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Europe's Identity and Islams

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Abstract

Until the break-up of the Soviet Union, dominant intellectual and educational cultures in Europe worked primarily with national concepts. In the twentieth century, nationalist ideologies have, of course, lost some of their glamour due to the impact of two disastrous world wars. But while leading European intellectuals over the past 50 years developed a research program that transcended the national spirit, they nonetheless remained bound by the concept of "modernity," which comprises the concept of the modern nation state and the modern nation state system. Steeped in this cultural unconscious, Europe has neglected the systematic study of alternative modernities and alternative systems of governmentality -- including systems of democratic governmentality in the internet age -- especially as these alternative modernities relate to the influx of Muslim populations.

Key conceptual relations: modernity and violence; intellectuals north-south; ontology of peace and ontology of violence; modern modes of knowledge organization and alternative modes of knowledge organization; history of jurisprudence 1500-1700 and inversion of rights; principle of rights and principle of the mind/soul; anthropological principal of the human capacity for justice; ontology of violence and modern philosophy; ontology of violence and modern social sciences; right to the right to knowledge on global peace and disciplinary censorship.

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EUROPE'S IDENTITY AND ISLAM

Renate Holub

I. Modernity

Until the break-up of the Soviet Union, dominant intellectual and educational cultures in Europe worked primarily with national concepts. In the curriculum of grammar schools and high schools, national literary and philosophical traditions received special status. Curricular recourse to national traditions has its roots in the cultural policies of the education ministers of the nascent modern nation states all over Europe, and calls to national organization of traditions in the curriculum reflects the self-assertion of the expanding bourgeois strata over aristocratic and ecclesiastical power. But it also reflects the self-consciousness of national elites in competition with other national elites. These processes of culture nationalization accelerated and decelerated in the course of the formation of the European nation states. Acceleration and deceleration depended on at least three factors: (1) imminent diplomatic conflicts, (2) economic, military, and technological competition between the states and (3) the status capital a particular nation state commanded in the context of Europe. Since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, intellectual elites consciously promoted the value of their particular culture over and above other cultures, and the polemic of the French intellectual Abbe Bouhours against the Italian intellectual Count Orsi is one of many cases in point. But this conscious promotion of national cultural values is also at work in the famous *Querelle des Anciens et des modernes*, with key figures such as Fontenelle and I also see it in the writings of Spanish intellectuals such as Gongora. At times, a national

intellectual, such as Madame de Stael, proposed to look at the virtues of a non-French culture, as she does in her *De l'Allemagne*. The conscious promotion of national culture or the denigration of a foreign culture becomes more of an unconscious process by the twentieth century, but it still obtains. We should also add here that in the twentieth century, nationalist ideologies have, of course, lost some of their glamour due to the impact of the disastrous two world wars. 180 Million people were destroyed by it worldwide. But overtones of national competition still are apparent. In a recent publication on the constitution of the Roman republic, the author, a Northern European, attempts to establish at every turn how wrong Mommsen was on Roman Law. Now you might say, with my accent, I probably want to defend Mommsen. Yes, you are right, I would like to defend Mommsen, just as I would like to defend Gibbon, Niebuhr, Savigny, and Braudel – all fabulous scholars. In the last 50 years, when leading European intellectuals developed a research program that transcended the national spirit, then they nonetheless still remained bounded by the concept of “modernity.” Through this concept, they also remained bounded by the concept of the modern nation state, and the modern nation state system. They thus conceptually remained in the territory of Europe and North America, and thus outside other global regions. The work on modernity by Alain Touraine, Juergen Habermas, and Anthony Giddens are all cases in point.

The concept of modernity has profound roots in European consciousness. It is linked to the formation of industrial capitalism in the regions of Europe and North America, to processes of rationalization and bureaucratization in economic and social systems, to political institutions such as the separation of power, modern constitutions and judicial systems, modern armies and the organization of the production of weapons

