**Unpublished conference paper**


**Cristaudo, Wayne 2012.** 'The "Problem of Islam" in the Context of the USA and Europe: Contrary Experiences – Contrary Problems – Contrary Solutions?', paper presented at Europe, Migration and Islam, Lam Woo International Conference Centre, Hong Kong Baptist University, Shaw Campus, Kowloon Ton, Hong Kong, 18-19 April 2012

# The 'Problem" of Islam in the Context of the USA and Europe: Contrary Experiences – Contrary Problems – Contrary Solutions?

Wayne Cristaudo
The University of Hong Kong / Charles Darwin University

Abstract:

This is an essay of two parts. The first part discusses a 'solution' to the potential problem of the colliding of religious traditions provided by the USA. It is a solution based on manners and civility – it is the solution that relies upon the preservation of civility through the suppression of dialogue. In this paper I argue that this is a particularly American solution, a product of the American form of Calvinism which forms the deep roots of the nation's habits and sentiments. I then argue that while this solution has been exported in the world of ideas much as US movies and consumer items find themselves exported, and much as the United States has tried to export liberal democracy to parts of the world that lack any habitus upon which such institutions could take root, it will not work in Europe where the large influx into Europe of Muslim immigrants over the last fifty years has contributed to a volatile political climate in which religion is once again a source of real faction. I conclude by arguing that Europeans need to cure their social amnesia and engage in serious dialogue with Muslim communities about the future they are building. And this will only be successful if they do better at making a world that is worth living in.

In a book I can only describe as breathtaking in its insights, conjectures and suggestions John Murray Cuddihy's *No Offense: Civil Religion and Protestant Taste* argued that the United States of America had managed a transition from a culture of civil religion to a religion of civility. It is not a work that has any obvious philosophical or stylistic affinities with post-structuralism. Yet his conclusion has as its epitaph Gayatri Chakrvorti's Spivak's pithy formulation of Derrida's difference as 'the structure of perennial postponement which is constituted only through postponement.'[1] Cuddihy had an uncanny nose for the consensuses which had come to dominate American cultural life. And, although, he does not say so, the choice of that fronts piece of that chapter is one more example of the value of a book that raises far more issues than the case studies would suggest. For not only Derrida but the ensemble of post-ideas and movements coming out of Paris in the 1960s and 1970s would so fit the American academic cultural consensus that French 'theory' would provide the defining concepts, tropes and programmatic moves for a rising generation of American intellectuals dedicated to transforming the world so that all could be members of a 'more civil society.

Of the French/ USA connection of what we might loosely call the '68 generation a little more later, but Cuddihy's 'thesis' is that civility in the United States is the replacement of the 'deep communal solidarity/ 'a solidarity of the surface and a solidarity for the interim – an *Interimssolidarität.*'[2] This solidarity is not 'built on the 'warm, dense closeness of "real" solidarity,' but upon 'a social variant of "Bourgeois formalism."' A great transformation has occurred, which is consistent with a fleet of similar transformations taking place within modernity – the transformation of the more abstract over the real, a transformation of form over content. Cuddihy remains somewhat ambivalent about the scale of this achievement; for it is all too obvious that this interim solidarity', or 'religion of civility' and all the policies and claims made on its behalf has not succeeded in curbing the oozing

---

[1] John Murray Cuddihy, *No Offense: Civil Religion and Protestant Taste*, (New York: Seabury Press, 1978),

[2] John Murray Cuddihy *No Offense: Civil Religion and Protestant Taste, 210.* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978), p. 209.

ailments of liberal atomism and fragmentation, all too visible, in the scale and intensity of the addictions and social afflictions which plague contemporary Western societies.

From his community grounded orientation, Marx had named that process alienation, and although Nietzsche eschews any kind of quasi-egalitarian notion of *Gemeinschaft* along Marxian or Rousseauian lines, he is also convinced of the coupling between  a process of anti-life, the nihilism of our idealizing or Platonizing of reality, and  the horrible potential fate of the West - the total triumph of 'the last man.'

One of the great virtues in a book full of virtues is Cuddihy's ambivalence about the solution that the West (he really means the United States – but the occasional identification of the USA and West has an importance I will pick up below) has found for the problem of enmity. For, on the one hand, the triumph of civility is a triumph of the deferral of the apocalyptic. And the preceding part of the century had demonstrated all too clearly the apocalyptic character of the collisions that take place within and between substantive modalities of modern solidarity - nations/ imperial alliances/ ideologies. On the other hand, it is a triumph of vulgarity and tastelessness, of the sacrifice of intellect and taste. And although Cuddihy traces such a lowly aesthetic (the aesthetic  of the interim) to the Gospels, he also sees that the extension of Christian charity , in what he, following Parsons, calls the ethic of the 'criss-cross,' an ethic in which irresolvable large scale violent  antithesis become ameliorated through their being scaled  down into multi-directional tensions has taken place at the expense of the need for more sublime figures, rituals, commitments and genuine existential acts of charity.  (Stated thus one must ask was post-structuralism not a Parsonian riff, a riff in which the ostensibly radical social transformations most visible in areas of sexual and gender issues have been achieved by a more consistent application of bourgeois formalism?)

If  the triumph of the criss-cross has its source in American Calvinism, as Cuddihy has suggested, and if, as he also demonstrates, that in the earlier part of the century leading Evangelical, Catholic and Jewish figures also lent their voice and support to a more civil world such support came at a great price.

