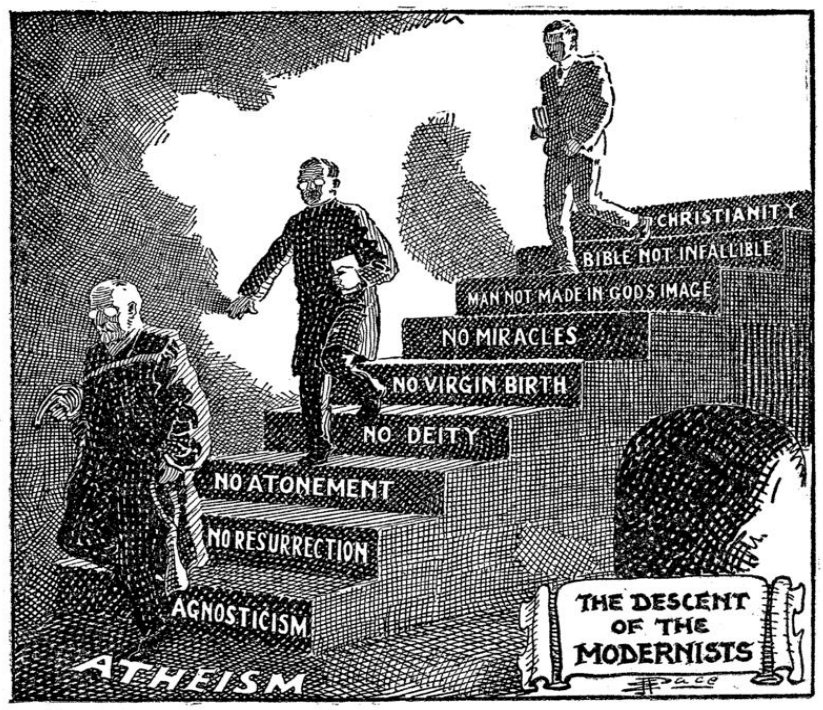


Figure 1. The descent of the Modernists. (Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamentalist_Modernist_Controversy (retrieved on 21 March, 2016)).

But the general view is that in the United States in spite of the decidedly secularization, the overlap between the religious and governmental spheres is substantially noticeable and questionable within a globally comparative and historical analysis. As a result, the American paradigm has always been a good example of the interference of religion in social and public affairs including the politics of education such as school prayer and the teaching of evolution. Moreover, it is important to remember that the unusual and endless quarrels generated by the Protestant fundamentalists against their liberal counterparts to ban the teaching of evolution in America are bizarrely inconceivable when talking about a post-industrial country. Yet, there must be another reason other than the incompatibility between faith and science for the continuing debate over what should be taught in America's classrooms.

Thus, if the Protestant fundamentalists' strategy to deal with the conflict over evolution-creationism in American public schools is explained in light of this, we may think of a cultural war between the fundamentalists and the liberals over the question of teaching the origin theory in order to influence political decisions associated with the issue. But, what has made American Protestant fundamentalists in particular fight fiercely to eradicate evolution from public school curricula, and what are the real motives behind their strategy? We allege that the answer is found once looking deeply in the psychology of Protestant fundamentalists and the extent to which the advocacy of a strict conformity to the Bible is vital for them, in addition to the depth of the belief in political theology and its theological and ideological dimensions which are engraved in the historical foundation of America.

4. American Protestant Fundamentalism as a Meaning System

4.1 The Rise of Fundamentalism among American Protestants

Although the term is significantly used in different contexts "Fundamentalism" usually refers to an internal contention in the Protestant faith in America that has aroused after the interference of liberalism in biology and theology, i.e., the growing threats initiated by evolutionary biology and biblical higher criticism that have shaped the Modernist controversy of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Thus, the "Fundamentalist Movement" is a complex phenomenon. It is often identified as a reactionary movement in opposition to the new cultural tendencies brought about by modernism and the evolution theory. Meanwhile, responding to the new wave of scientific advances and the necessity of adjusting thinking in light of the various aspects of worldliness and secularization remains the biggest challenge Protestant fundamentalists have faced.