for profit, and the formation of instruments of control of mass cultures, instruments which include the media and communication systems as well as prisons. But modernity is also linked to belief systems in the knowledge fields that use the economic, political, and cultural developments in Europe as foundational, and often normative, points of reference on a global scale. Marx, Weber, Freud, Durkheim are among the leading organizers of social and political knowledge in Europe, and their focus on Europe, at the expense of other global regions, deeply influenced the unconscious of Europe's managers of knowledge production. It is true that Marx had the capacity to view other global regions, but the impetus for change, in his view, on a global scale, was directed by a consciousness advanced by the experiences in increasingly differentiating divisions of labour: the consciousness of the European industrial working class. Further, it is also true that Weber had the capacity to view, in his sociology of religion, major religious systems that flourish outside Europe: Islam, Confucianism, Hinduism and so on. But his inimitable study of China, India and other global regions had the purpose of illuminating the connection between the spiritual structure of the controllers of the organizers of knowledge and of that of the controllers of the modes of economic organization. This is what he does with respect to Protestantism and capitalism, in his *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (). Durkheim's study of the social function of religious practices took him intellectually to the Pacific, among other places. But as for Weber, Durkheim's primary purpose was to understand and comment on the origins and the transformations taking place in European society, and not in societies elsewhere on the globe. Further, the materiality of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic project is so profoundly tied to Viennese society of his epoch and to European philosophical systems

of ontological legitimacy of human behaviours of political violence – national and international. These philosophical systems, which epistemologically and morally legitimate, by way of an ontological principle of violence, range from Machiavelli, Hobbes, and the French materialists to Darwin, Nietzsche, and Carl Schmitt. Europe's leading organizers of knowledge remained Eurocentric, if not always on the level of thinking, surely on the level of feeling, to use a distinction I have learned from Antonio Gramsci. With the exception of Marcuse, and even this could be an issue of debate, even the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Benjamin) spiritually remained in Europe and Northamerica. Adorno's profound misunderstanding of the origin and function of Jazz may serve as an example. The historical connectedness of Europe to the rest of global regions – be it culturally, politically, financially, and economically – remained outside the purview of Europe's leading social and political thinkers. Hence the geopolitical facts of Europe's development, including its national developments, escaped the central debates. Yet the historical connectedness of Europe and Northamerica to other global regions, was probably always clear to intellectuals like you, who live and think here in the Southern Pacific. Elsewhere, it was clear to minority intellectuals, to W.E.B. Du Bois in the United States, but only after a very gradual process of consciousness formation for one; and this historical connectedness of geographies was clear to many intellectuals from colonized regions: Aime Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, Ashis Nandy and others. Janet Abu Lughod, with her *Before European Hegemony* and Andre Gunter Frank's *ReOrient. Global Economy in the Asian Age* are examples of lineages of thought which gradually insist on connecting Europe with the rest of the world. The geopolitical interdependency of the north and south has been clear

to southern intellectuals, and so is the imbalance in power. What Abu Lughod and Andre Frank bring to the table are plural perspectives which are probably rooted in the materiality of their experiences not in a monocultural but in a pluri-cultural community.

II. Intellectuals North and South

The formation of the European Union on one hand, and Europe's enmeshing with forces of globalization on the other hand, has begun to impact the consciousness of cultural and educational elites. A new era in knowledge organization and transmission has begun. While the European Union has set up educational initiatives intent on denationalizing, or Europeanizing, the education of Europe's young, globalization has presented European intellectuals with both an opportunity and a challenge that transcends this process of Europeanization. First, globalization accelerates a process of conscious multiculturalization of the European public spheres, a process which is already widespread in the educational systems and public spheres of the classical immigration societies of North America and elsewhere, such as in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore.¹ Secondly, globalization produced an increase in migration flows into Europe. Since for geographical reasons, short distance migration into Europe occurs primarily from the East and the South, migration into Europe is also, but not only, migration from Muslim majority countries. The integration of Muslim immigrants in Europe and the fact of the presence of Muslim Europeans in Eastern Europe, brought home by the Kosovo wars, have increasingly opened up debates about the "nature of Islam."

¹ Robert W. Hefner., ed (2001) *The Politics of Multiculturalism. Pluralism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia*, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, Hawai'i, USA