That was the price of each group's own fundamental conviction that the sacred component of its own community – which is to say what was most essential within its community - had to be treated with humility and, if not outright disdain, at least in the context of civil exchange and communication with polite reservation and the most decorous requirement of all – silence. If decorum is the style of civility, then every failure to observe such civility is mere fundamentalism. To use the plain speak of vulgarity: within the mannered society, the very condition of a religious community's substantive solidarity, and the faith that glues its members becomes bad taste and civilized once it is expressed in the public arena. Put slightly differently, to have the temerity to express one's most fundamental convictions to someone outside of your community is to be a fundamentalist. And to be a fundamentalist is to demonstrate that one is not worthy of being treated civilly – for civility requires mutuality of respect. One who does not demonstrate civility must be shamed, forced to repent so that one might come back within the zone of civil security.

The rise of the civil goes hand in hand with a certain view of the state as the protective artifact powerful enough to ensure the continuity of civility. The civil zone requires its members have a source of authority they can appeal to against the uncivil, a force strong enough to enforce a more concordant community of divers collectives. That authority is what Hobbes named the Leviathan, the monster from the deep strong enough to put an end to what he called natural right (the right of forces in collision) whose body, as the wonderful etching to the first edition of the work bearing that name so perceptively captures, is but the metallic scales of the people themselves. And is it not conspicuous that the expansion of the religion of civility and the solidarity of the interim has gone hand in hand with the state accruing more powers to itself as it increasingly is required to ensure that its members do not offend each other?

Let us step back a second and notice that I have taken Cuddihy's insights just slightly further and slightly backward – further in that I have added just a few phrases which are no longer merely American but now part of a more global narrative on civility; backwards in that I want us to go back prior to the United

States, which forms the space of Cuddihy's concerns, to what Hobbes had held up as a new idea of the political body in the context of the English civil war. For the fact is that while Cuddihy is, I think, absolutely correct to argue that a transformation took place in the United States during the 20th century in which a certain variant of Calvinism took hold, Hobbes provides the most conspicuously modern legitimation of the absolute sovereignty demanded by the modern state. This is irrespective of the fact that Hobbes eschews genuinely democratic representative government. It is also the case that the Hobbesian solution is a case of an English version of Calvinism applied to a crisis that Calvinism helped engender.[3] It is this Calvinist solution to the problem of political conflict – conflict caused, inter alia, by the blowback of the crown's elevation of a new group of power brokers (formed via the distribution of the plunder of Church property), and the failure to really reform the Church at the right time - which would be spread globally by the Calvinized culture of the United States after the Second World War.

It is a great irony that the one country that has been so incapable of solving its internal racial problem took on the mantle of instructing Europe in the mores of civility after the explosive politics of nations of the First World War had reignited and reconfigured itself into the National Socialist politics of race. But that instruction was exactly what it did, commencing with the decision to provide a legal theatre in Nuremberg (as well as the smaller theatres throughout Europe) so that rectitude would become visible in the after math of the War and the German people rediscover the moral bearing it had lost.

With the growth of its universities, as well as the extraordinary talent gathered within them with the inpouring of refugees from Nazism, the United States (whose tenure policies emphasized publication long before the UK or Australia) led the world in the production and distribution of post-World War 2 social ideas. And the ideas it developed and circulated were ideas about how to improve the world, which given the state of the rest of the world, and imperial free-fall of Great Britain, could be said to be equivalent to making the world more like the USA. Along with rock n' roll and coca cola, American

---

[3] Cf. M. Gavre, 'Thomas Hobbes: The Dynamics of Theorizing,' especially the section 'Hobbes and calvin' in Perston King (ed.) Thomas Hobbes critical Asessements, (London: Routledge, 1993), 204-230.

scholarship, American ideas about politics, society and culture were for export.  By the time of Vietnam, the United States would itself find itself being criticized by youth all around the world precisely because of the massive contradiction between the moral view of life it had successfully spread in a world in the ruins and smoke of fascism and the brutality of its imperial politics. Indeed, in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, the United States' imperial role in the Cold War was ever represented as a moral role – and the tension between the pragmatics of its Real Politik and the moral rhetoric, however hollow it has been in the hands of some (all?) administrations has always blunted its weaponry. For  the moral narrative of its global political purpose and role  has always served to fuel internal moral dissent from the pragmatics that other superpowers, unencumbered by the need not to shoot journalists and to woo an electorate,   simply find baffling.

But if the United States has been torn between a hegemonic imperial logic, in so small part due to the irruptions and vortices of violence that seems to fill political vacuums, and a desire to retreat to the relative safety of its  distance from the conflicts of the un-Calvinized, due to the moral pressure and outrage of its administrations'  internal critics, it nevertheless finds some kind of anchorage in the solace of its civic righteousness.

It might seem that I am speaking ironically, but I am not. For, in its way, the United States has to some extent solved  a significant problem – the problem of its own internal collective political communalized violence. And it is understandable why it should be proud of that solution, even if the society  of the United States is not only the most violent of Western liberal democracies in terms of crimes committed, but also in terms of how criminals are treated. The success is, however, visible in the relationships between religious communities in the United States. One cannot, for example, imagine wars breaking out in the United States, in which religious designation, even of different  Christian groups – as was the case between warring Croats and Serbs in the 1990s – becomes a contributing factor in the conflict. And if the rest of Europe seems light years away from reproducing the Serbian *solution* to the presence of Muslims in their neighbourhood (a solution which was different in scale to be sure, but not always in kind from the Bosnian Muslim

treatment of Serbian enclaves within their midst), the Muslim problem, as it may be somewhat un-decorously, termed in Europe  has not reached the same scale in the United States as in Europe. And this is in spite of the scale of killings of 9.11 far surpassing the Madrid  and the London underground bombings, but, in the main, the presence of in Europe has had a far greater effect in the day to day political alignments and tensions than in the USA.