What may appear very crucial in dealing with "Fundamentalism" as a dynamic concept is to give proper credit to the fundamentalist thoughts and actions. Protestant fundamentalists in America believe that the "Scripture" is inerrant and is the ultimate word of God that has to be strictly followed and literally interpreted. Nevertheless, living in an atmosphere that by the 1920's starts to deviate from God's path, has shaped the American fundamentalist experience in the struggle against modernism and its new cultural tendencies and changes. Modernism and Darwin's theory of evolution, in a nutshell, have caused far-reaching transformations in the fundamentalists' response and adjustment to new social and religious crisis of their time. As a result, fundamentalists in America can be stereotyped as a militant evangelical group in opposition to the liberal theology that has calamitously eroded America's Christian heritage and biblical foundations and changed the country's cultural values.

The Bible is more than a sacred text to the Protestant fundamentalists in America; it is always central to their religious conviction and has even shaped their behavior from the outset of their most alarming experiences of the 1920's. The secret behind a strict insistence on Biblical inerrancy is the key to understand fundamentalism as a new movement in reaction against modernism. In fact, it may appear incomplete if we narrow down the essence of fundamentalism only to the sociological perspective which views the fundamentalist phenomenon as merely a dying style of life in opposition with modernism in theology and culture. The trick is to look far beyond this assumption and to regard in

addition, the genuine doctrinal tradition of evangelical Protestants in America, in his "Fundamentalism and American Culture" the historian George M. Marsden has argued,

By far the most important manifestation of this shift was the interpretation of Ernest Sandeen, presented in its most complete form in 1970. Rejecting social explanations of fundamentalism, Sandeen found its roots in genuine doctrinal traditions. Basically, according to Sandeen, fundamentalism was the outgrowth of the "millenarian" movement that developed in late nineteenth-century America, especially through Bible institutes and conferences concerning the interpretation of Biblical prophecies (2006: 04).

Yet, the emphasis on Sandeen's argument of the role of millenarianism (more particularly dispensational premillennialism) and Princeton theology in shaping the fundamentalist identity has beautifully made the concept "Biblical inerrancy" more understandable. Accordingly, it is highly valuable to group Sandeen's awe-inspiring study of premillennialism and its pertinence to fundamentalism with the anti-modernist leaning of evangelical Protestants as an attempt to understand fundamentalism as a new phenomenon that has become more visible since the 1920's.

4.2 The Significance of the Sacred Text: The Biblical Authority

Protestant fundamentalists in America consider the Bible as the unique spiritual authority through which they derive meaning of every aspect of life. Therefore, their strong belief in the Scripture is intra-textual which implies that every single fact in life is included in it and that those facts are comprehensive and easy to grasp by believers who would, in return, exhibit higher possibilities to understand the Bible's clues and to stick to God's revelation to them (Herriot, 2009: 189). Fundamentalists view life in terms of the gospel, and they deem its rules, inspirations, and guidance as the paramount systems of their faith. Therefore, for instance, their religious conviction makes them emphasize the notion that human beings are created by God and that it is the duty of his creatures in return to worship and obey the almighty God by strictly adhere to his guidance and literally interpret them, i.e., the Bible (Hood, Jr. & Hill & Williamson, 2005: 31).

More could be said, particularly about the regulations related to behavior and which define the fundamentalist belief in the "inerrancy of the Bible" and how it is the one that claims authority. Fundamentalists derive a meaning of prohibition of a collection of behaviors which are often originated in and connected to the devil work like biblical views on sexual immorality or the surrendering of sexual purity which became extended by the fundamentalists to other behaviors on the grounds of their interpretation of the "Scripture". These may include earthly behaviors like the use of cosmetics, the drinking of alcoholic beverages in a social setting, dancing, smoking, or even card playing (Hood, Jr. & Hill & Williamson, 2005: 33) which their prohibition is derived from scriptural interpretation of 1 John 2:15 that states, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (Hood, Jr. & Hill & Williamson, 2005: 33). This suggests that in biblical contexts, the term "world" refers to earthly humanistic and corrupt systems of humankind which are typically far from the path of God. Yet, the authority of the sacred text as being the only source of truth and meaning and the fundamentalist insistence upon its legitimacy is what gives the "Fundamentalist Movement" its peculiarity and authenticity.