Every European nation state has entertained the “Islam Question” over the past decade or so.² In Britain, it involved the so-called “Salman Rushdie Affair,” book-burning events in populous Muslim quarters in some British cities, and debates about the re-introduction of elements of Islamic family law into the British legal system. Among the active debaters of these issues are members of the clergy, both Christian and Muslim, and on a European-wide level, it appears that intellectuals from the catholic clergy have been particularly active in the maintenance of these debates.³ In France, the “Islam Question” involved the “Veil-Affair,” namely public debates on the right of Muslim girls to wear their veil in schools, which are public spaces. It also involved sociological studies on the emergence of a political Islam among French youth from Muslim immigrant families. In Germany, the “Cross-Affair” was under debate in predominantly Catholic Bavaria. In question was the right of the German state to keep a Catholic symbol in a public classroom while denying the right of wearing a Muslim symbol, the veil, to Muslim girls, attending the class-room. The sophisticated German weekly *Der Spiegel* ran several cover stories about the Turkish immigrants and their descendents in Germany, wondering whether they constituted a threat to German culture. Birth rates are up among all Muslim immigrants in Europe, as compared to the natality rates of the non-Muslim populations and non-immigrant populations. And intermittently, populist political activists introduce xenophobic rhetoric into public discourse which in France focuses on immigrants from Muslim majority countries.

² Renate Holub, (2002) “Intellectuals and Euro Islam,” *Muslim Europe or Euro-Islam. Politics, Culture and Citizenship in the Age of Globalization*, eds. Nezar AlSayyad and Manuel Castells (2002), Lexington Publishers, Oxford UK and Boulder, USA, pp. 167-193.

³ Joergen Nielsen (1999), *Towards a European Islam*, St Martins, New York, USA.

What is interesting about the various debates on the “Islam Questions” in Europe are many distinct features. Let me focus on two: First, the opinion producers such as major newspapers, television, and radio, but in particular prominent weekly journals, have made an increasing effort to educate their readers on questions pertaining to Islam. This involved a depiction of the history of Islam as a geopolitical movement, ranging from the conquest by of Spain by the Umayyad Tariq in the eighth century to the Islamization of regions from the Guadalquivir to the Ganges in India and beyond from the seventh century to the 12th centuries. But it also involved good discussions of the current state of Islamic affairs on a global scale. Among these were discussions of the evolution of democracies and republics with Muslim majority populations, such as Egypt, Tunisia, Iran etc., which included a discussion of the conditions these evolutions: the historical link with both European colonialisms, and imperialisms, and with the competitive process of national industrial capitalisms. Apart from expanding the knowledge borders in reference to the many Islams that exist in the world, “the Islam Question” in Europe also commands a second important feature: the participation in knowledge organization in reference to Islam by an increasing body of Muslim intellectuals.⁴ It would be more correct to simply name this group immigrant intellectuals, because not all of these intellectuals are Muslims. Some are secular. But what they all share is, in distinction to non-immigrant intellectuals of Europe, is their emotional rootedness, or their cultural rootedness, in Muslim cultures. In this respect they represent what Gramsci called “organic intellectuals,” intellectuals whose structure of feeling is steeped in particular cultural environments. It is difficult to measure the impact of these organic intellectuals on the direction of the debates on the “Islam Question” in Europe. Bassam Tibi, for instance, is a Germany political scientist of Iraqui

⁴ Renate Holub (2002)

origin, who, working in the Habermasian tradition, is one of the staunchest critics of the political institutions of Islamic regimes, republic or otherwise. The organization of governance in Europe, with its democratic institutions guaranteed by modern constitutions, is vastly superior in Tibi's writings to the organization of governance in Islamic states where the Holy Book of the Koran, the legal traditions of the Schari'a, and the jurisprudential tradition of the *fiqh* or Islamic law play an important role in legislation and its judicial implementation. Azis al-Asmeh, a Syrian intellectual who has taught in Berlin and London, before he joined the re-opened American University in Beirut, has written extensively about alternative modernities, thereby inviting us to reflect on the political conditions that obtain in global regions that have been subject to colonization. Mohammed Arkoun, an Algerian intellectual who has lived in exile in France for many decades, has probed into the anthropological conditions of religion, investigations which reveal not only the social function of religious institutions, but also the spiritual needs that are embedded in all cultural and symbolic institutions, whether they are religious or not. His project approaches that of Ernest Gellner. Krishan Kumar, Tariq Madood, and Pnina Werbner, from India and Bosnia respectively, have in their work experimented with institutional responses to the pain and suffering that accrues to minorities in Britain in particular. Mohammed Sabour, a Tunisian sociologist who works at the University of Joensuu, in Finland, has been able to look more closely at Muslim intellectuals themselves, thereby opening up a discourse on the conditions of thought and work of intellectuals in semi-liberal Muslim majority countries, such as Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, etc. These organic intellectuals, whom we might call the organic intellectuals of the New Europe, have the advantage of a dual perspective, a perspective which has been called, in the context of