Whether  the United States' religion of civility is genuinely successful in creating a healthy peace between Muslims and non-Muslims is difficult to say. And certainly there are journalists and academics in Europe who reproduce the 'no offence/ respects and rights model of the United States. In any case a debate held by the Robert Rosenkranz foundation on the question 'Is Islam a religion of Peace?' in which Hirsi Ali and Douglas Murray argued the negative and Zeba Khan and Maajid Nawaz the affirmative was a very powerful illustration of how the religion of civility model of tolerating difference rests upon stealthily (though not necessarily consciously) depleting the most dangerous and vital elements which are the glue of the substantive solidarity of non-Calvinized peoples.[4] For what was so striking about the affirmative case and appeals of Zeba Khan and Maajid Nawaz was how unquestionably liberal their rendition of Islam was. Both accepted without qualification the separation between religion and politics, and in a way that was completely commensurate with the public/ private split and the accompanying relegation of  religion to the private individual. It was an exercise in  the classical appeals of liberalism. The un-scarved Zeba Khan spoke movingly of her loving parents whose civility and tolerance undoubtedly would find few equals, let alone peers, within the audience. For as Zeba Khan recounted:

they enrolled me and my siblings in a Hebrew day school for nine years, where we learned Hebrew, read the Torah, and prayed in a synagogue almost every morning. They always wanted us to learn about other faiths, and they always made sure that we knew the difference, though, between Islam and

---

[4] It can now be found online at c http://intelligencesquaredus.org/wp-content/uploads/islam-peace-100610.pdf Last viewed March 17, 2012.

Judaism. But they also made sure we also respected our Jewish sisters and brothers in faith.[5]

Khan's parents were as she emphasized throughout first and foremost liberal American(ized) Muslims, though every sentence and every gesture was meant to reach out to her fellow Americans in the audience, she seemed oblivious to the fact that to more traditional Muslims what she was saying was utterly shocking. Who can imagine pious Muslims from anywhere from Pakistan/ Iran/ Saudi Arabia/ to Egypt being warmly congratulated by fellow Shia or Sunnis for sending their children to Hebrew school to learn what the Koran makes very explicit is  an apostatic treatise from an apostatic people?  But Khan was not thinking of an audience outside of her comfort zone. And from inside it - who could doubt that Zeba Khan's parents were people of peace? Certainly not Hirsi Ali, who must retain a retinue of body guards to protect her from Muslims threatening to kill her, nor Douglas Murray, both of whom made a point of their admiration for Khan and Nawaz as people. What remained of Khan's parents' Islam, in the story she told, was a certain kind of faith – an anodyne faith in which goodness and niceness and tolerance were all too conspicuous, and in which anything resembling the kinds of Muslim communities actually existing in the Muslim world have little to no counterpart. Were they to exist there, the Israel problem would have ceased decades back; Muslim anti-Semitism would have vanished; jihad would not be exported; all women would have equal rights with men; anti-Semitism would be the exception rather than the rule; and Christian evangelists could openly seek to convert Muslims. We might say, Islam would just be another religion, and it would be, as Christianity and Judaism now are (but were not, of course, always), a liberal one.

The other party to the affirmative position of the debate Maajid Nawaz was, if anything, and if possible, even more liberalized, or at the very least his talk was based upon a more sophisticated liberal theoretical framework. Nawaz's journey to being a founding member of the Quilliam Foundation, an anti-terrorist Islamic think tank, had been an interesting one. A British born Muslim with Pakistani parents, as a university student  he joined Hizb ut-

---

[5] *Ibid*

Tahrir, a party widely active in universities in the United Kingdom, but banned in less enlightened countries such as Russia, and in a large number of Muslim countries, including Syria, Turkey and Bangladesh, and Egypt, where he was imprisoned for his activities with Hizb ut-Tahrir. He was adopted as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International – even though Hizb ut-Tahrir's mission of a return to the caliphate and the replication of Mohammad's foundation of an Islamic state hardly seems commensurate with a genuine politics of non-violence; for whatever one may think of Mohammad there is no question that he and his community were engaging in strategic warfare of survival and expansion. According to Nawaz he learnt from the example of older Muslims during his time in prison in Egypt that his brand of Islamism was contrary to genuine Islam, and was more a branch of fascism than Islam. The story is certainly moving, but it is curious that he could for so long misinterpret the peaceful narrative he would later find in the Koran. It is equally interesting that in the debate he would make a critical distinction between Islamic scholars and the fact that many of the Islamist 'extremists' were not 'clerics'. Though, he did concede that the Ayatollah Khomeini was a scholar, which raises the question: how complex is the liberal message if a man who spends his life studying the Koran, hadith and legal traditions fails to see it? And Nawaz was being extremely disingenuous in giving the impression that his 'scholars' were somehow the more orthodox interpreters of Islam.

But for me the most interesting appeal of Nawaz was the appeal to historical context and the changing times. Nawaz spoke as if historical progress is the most natural thing in the world, and as if all people's assemble their temporal experience in such a way as to learn from their past in order to live more morally now. Thus, when confronted by Douglas Murray about the age of Aisha when Mohammad 'married her' (six) and, in Murray's words 'raped' her (nine), Nawaz emphasized the need to take into account the historical context of the morality of the period. Indeed, the insistence upon a historical hermeneutic was critical to Nawaz's major argument. In another environment, Nawaz might have been forced to confront the fact that such a historical hermeneutic and such a view of historical progress has nothing to do with the anthropology or hermeneutics that can runs through the Koran and hadith.