Again, from this perspective, we may explore the fundamentalist behavior towards modernism. As most scholars and historians of religion have agreed on, fundamentalists are frequently perceived as having defensive responses to modernist principles. Modernism and Darwin's evolutionary theory have caused far reaching outcomes to the centrality of the fundamentalists' religious beliefs, and diminished the validity of Biblical truth. As evolution contradicts common belief in God, it jeopardizes what the fundamentalists hold so dear. As a consequence, they cannot stay inactive against what may put their faith in peril. In drastically simplified terms, the fundamentalists' reaction towards what appears to challenge biblical truth is considered a natural result even though its nature is violent and feverish.

A typical response to the above account of being largely in discordance with modernism and particularly with evolution is raising children in an atmosphere far from religion. A primary premise could be that the fundamentalists seek to teach their children starting from an early age that the only way to find meaning is by remaining within the boundaries of biblical exegesis. The essential goal of the fundamentalists is to keep the "covenantal theology" (that God has offered them), to ensure that parental responsibility is accountable for children nurture and instruction which should be accomplished according to the precepts of Protestantism (Hood, Jr. & Hill & Williamson, 2005: 32).

Thus, providing the doctrinal foundation for child-rearing will guarantee that their children's explanation of life and their search for meaning and purpose are to be found exclusively in the Scripture. By extending this view, we would probably understand the fundamentalists' intention to teach their children in Christian schools and to argue against the teaching of Darwin's evolutionary theory in public education for it may undermine the divine truth and higher values parents try to inculcate in their children's mind.

5. The Belief in Political Theology and the Fundamentalist Political Uprising

Although its move towards politics was slow, the publication of the seventh volume of "The Fundamentals" in 1912 has marked the real start of the fundamentalist process of politicization (Lienesch, 2007: 81). At first sight; the later volumes contained remarkable and extensive writings for fundamentalists about Darwin's evolution and the threat of their Darwinist counterparts. However, the fervent language of fundamentalists to strongly protest against teaching evolution in public education has no longer been apparent in the last four volumes. The reason for such retreat, according to David N. Livingstone, lies behind the editor Reuben Archer Torrey and his deep conviction in the harmony of science and faith and his acceptance of theistic evolution (Livingstone, 1987: 150-151). It should be pointed out, however, that by this time the fundamentalists were not ready enough to start a potential crusade against the threats of evolution in spite of their total disagreement with the core of evolutionary belief (Numbers, 1992: 38-39).

Yet, with the final volume of "The Fundamentals" published in 1915 a coherent sense of identity has been created and an inclusive perspective of the fundamentalists' growing concerns to fight Darwinism has generated the necessity to act politically. With the formation of a clear identity after 1915, the fundamentalists became ready to challenge the growing threats brought about by many contrary ideas among which evolution stands at its heart. Now political mobilization is necessary for the ultimate goal of generating an anti-evolution crusade. But as an attempt to achieve this, fundamentalists had to go

underground and to build a solid infrastructure of establishments and organizations that will in return give way to the most challenging political struggle of the 1920s.

Thus, social movements which seek to have constant and dynamic influences on their world must learn how to act and mobilize politically (Verta & Whittier, 1992: 117-121). It was during the 1920s that the "Fundamentalist Movement" started a new stage in American history by opting to shift to political participation. The political mobilization of fundamentalists aimed at challenging both modernism and the introduction of evolution in public education. Therefore, the debate over checking the spread of evolutionary biology by its eradication from high schools curricula and the advancement of teaching creationism as the divine truth was fueled by some creationist organizations. Organizations such as "The Bible League of North America", "The Bible Crusaders of America", "The Defenders of the Christian Faith", and "The Flying Fundamentalists" have considerably strived against the teaching of Darwin's evolution in American public education (Wilcox & Robinson, 2011: 37).

Because anti-evolutionism arose out of fundamentalism, it is commonly perceived as being the product of the religious and political revolts that are the cornerstones of the "Protestant Fundamentalist Movement" in America. Thus, the strategy of anti-evolutionists to challenge the teaching of Darwin's evolution reflects the movement's shift from theory to practice. The antievolution groups were deployed at strategic goals. In their efforts to gain the support of state legislators and the assent of public opinion, anti-evolutionist leaders aimed at enacting laws favoring the proscription of teaching Darwin's theory in the classroom (Wilcox & Robinson, 2011: 37). These acts of pressure and persuasion mirror the most polemic agendas of the "Christian Right".