feminist theory, standpoint theory. The advantage of this perspective is to not only view social facts from the standpoint of dominant political and social thought, but also to view it from the point of view of social and political experience of the viewer. By social and political experience I understand the location of a person in a system of class, gender, and ethnicity in which some social groups attempt to control the access to the organization of knowledge and values at the expense of other social groups. Social and political experience hence involves experiences of material, ideological, and symbolic power and domination, including experiences of power and domination in the construction of psychic space and time. Feminist standpoint theorists such as Dorothy Smith, Sandra Harding, Nancy Hartsock and Patricia Hill Collins had come to the conclusion in their theoretical work that the principles and methods of sociological research into which they were socialized in the academies were constructed, all claims to scientificity to the contrary, from the point of view of white privileged men who materially, that is legally, and emotionally, lived in the confines of particular patriarchalist structures.⁵ Hence their research questions were formulated in ways that reflected their own material groundedness in – say – nuclear family of the 1950's where a wife performed those domestic and childraising functions which enabled the husband to spend the entire day in the office in the first place. For a woman sociologist with a child and typically without the structural support of a traditional wife, ensuing research questions increasingly involved inquiries into the social, symbolic, and political imbalance produced by patriarchalist organizations of gender hierarchy. There are problems with feminist standpoint theory which it is not the place here to address. My point

⁵ Renate Holub (1994) "Between the United States and Italy: Critical Reflections on Diotima's Feminine/Feminist Ethics." In Feminine Feminists: Cultural Practices in Italy Ed. Giovanna Miceli Jeffries. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1994. Pp. 232-59.

is that the extraordinary methodological and epistemological advantages that accrue to standpoint theory are also at work with organic intellectuals, who, like feminist intellectuals, have the advantage of asking questions about the world not only from the point of view of national power, but also from the point of view of geopolitical power, precisely because their community of origin may have experienced the institutionalization of economic, political, cultural, and symbolic imbalance, and hence, injustice, under conditions of colonialism and imperialism.

III. Ontology of Peace

This process of addressing cultural and symbolic injustice has already begun, and Aziz al-Asmeh's discussions, or Edward Said and others is surely one of the many initiatives along those lines. Mohammed Bamyeh, a sociologist born in Palestine, is engaged in a project that analyzes "the psychic structure of defeat." But in my own research on intellectuals, rights, and states, from which I draw in this paper today, I would like to go beyond deconstructing a particular kind of cultural and symbolic injustice. What I would like to propose is a constructive model. I would like to propose that we increase the structures that allow for dialogues between northern and southern intellectuals, an increase which the internet revolution can support. Further, I would like to propose that we increase these dialogues particularly on the question of the "nature of Islam" and the question on the "nature of Europe." Today I would like to offer to you four reasons for this. First, steeped as the cultural unconscious of Europe has been in the concept of "modernity," the "modern nation state" and "the modern nation state system," it has neglected the systematic study from within Europe's system of thought, of alternative modernities, of alternative systems of governmentality, including systems of democratic

governmentality in the internet age. Islamic political systems tend to link the jurisprudential elements of the holy book of the Koran and the fiqh, and the legal knowledge of the Schari'a to political institutions. The current European systems tend to delink religious knowledge and institutions from legal and political power, though they retain, by way of constitutional legitimacy, ideological and educational power to some degree. First, then, I hold is that particular kinds of thought traditions have been neglected in Europe. My second reason for promoting the dialogues with intellectuals from the south, in particular with Muslim intellectuals inside and outside Europe is that it enable us to better reflect on the evolution of rights traditions and constitutional traditions the ideological and material conditions of which in early modern Europe were wrested by the leading intellectuals from the principles of ecclesiastical and absolutistic power. Yet the further evolution of these rights traditions and the potentials they hold for a global network of peace, equality, liberty, and justice was not impeded by ecclesiastical and absolutistic power, but by the "myth" of competition to which the national economic elites and intellectual cultures clung. In other words, the rights we enjoy in the rich countries are not static but part of an evolution and a process of expansion, the largest democratic expansion of which occurred in the third quarter of the twentieth century. I have already made reference to the ontological legitimacy of violent behavior that runs through the European philosophical systems. Ontological legitimacy of patriarchalist behavior also runs through some philosophical system in Muslim majority countries, but this is not the point of my paper today, which focuses on Europe. And here I arrive at my third reason. Above all, built into the European tradition of rights is the so-called international law system. From its inception in the seventeenth century it promoted, however camouflaged by the concept