There is nothing terribly difficult about that hermeneutics – it is one that depicts God word as all powerful, all embracing, and as ever true. It is a perspective that goes against the grain of modernity, but it is not one that contradicts traditional tribal or imperial ways of understanding authority. On the contrary it is a brilliantly successful way of consolidating and heightening the degree and intensity of a traditional understanding of authority within a larger framework of communal solidarity. It stabilizes and anchors – God is but God, there is one book, and one life worthy of being depicted within a book of his saying and deeds. If possible all other contingencies should be understood through that powerful unity of divinity, of law and society, and example. Nawaz' hermeneutics might seem like common sense, but they nothing in common with the sense that operates within the larger Muslim world.

Nawaz's contextualist perspective relativizes the word of Allah, just as it absolutizes the view of progress whose roots are the providentialist ones of Christianity, which would undergo a secular transmogrification in the, frequently, more facile versions of the Enlightenment. But even the need to find historical hermeneutical methods for the reading of scripture – as is all too conspicuous in Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, comes out of more than a century of religious wars within the Christian nations.

Stated more bluntly Nawaz and Khan like many millions of Muslims find themselves in a world whose reproduction has been shaped by narratives based on experiences exogenous to the sacred texts which form that part of their identity which they might well think is their most important part. To some extent, this split between the forces of reproduction and the historical sources of everyday appeal is the case of everyone who appeals to some ultimate authority to orientate their being. And this lengthy discussion of the one side of the debate has not been for the purpose of seeing who wins the debate. Although, it is noteworthy that the idea of the value of peace as such as the absolute source of appeal of a religion's worth tells us equally about the kind of world we inhabit and the narratives that are constitutive of at least that part of it which is inhabited by the participants in the debate and their audience. (As it turns out, the audience was more moved by the disturbing

autobiographical narrative of Hirsi Ali and the political challenges and uncomfortable facts of Douglas Murray than by the good will and natures of Nawaz and Khan; they lost the debate - 55 % to 36 %, even though prior to the debate the audience were more sympathetic to the affirmative than the negative – by 41% to 25%). The lesson that Nawaz and Khan must have taken away is that more must be done by Muslims to convince North Americans that Islam is a religion of peace. Another way of saying this is that more must be done to redress the perception of incivility that the US has of Islam, though the most obvious way this must be done is through the kind of deeds that Nawaz himself is doing. Which is to say more must be done to make Muslims more civil. Or if I go back to my earlier point – more must be done to Calvinize Muslims.

I should also note here that Nawaz is actually a British citizen of Pakistani parents, and that Hizb ut-Tahrir, the organization he left, has only become active in the United States in the last few years. But it is interesting that a former radical Muslim from Britain has come to the United States to preach that Islam is a peaceful religion and he finds himself competing with his former organization about the direction of Islam. He is a good example of the successful export of Calvinism.

But let me return to my earlier disjuncture between the United States and Europe, and my claim about the civilizing mission of the United States, and the Calvinism which is at its civic heart. I must add that this consensus of civility is not one that runs through the entire culture or across classes – it is the consensus of the reflexive consciousness and the class who fabricates that consciousness and thus shapes the reflexive sites, the educative institutions of the nation.

Almost no greater criticism can be made of something  a speaker says in the United States than the retort 'I am greatly offended by what you are saying.' A phrase that loses any kind of forcefulness once it moves into Catholic or Orthodox Europe. It is no accident that in the United States words take on such a delicate nature – if used offensively they are to the civil consensus like nitroglycerin. Every word that may cause offense must be guarded against and

anyone who uses an offensive word must be shamed. An English radio journalist I met once told me how she was looked upon with the horror usually reserved for the worst social lepers when she jokingly responded to a story about ladies underwear being kept in refrigerated storage to preserve the traces of semen: 'you mean that's a fridge full of knickers.' To the American ear the harshness of the English ck threatened to open up a race riot. And the story, in 1999, of David Howard having to resign after having used the word niggardly (and Wikipedia lists a number of incidents where this word has led to uproar) indicates how dangerous the penumbra of offense may be within the United States – so charged is the subject that it provides the material for one of the finest literary works to appear in the USA of the last fifty years – Phillip Roth's *The Human Stain*.[6]

For all its madness though I have suggested that the United States has been somewhat successful in solving the problem of religious violence. Even though the number of deaths from 9.11 far exceeded the deaths caused by Islamism in Europe, there is no mainstream anti-Muslim/ anti-immigration party in the United States. In part this is because Islam is not seen as Islam in the United States – it is seen as a minority religion.[7] Which brings us to the core defect of the culture of no offense – that nothing is seen for what it is. The great culture of the toleration of difference is really a culture of the intolerance of difference. This is, of course, what the great intolerants – the American conservatives (who have no real European counterpart) always say; though what they don't realize is that this is precisely the American way, that

---

[6] Other parts of the Howard story are equally instructive about the culture of civility – for under pressure from the gay community David Howard was offered his job back. That he was a member of a minority meant that he too understood victimhood. Indeed he publicly commented that he had learnt a lesson about the situation of African Americans. He had demonstrated his public sympathy with the victim and thus could demonstrate his credibility as a non-offensive person. But this too is part of the Calvinist spirit – for was not Christ the victim of persecution by the powerful? And if we transgress by sinning against the victim must we not redeem ourselves through apology? Larry David, that astute observer of Jewish and Christian manners, understands all too well that the apology is deeply woven into America's culture of manners. (I doubt if any better instance of life imitating art can be found than the real life Michael Richards, whose successful career was due to Larry David's and Jerry Seinfeld's creation [based on a real life] Kramer, affair.)