The 1925 "Scopes Trial" was the climax of the anti-evolution crusade headed by William Jennings Bryan. By that time, Darwin's evolution has become widely debated and vigorously opposed in America thanks to Bryan and his efforts to defend the fundamentalist cause. But, after his death, the "Anti-Evolution Movement" lost much of its prominence and influence and has retreated from politics. Most fundamentalists objected to the shift of their movement to politics; consequently, only extreme fundamentalists continued to advocate the agendas of the anti-evolution crusade (Cole, 1931: 102). Moreover, the fundamentalists after the "Scopes Trial" started to think of politics as a useless endeavor and they preferred instead to enforce the backbone of their movement by building organizations.

5.1 The "Christian Right" and the "Political Theology" of White Evangelicals in America

After a drastic collapse both in position and respectability after the Scopes era, evangelicals retreated from political activism. However, by the end of the 1970's, many white evangelicals and fundamentalists started new dawn in American history by opting to mobilize politically in an attempt to restore the old godly roots of their nation that were devastated by a group they label "secular humanists" or "liberals". To make the task even easier, they start to use "technology" for mobilizing people. Graham's use of television, as an example, was the most popular act of evangelistic campaigns. Ghermaoui has stated that, "advances in technology…impacted considerably the landscape of…political

campaigns" (2015: 470). Hence, this suggests that in America the different technological innovations have considerably assisted evangelistic campaigns.

This political activism of the 1970's was not new. In fact, it has been the product of an ideology and a collection of beliefs that are engraved in the American Protestant faith history, and which started to bubble to the surface when the American Christian heritage felt the danger modernism has caused to America's religious legacy. The result was the rise of a new group of "conservative Protestants" who saw the necessity to revive the old tradition that considered America's position and power as divine blessings. Dr. Benabdi notes, "nationalist movements emerged in the form of…political parties" (2018: 51).
Thus, this suggests that political parties help in the outbreak and the visibility of social and political movements. In simple terms, in America political activism is essential to healing the shattering consequences of the liberal theology and the "Republican Party" would be the most prominent and promising means by which the task could be accomplished.

Historians "Clyde Wilcox" and "Carin Robinson" have developed a definition to the "Christian Right" by stating that it is "a social movement that attempts to mobilize evangelical Protestants and other orthodox Christians into conservative political action" (2011: 08). This suggests that like any other social movement, the "Christian Right" seeks to mobilize as many people as possible into political activism. According to Zwier the aim of the "Christian Right" movement was "…to mobilize a group of people who had traditionally avoided politics because they saw it as dirty, corrupt business...by convincing people that political involvement was a God-given responsibility" (1984: 09-10). This provides a direct appeal to individuals who seemed reluctant about political participation because of consecutive stereotypes of the dishonesty of politics. That's why Kerboua states that, "Perception and human agency are critical in…decision making" (2018: 41). In respect of this, for leaders as Jerry Falwell and Ralph Reed, looking for a large constituency by appealing to "Catholics, Jews, Protestants, Mormons, and fundamentalists…mainline Protestants, Catholics, African Americans" (Wilcox & Robinson, 2011: 09) is crucial to their agendas.

Nevertheless, while the movement has succeeded to gain the support of many evangelicals as it aimed at reviving the old Christian bedrocks upon which America has been built, some have viewed the "Christian Right" as merely an attempt to "baptize" a political theology in the name of Christianity (Jorstad, 1981: 108).

Daniel Bell defined ideology as "a way of translating ideas into action" (1960: 370). Therefore, there is an ideology behind the "political theology" of the "Christian Right Movement" that shapes its political actions. To understand the ideology of the "Christian Right", we have to deal with the motive of its leaders to translate some old evangelical traditions into political actions. The key components of this ideology can be outlined in four essential elements.