of “balance of power,” the right of the stronger over the weaker. (Grotius, *De iure belli et pacis*, and *De mare liberum*). This includes the right to war. Yet right to war, which brings destruction to people, cannot be a human right, because to live unharmed, physically, psychologically, and spiritually, is a human right. My study of the history of political theory and international relations in the academies of the North indicates that international relations are primarily viewed on the basis of two principles alone: the “realist principle,” which justifies the principle of deciding what a just war is without international consensus, and the “idealist” which justifies the principle of war on condition that it follows international procedures of what a just war is. Other principles, such as a principle of peace, concerning international co-existence have been relegated to the margin. Surely, around the two world wars in the twentieth century, the principle of peace experienced revival, but leading political scientists have had no qualms of calling users of this principle Utopian. The fourth reason why I would like to encourage dialogues with Muslim intellectuals pertains to secularism. As I mentioned already, for many Muslim intellectuals, the connection between politics and religion remains a material, legal, and constitutional fact. We can rethink our constitutional facts, including the “religious” principles that govern the rights traditions in Europe, however secular they appear to be. It would also enable us to study more closely the “religious” or spiritual principles of secularism.

Let me, for the remainder of my talk today, stay with my first reason, the search for alternative traditions in European thought, the ontology of peace. One of the most important projects philosophical Europe began to set up at the beginning of modernity, was the project of promoting natural rights, the universality of the human right to justice, equality, liberty and peace. Early modern thinkers all over Europe had

understood that the principle of human rights firmly had to be grounded in the principle that humans have the capacity to make their own laws. If medieval Islamic philosophers, such as Al Farabi and Ibn Ruschd, spent most of their life –projects with polemics that focused on diminishing the range of divine powers in the principle of lawmaking, European philosophers, from Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century to Giambattista Vico in the eighteenth century and beyond, spent most of their life projects in polemics that equally focused on diminishing the range of divine powers in the principle of lawmaking. When Giambattista Vico wrote his *New Science on the Common Nature of Nations* (-- there are many versions, 1720, 1725, 1731, 1744) he squarely transformed the human capacity to make, or to create, or poein, into the principle of law, and hence of rights, a transformation which rests on the basis of all modern constitutions. Vico and others did so under threat of incarceration by both the Roman inquisition and Spanish and Habsburg absolutistic power. The essential features of this Vichian transformation are at the very center of the debates on human rights, international law, and jurisprudence in Islamic republics at this very moment, where intellectuals argue for the right to make rights against the claims of many religious intellectuals, who deprive in their theological discussions the individual of the capacity to control their mind. As in European medieval philosophy, which learned from medieval Islamic theology, current Islamic debates on rights also draw on their own Islamic traditions and translate the concept of mind into the concept of the soul. This transformation renders the mind/soul more flexible to divine connections, and connectionism, or conjuncture, is a major feature of Al Farabi and Ibn Ruschd's philosophical systems. But let us return to Christian Europe for a moment. I mentioned two philosophers above, Thomas Aquinas and Giambattista Vico. Both are Neapolitans, both

taught at the University of Naples, the first public university in Europe, independent from the Papacy, that is. Even a cursory study of the history of the university of Naples indicates that the political struggles around the professorial chairs it commanded centered on the struggle about chairs in jurisprudence and law. It was always a struggle between canon law and civil law. In 1507, the University of Naples, under the dominion of the Spanish viceroys, who were versed in humanistic thought, invited Europe's most advanced legal philosophers to teach there, such as humanist Lorenzo Valla. Valla, on the basis of careful linguistic studies, had deciphered the documents of The Constantinian donations, one of the pillars of Papal territorial power, as a forgery. At the University, there were four chairs in jurisprudence in 1507, one in canon law, one in civil law, 2 in government, and one chair called "De sponsalibus" – a curriculum which studied the many documents on which the catholic church legitimated its secular power. Needless to say that this chair disappeared in the reformation. And other chairs that taught on the history of rights, laws, and constitutions also disappeared.