[7] There are, of course authors such as Bruce Bawer (a gay Christian American who lives in Europe) and Robert Spencer who wish to raise the alarm about the differences between Islam and the Jewish and Christian traditions, but they are generally treated as alarmists and hysterics. Anyone who goes to the Amazon web site to see the readers' rating of their work will see that it is either rated as five or one star – those who agree that this is an urgent matter, and those who hate what they are doing. A common thread running through the five star reviews is a complaint against the culture of civility which demonizes Spencer and Bawer, and insists upon the peaceful nature of Islam.

this is due not to the defeat of Christianity but to its triumph. At least to the triumph of its form.

I said earlier that after the Second World War the United States wanted to export its mores around the world. And that this was as much a part of its rebuilding of Europe as the Marshall Plan. Indeed, one might add that the student revolutions that took place around the world in 1968 were the result of the success of that strategy. And what has since become the bane of the conservative mind - political correctness – is but the institutional consolidation of Calvinism, and not as Alan Bloom and so many others have thought the triumph of nihilism. The United States might be anarchic in many ways, but its educated classes are the least nihilistic on the planet.

In sum, then, the United States may have its puritan, politically correct institutions as the palliative to, what to Europeans looks like its anarchic economy and pockets of lawless outsiders (which all find reflection in US television series of criminals, polygamists, motorcycle clubs, prisoners etc.), but compared to Europe it has ' solved'– at least for now – the problem that plagued Europe for so long, and which as we have suggested persisted until the mid 1990s and still is not solved.  I must italicize the word solved in the case of the United States for the simple reason that its 'solution'  is one which bypasses addressing the real problem – and quite possibly the United States is successful enough at least for those who stay out of prison and out the sizable pockets of despairing poverty that  it does not need to solve the problem internally. But when it comes to Islam the fact is that demographics also seem to favour the environment and thus not to place undue pressure on the US model of civility. For while there are no official government statistics on Muslims in the USA, guestimates would all place the number of Muslims in USA far below numbers in those Western European countries where Islam is frequently discussed as a 'a problem' of demographics.

Unfortunately though for the United States it has learnt that its bouts of isolationism always become interrupted by events which pull it from its slumber. And then it equally has the experience (though I will not say that it learns from this experience) of its inadequacy in dealing with a world that is

not akin to it. It learns that there is a world beyond American Calvinism, and it is unsure of how to operate in that world. It is not helped in its cause by the anarchic elements who damage any credibility it may have as a moral force and it is also not helped by the fact that its moral narrative conceals the violence inherent in  its own rectitude. The United States might lecture the world about rights, but every dictatorship has a fair idea of American murder statistics, of a society that has been (and in many ways still is) indifferent to the lack of health services for its substantial poor, of its racial divisions, of its guns, its prisons – which are so important to its sense of order, but are also the greatest of breedings ground for racial tensions and for recruiting whites into neo-Nazism and blacks into Islam.

By contrast Europe is a society where substantive solidarity has never been completely sacrificed for formal solidarity. And this is also why when immigrant communities entered Europe for work, their experience was not akin to the American story where immigrant neighbourhoods would be built only to then be dispersed into the capillaries of the social body (of course the native Americans, and African have also not fitted the model of social dispersement).  In Europe unionized labour did not particularly help their cause– for in spite of Marxian narratives about class solidarity overriding all else, tribalism is one of the most natural modalities of human association, and where scarcity prevails tribalism is always conspicuous.[8]

 In Europe identity is not something which readily dissolves – even if that is what the European Union would like – because, unlike the United States, there is no greater culture into which it can dissolve. Europe is not so much an actual culture. Under the catholic Church  talk of (Western) European culture made far more sense than today – for there were common rituals, festivities, an educated *lingua franca* that did not favour one ethnic group above another. Indeed, there is a very good reason that the Romantic view of culture which emphasizes language, ethnicity, fairy tales, heroes and the like did not exist prior to the Reformation: because there was no real European culture.

---

[8] As Robert Leiken puts in *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation* ˏ(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), about the French unions and Muslim immigrants: ''unionized workers, usually white and native, got steady jobs, even tenure, while immigrants and their offspring, the denizens of the banilieues, got short term jobs, if any,' p. 37.

European culture is something that a small group of (originally Romantic) intellectuals wanted to create. Pre-Reformation Christian culture, by contrast, was something actual – so actual that some Romantics like Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis dreamed, nostalgically, of its reestablishment. Once religion and national identity became increasingly allied, Europe's ethnic and linguistic diversity became obstacles to the creation of a common culture of Europe. The idea of post-Christian Europe – as opposed to the reality of a united European army of diverse principalities  united in their faith against the common enemy of Mohammad II that led Pope  Pius II to write his *Europa* - has only had any institutional form for fifty years; and although that form has gathered momentum since the end of the Cold War, it is – as the Euro Zone crisis happening now illustrates – still fragile.  Europe is a tapestry of neighbours whose  historical memories have been formed by recent traumas.  Thus when Yugoslavia fell, old murderous memories opened up, or, more recently, when Germany appeared heavy handed in its demands for the Greeks to get their budgets in order, the swastikas appeared again as a form of political embittered political reaction.

Religious differences in Europe are not, then, differences which can be concealed – for Europe is plagued by its panoply of visible signs of  difference - its languages, its parliaments, its customs, its three Christian religions (not to mention Islam in Albania, Bosnia and Turkey and the Muslim remnants of former Ottoman occupied states) which all speak of contrary historical narratives visible in architecture and artifacts as much as habits and sentiments.  Likewise when immigrants enter Europe they are surrounded by differences which yell at them. To the American mind the magnitude of these differences is all too easily underplayed, as if a liberal resolution were simply a matter of good will. A good example of how this was aired in an op ed for Al Jaezeera by Joanathan Laurence, an Associate Professor of Political Science at Boston College.[9] The essence of the essay is compactly put in the title – 'Europe's failure to integrate Muslims.' According to Laurence  the failure comes from the restriction placed upon Muslims to symbolically express their identity in the public sphere. He operates under the delusion that what

---

[9] http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/03/201231473832412963.html last viewed 17.3.2012.