First is the belief that the Scripture is inerrant. The "Christian Right" leaders are highly convinced that the "Bible" is the soul and paramount source of authority. Consequently, with direct access to God through the "Bible", evangelicals see no need for human involvements in the framing of political insights. Indeed, they suppose that their biblical interpretations must be applied to the various sides of human life including politics.

Second is the strong "belief in the covenant" which has prominent political implications for the "Christian Right" ideology. The evangelical passion for "America is a Christian nation" and which has been established on Christian principles is derived from the Puritans' belief that America is a "city on a hill" or "new Israel". As Boutouil notes:

> They believe that this holy land is the land of opportunities. Most of the themes of their writings were about this new land, about nature, wilderness, and religion holds the lion's share in their writings. Actually they considered it as the Promised Land and themselves as the elected people (2016: 174-175).

Hence, originated from the Puritan heritage of transferring the "covenant" to America, American civil religion still emphasizes on the idea that America is "a chosen nation" where the rules and principles of God must be applied to the different sides of life such as education, foreign policy, and military actions. Moreover, this complex version of American history provides solid grounds for the "Christian Right" political activism.

Third, evangelicals believe that America has not remained faithful to the divine commands and this resulted in bringing God's judgment illustrated in the spread of "secular humanism". According to LaHaye, Secular humanism is viewed by many "Christian Right" leaders as "a man-centered philosophy that attempts to solve the problems of man and the world independently of God" (1980: 27). This suggests that this philosophy has pejoratively changed America's conservative social principles including the growing power of government which has found in keeping away from God new underlying support. However, "Christian Right" leaders and their opinions about secular humanism are deeply engraved in the fundamentalist doctrine of "premillennialism" which holds that the "second coming of Christ" will be preceded by a critical period when the world would worsen and the "Antichrist" will dominate it.

Fourth, the political field is the most appropriate place for the "Christian Right" to fight against all aspects of secular humanism. The new social problems generated by modernism and secular humanism have made the political energy of evangelicals and particularly fundamentalists more visible. Nevertheless, the debate over their shift to "politics" has been active since the 1970's. Evangelicals protested against social ills and attempted to change America's culture by mobilizing politically and reactivating their role in the American society. After the Scopes era, "evangelism" was the primary role of evangelicals. They were certain that revivalism is essential for correcting modern social issues and that political mobilization is unnecessary. Thus, the "political resurgence" of the 1970's is considered a new version of their older reformist ideology.

Contrary to their religious beliefs and how the Bible should be read, evangelicals consider their political goal as a moral imperative (they still believe that "evangelism" has a considerable religious role too). The agenda of the "Christian Right" reflects the Protestant readings of the "Bible" and many "Christian Right" activists aimed at making it accessible to all Americans despite their different religious affiliation. The reason was to gain the support of non-evangelical groups such as "Jews", "Catholics", and "Mormons" and to assert that morality could be independent of religion and is essential in the framing of political ideologies. However, the primary goal of their moral vision was to restore traditionalism.

This seemingly technical vision has had one important political consequence. Behind their morality, evangelical political activists wanted to propagate some conservative ideas of older American values regarding issues related to family life, sexuality, feminism, abortion, and evolution. Hence, it is highly crucial to realize how they figure out the position of their old culture of political conservatism in the dilemma of their contemporary American politics. As an attempt to answer this question providing the concept "conservative" with a valid definition would be very substantial. It denotes a factual resistance to change or the preservation of something from damage or inevitable loss (Koyzis, 2003: 72-73). Consequently, while "Christian Right" activists appeal to restore old American life attitudes, they seem trying to overcome the outcomes of the older doctrine of "premillennialism" that calls for a vigorous opposition to any political involvement (Wilcox & Robinson, 2011: 33).

6. Conclusion

There is nothing intrinsically contentious than how evangelicals should respond to the contemporary societal and intellectual alterations introduced by modernism, namely Darwin's evolutionary theory. The biggest question, however, was how evangelicals would legitimize their strategy to eradicate the teaching of the evolutionary theory in public education and to advance, instead, the teaching of creationism. The outcome was an explicit split in "American Protestantism" between "Fundamentalists" and "Modernists". The fundamentalists' strategy throughout the struggle over evolution-creationism will open the door to question their shift to political activism and the relation of their theological and political conservatism.

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