200 years later, at Vico's time, there were only 2 chairs in jurisprudence, one in canon law and one in civil law. Vico, who had written his science on the common nature of nations in order to get the chair in civil law, was denied. Why? Because he understood, as did many contemporaries, that the logic of the principle of human right to make laws of justice, liberty, and equality ran up against the principle of divine right, however much he intended to camouflage it by way of self-censorship. But Vico did more. He also understood that the desire for the right to justice and equality, which he unearthed as a natural human right on the basis of his careful study of the constitutions of the Roman Republic, was a universal right. But he did more: before Savigny, before Niebuhr, before

Hegel and before Mommsen -- and very differently from them, he deduced from his decadelong studies of Roman Law, Greek mythologies, and Germanic medieval legal systems he understood that the evolution of Roman Law constituted an evolution of morality: at its origin resided a mind, a human mind and human desire, who in social company with others insisted on the right to rights as integral human beings. Not a Cartesian mind, but a pre-rational mind – and a social mind nonetheless – desired justice. Justice and equality were not a modern invention, but the attribute of all social configurations, which he calls “nations.” His science on the common nature of nations implies that every human being on earth had the right to security, to liberty, equality and justice. Wars run counter this human right, as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) implies. ⁶Grotius, whom Vico had translated, and whom he had preferred over the catholic international relation theorist Suarez, had argued for the right to war, so he qualified it as just war theory. But Vico rejects this protestant international theorist as well, because it was based on the ontological principle of matter, and hence violence – while Vico built as educator and father of many children, against Locke, Descartes, and others, on the power of education on the moral evolution of the mind. Children are not evil, we make them so, as Manuel Castells, one of the world’s leading social thinkers, most recently maintained along similar lines. Vico was not the only philosophical peace theorist of the enlightenment. There was, somewhat later, Kant, but there were also Rousseau, Voltaire and others. The comprehensive logic of the concept of human rights, which includes the right to the absence of violence and wars, was in Vico’s system legitimated by the historical proven anthropological capacities of human beings to

⁶ Article 6.1 of the International Covenant states: Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his/her life.

create social systems, including systems of justice. His new science had intended to show the universal capacity to build community. But it was also a science that invited the new scientists of the political, the intellectual strata of the nascent bourgeoisies, to systematically build communities of justice, equality, and peace. Vico did so before the formation of the Italian nation state. But living in Italy, where there were old traditions of free cities, that in relatively democratic manner governed their affairs, he also had the knowledge of city federations and hence of federational systems. Before the building of Italy's nation state, alternative forms of governmentality were envisaged, in Italy's South, of historical memory of many popular revolutions.

IV. Alternative Knowledge Organizations.

The project of the universal nature of human rights, which logically included the right to the absence of war or the right to peace, was aborted when human rights were territorialized in the space of the modern nation state. The state created , “insider citizen“ and an “outsider non-citizen”, a creation which has been called the Janus face of the modern state by political philosophers. The modern state included in and excluded from its territory, an other. But it also created a moral other, an other who could be colonized, subjugated, exploited, and even destroyed. And the modern nation state, built, as it is since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, into a modern state system, constitutes an essential element of modern European identity. But there are other elements. The presence of many different forms of Islams in Europe, as well as the participation of Muslim immigrant intellectual in the European debates and the networks with Muslims outside Europe Muslim intellectuals procure is an extraordinary opportunity I suggested here to substantively rethink and systematically study the many other roots of European

identity. What I have found, in my research on intellectuals, rights, and states is that traditions exist in Europe that include moral principles and proposals for their institutional implementation on a global level of genuine global peace. But these traditions have been neglected in those sciences that deal with social facts: the social sciences. The modern social sciences have evolved from within the modern nation state in the context of a modern nation state system, and their epistemological frameworks are based on an ontology of biological materialism, an ontology that legitimates violence. But we have, in the north, gained the right to the right to knowledge, a right which many of our colleagues in the south do not share, and with respect to the knowledge systems mentioned here, we have the right to set them right. In an essay on the German constitution written in 1800, Hegel states: “Was nicht mehr begriffen werden kann, ist nicht mehr. Was nicht begriffen wird, ist nicht.” (What we no longer grasp, no longer exists, and what we do not grasp, does not exist.) What we may offer, as northern intellectuals, to southern intellectuals, in particular to Muslim intellectuals under Islamicist regimes, is not ours to say. For this, we have to listen to them, to their discussions on human rights, on the rights of women, and so forth. But one thing is certain: they work under conditions and move in psychic spaces and times which appear similar to those of European intellectuals of the pre-nineteenth century era. Fernand Braudel would have liked me to pursue this charming idea.⁷ But these similarities only appear as such. Southern intellectuals live, like you and I, under conditions --with their opportunities -- of the internet age.

Thank you.

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