Americans and even European intellectuals (who reproduce Hannah Arendt's political appreciation of the political modalities springing from the American Revolution) call public-space exists in European countries. European political life is much more the product of the nation than the public – and as nations are in far greater disarray in much of Europe than any time since the last War – the question of commitment to the nation has reappeared with ever greater frequency in ways that Eurocrats had thought was no longer possible. Apart from the broader tension between nation and public, Laurence's essay does not  address, at least with any seriousness (for there is a polemical put down of the idea),   the all-important fact that one of the great complaints of secularists in Turkey, and secular 'Muslim' women living in Muslim ghettoes/ neighbourhoods in other parts of Europe, is the intense pressure of conformity that comes from the Islamic community. Thus women who do not want to veil up in certain Muslim in Turkey or Muslim dominated suburbs in France have had to veil up or be punished.[10] The pressure of conformity is not a particularly Muslim   trait – it is a condition of all communities – but this does not eradicate the fact that there can be very severe consequences for women who do want to conform to the mores of their tradition once they have been exposed to and offered the possibility of change.

 Laurence, like Khan and Nawaz, seem to take the matter of freedom of choice for granted. The freedom of choice that has emerged in the liberal parts of the world is a fruit whose sacrificial  costs were enormous. And the fact that the greatest price was paid for centuries ago should not fool us into thinking that the experience of choice is effortless. Nor that it is even desirable in itself. The Muslim traditionalist who sees the horror of freedom of choice is not wrong; for the cost of freedom of choice is not only paid for in the past - it is paid for continuously. More - it is still paid for every time a bad choice is made. Freedom means renouncing authority and tradition. It also means being an example for others to follow. Freedom is destabilizing within a community. And it is very understandable why those whose sense of self is built around honour and tradition stop at   nothing including killing one's own family

---

[10] Cf. e.g. Claire Berlinski  *National Review*, *August 16, 2010,*
http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/243587/ban-burqa-claire-berlinski last accessed April

members to stop the plague of freedom. A widely publicized image of demonstrating Islamists has two placards that both seem unimaginable to the Western mind: 'Massacre those who Insult Islam' and 'Freedom go to hell.'[11]

Honour killings are a terrible example of the collision of worlds – a tragedy that comes from different value orders coexisting in the same location - a young woman wanting a freedom  that other family members view as destructive of all they hold sacred. It is a communal tragedy that was not peculiar to Islam, but increasingly so in Europe today it is a peculiarly Muslim crime, which (to Europeans a disturbing number of) Muslims do not see as a crime.[12]  The perpetrators of an honour killing believe not only  that they have not committed a real crime but they have prevented a crime – they have followed a higher law than the mere law of the land.

Although honour killing occurs in the United States, it tends not to be so widely discussed as a particular phenomenon of particular religious group as distinct from murder generally. In other words the matter of the sacral nature of the deed is bypassed. In Europe too governments *wish*  conflicts involving the sacred would not happen and could just be classified differently. But the failure to achieve this is visible in the rise of political parties which refuse to accept the kind of institutional consensus which rules in the United States.

Multi-culturalism is Europe's  equivalent to the religion of civility. But, when the German chancellor Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy recently expressed that it was a failed policy they may have been wanting to make political capital, both were simply stating what had been a fact for a while in Europe. It was not simply that multiculturalism was almost dead, but that it was its inability to deal with Islam that had killed off the project.   Given the structure of Islam it is astonishing that European governments were so ignorant that they thought they could find community leaders who would bring  their respective constituents into line so that politicians could find the neat

---

[11] See http://freethoughtkampala.files.wordpress.com/2010/05/muslimdemonstration_thumb.jpg?w=487&h=311 last accessed 17.6. 2012.

[12] Cf. Phyllis Chesler 'Worldwide Trends in Honor Killings, ' *Middle East Quarterly* Spring 2010, pp. 3-11., online – last visited march 20 2012  http://www.meforum.org/2646/worldwide-trends-in-honor-killings

alignments which would conform to the input/ output structural block of interest systems of politics that characterizes modern Western party politics. Indeed the example of multi-culturalism and Islam in European is an interesting indication of the desperate need to make something with a very different shape of human energies and practices try and be moulded into a prefabricated Western shape. For Islam was not on few minds when multiculturalism was first touted in Europe as a way to manage immigrants within the community – and a number of parties encouraged migration to enhance their political base.[13] Nevertheless, when the UK introduced its 'Life in the United Kingdom Tests' in 2005 it was belated and some might say rather innocuous attempt to try and find some social glue by trying to define and instruct new migrants in British values. The real problem, so evident in the 2011 riots (which had nothing whatever to do with Islam) is that an increasing number of European nations, including Britain, do not seem to have many core values anymore.

Equally, indicative of the collision between not only multi-culturalism, but far more disconcertingly, human rights and the European response to Islam is the recent wave of parliamentary attempts throughout Europe to ban the niqab, beginning in 2009 with Belgium, and now legislation has been passed or is at various forms of progress in Switzerland (coming on the heels of the minaret bans), Italy, the Netherlands and France. I think what is important here is that these nations are not wanting to do away with rights *per se*, not wanting to do away with liberal democratic political mechanisms. Yet they find themselves in water with no better solution than the might of Leviathan.

Yet it is also important to note that liberal democracies in Europe are under other pressures besides Islam which eat away at their durability – not least are the budgetary pressures, and generational conflicts as the elderly want their pensions, and the young have to pay for their education. And while the relative closure of the labor market protects the jobs of those employed, as we

---

[13] 'The huge increases in migrants over the last decade were partly due to a politically motivated attempt by ministers to radically change the country and "rub the Right's nose in diversity", according to Andrew Neather, a former adviser to Tony Blair, Jack Straw and David Blunkett.' The Daily Telegraph, 23 October 2009. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/6418456/Labour-wanted-mass-immigration-to-make-UK-more-multicultural-says-former-adviser.html last viewed April 15 2012.

indicated above, the young and the immigrants remain condemned to be part of what Marx had called the reserve army of the unemployed. And the fact that Marx remains correct about capitalism's periodic crisis but wrong about a solution to the problem does not make the crisis any less of a crisis.

Europe is in a deeper set of crises than at any time since the defeat of fascism. Islam is not the source of its despair, but is one further symptom of its despair, as are the wave of anti-immigration parties, and, not surprisingly, this in turn has its corollary in young Muslims taking on more radical political interpretations of Islam than their parents generally did. In both instances, such responses tend more to fuel rivenness that already is conspicuous between the urban tertiary educated, and the non-tertiary educated lower classes – the former generally being more radicalized. At the same time, such suppressions of traditional liberal freedoms – suppression which seem to go against the entire thrust of liberalization occurring in other aspects of life (gay marriage, for example) have also fueled anti-immigration political parties whose arguments against Islam are traditional liberal ones.

In its despair a number of countries in Europe has tried to use hate speech legislation. Hate speech legislation has two sources of origin in Europe: anti-Semitism/ holocaust denial and Islamophobia. Significantly, hate speech legislation in the USA is unconstitutional, even though there are arguments made by liberal intellectuals to introduce such legislation. Not surprisingly, perhaps, in the university system in the United States hate speech legislation is practiced de facto. The idea of the holocaust as the paradigmatic representation of fascism and hence the ultimate threat to liberal freedoms lingers in hate speech legislation which may be invoked by any minority group. The point to notice here is the basis of European law is also rights' based and that rights are constructed in the blind/ liberal sense as applicable to a minority and thus as needing protection in need of minority status- that persecution of gays and Muslims share a common suffix is most revealing about the construction of the 'problem.'

Nevertheless, in Europe it is very contentious whether the use of hate speech legislation has been a success, and it is not clear that it has not contributed as

much to the increasing support for anti-immigration parties as anything. The case of the film *Fitna* has been instructive. Geert Wilders' short film consisted of nothing but news bites, quotations from the Koran, and  Mullahs calling for extermination. He was accused of hate speech (but not convicted), but the speech he cited was not his own. A similar affair occurred in the United Kingdom – a  channel 4 documentary was made some years ago in which various radical Imams  living in England were recorded calling for violence. Although it did not go to court, the  producer of the documentary was threatened with court action by the police for inciting racial hatred.  These are not simply examples which revolve around Islam, but they are examples of fractious issues feeding into a deep sense of alienation and abstractness, a hiatus between law and common sense, the danger of which is that it erodes the one thing that every society grounded in the rule of law most requires, viz. faith that law is just. Law itself is jeopardized when it is synonymous with an identifiably  political point view that belies common sense. Indeed it illustrates that there is no longer a common sense within a community, as legislators and policy makers part company with larger sections of the 'nation'.

To say that the religious problems now existing in Europe were of Europe's own making is to state the obvious. But as in all things people do not know the future they are making at the time of the making. They always think it is something else. The failure to understand human needs, and the idea that economic satisfaction was all a human being needed was so prevalent that when immigrants from countries with vastly different religious traditions came into Europe there was no concern about what effects this would have generations down the track. Then the quick fix of multiculturalism was adopted.

Then and now interfaith dialogue has also been adopted. But this too has largely followed the United States Calvinist model of 'no offense' – as the emphasis upon religious similarities is at the core of the discussion, when, in fact, such a process largely involves a substitute racket of all religions with a pseudo-religion (embraced enthusiastically I a completely different context by Aldous Huxley and named as the) perennial philosophy.  Unlike the Calvinism

of the United States the content of perennial philosophy is substantive – it is mysticism. The trouble with mysticism, though, is that it only appeals to mystics, and they are always a rather small component of the religious body. Interfaith dialogue tends to supplement the idea of a religious/ mystic core with an appreciation of ritual in conjunction with ethics. But such approaches ultimately only appeal to a far narrower group of people – people who appreciate abstractions – than the divers substantive sacral codes  which provide orientation through the thickets of everyday life.

Without wishing to overly valorize Carl Schmitt, it is true that enmity is not an aberration within the human experience but intrinsic to it. And the religious and political experiences of Europe  are all testaments to what has been built out of inimical relationships. The question then is not how can we tip toe around each other so that inimical relationships will not break out – but how is it possible to build bridges so as to form alliances in spite of the fact that we are in conflict about how we are building the world. There are two aspects to this: first we do not hide the fact that faith is not a private thing. It is not merely the mystical, but it is at the core of a community's actions. A community's core directs actions so that the group forms its future on the basis of selected/ cultivated/ shaped human traits, and behaviours.  The sacred core must be spoken if it is to be lived. It must be preached and it must be preserved. Every community's future  is indeed endangered by every other community which seeks to form a different future. There are European liberals, like their United States counterparts, who wish this were not the case – but in Europe failure to grasp this and work with it is disastrous.  Secondly in spite of our different hopes for the future, we are in a common world. And that world in all its complexity is woven by many many strands, religion is a huge one, but it is but one. Europe's religious wars were rarely just religious. As in life, religion was invariably one element in conflicts. Thus, for example, although the Thirty Years undoubtedly had much to do with the Holy Roman Empire, the grievances of Protestant subjects, disputes over property that had been taken by anti-Catholic secular powers and then repossessed, one can make as little sense of the changing political alliances by assuming that those alliances are explicable in terms of shared  religious convictions, as one can

understand Ottoman/Christian relations. Indeed what is true today of geo-politics today was no less true half a millennium ago – that territorial and political alliances often completely ignore commonality of religious conviction. Thus does the United States today ally itself tightly with Saudi Arabia (who solves its internal radical Islamist problem by exporting jihadists attacking American interests).  And in Europe's past there were Ottoman/ Christian alliances  such as the alliance of Francis 1 and Suleiman the magnificent commencing in 1536, and that between Muslim armies and the Dutch and English in the 16th century.  That is to say religion is not the world – it is one more part of the world, and that is so irrespective of whether one has a theocratic state as in Iran today or for protracted periods within Christendom.

The question is how is the reality of our lives and the multiple appeals, calls and pulls upon the powers  which constitute us commensurate with diverse communal sacred codes which  ultimately provide the framework for those other appeals?

Here we must take account of many truths which are simply part of  the experiential conditions within which any dialogue is possible. Any although I think Habermas' concept of communicative action somewhat simplified the nature of dialogue by a kind of Popperian and Kantian hybrid in which participants were presented as working toward a common social goal in a rather thick sense, it is true that dialogue does require certain conditions for it to work. The most elementary is that one is prepared to respond in kind – to respond to a word with a word. This itself is problematic enough in the context of Islam and Western discourse. For there are all too many examples of violence not only being the form of response to words or signs (cartoons) that are offensive, but frequent examples of the fear of violent retaliation ensuring that books are not published. In this respect, though, a cleavage runs through communities which can be seen as cracking up hermetically sealed sacred codes in order to let something else transpire between peoples. The crack is the crack between those who are willing to talk and those who are not.

Historically the world is full of examples of those who are unwilling not to talk. It is also full of discarded sacred codes, and individuals and collectives who have discarded codes. Moreover every conversation about conflicting accounts of the sacred is also a potential threat to one's commitment to a code and at its most extreme even to the code itself. Those who do not wish to dialogue, then, are those who do not wish any way to change fundamentally in relationship to the code or to change the fundamentals of the code.

The use of the term fundamentalism or fundamentalist as a pejorative term tells us much about those who use the term – for it points to a preparedness on their part to let the fundamentals of the code stand or fall. It is a term that already presupposes a liberal context. Thus it is all too understandable why not everybody simply changes their behavior and reacts by dropping the fundamentals of their code. But being understandable does not mean a practice does not have a self-destructive component. And that people commit collective suicide for their beliefs is no less a part of having sacred beliefs than living better because of them.

A self does not exist outside of a world. And a sacred code is not merely an inner code it is a code that makes peoples and thus the world. But because the world is not just made by one sacred code and because the world today is so interpenetrated by a variety of codes, imperatives, appeals, laws, rules, agreements, adaptations and compromises, potencies – a vast gamut of practices from such a variety of historical sources and journeys to try and limit one's appeal in a singular manner is totally Quixotic. This does not stop people trying – but just as we are forced to create a cleavage between those who are prepared to speak and those who are not, we a cleavage – also cross cultural/ cross historical, and across faiths etc. exists between those who refuse to acknowledge the multiplicity and complexity of potential appeals (which does not mean they do not make them without taking cognizance of what they are doing) and those who take cognizance of what they are doing.

Here I wish to conclude by pulling the most important themes together, and make some proposals. First, Europe cannot ignore the fact that Islam is in its midst in an unparalleled manner. Second, it comes with a very different set

and subset of traditions. Third, Europeans are as deeply ignorant of their own traditions as they are of Islamic traditions. Fourth, the fundamental ignorance of European traditions is, in part, due to internal critiques that have been taking place in Europe with the rise in power of the 68 generation. That generation projected its concerns so much onto history that it did not comprehend the deeper currents of Europe other than as quasi-fascist ones. This has been disastrous and it has played into the hands of the enemies of liberal democracies, including Islamist ones. The 'Life in the United Kingdom' criterion is both simplistic and symptomatic of the problem. The problem of the conflict of values between Islam and post-Christian Europe is that too few European educators, politicians, and citizens have any idea of their own social memory beyond the second World War. Before Europeans begin educating migrants about Europe they need to be educated themselves – to understand the religious roots of their heritage, the transformations that have taken place, and the broader values that set them apart from other peoples' histories. At the same time, there is a need to understand how European history is solidified in global processes and institutions from capital to nation states to international law to ecumenical dialogue. Europe's power in the world as the most inventive of all peoples (a truth that one is not supposed to say) did not come from goodness or brilliance but from the regularity and enormous scale of its conflicts that were fortuitously grafted onto a messianic understanding of time and human possibility. Those crises helped trigger off inventive responses the likes of which had never before been seen on earth: the responses were technological, scientific, commercial, administrative, legal, political, and ultimately religious as well – or let us say tempering of religion. One might say this in the forgotten European language of theology: Europe's blessing came from grace; its providence came from that grace being bestowed on sinners.

One great difference between Muslims and Europeans is that the former know who they are much better than Europeans who they are. This is alarming, and it is the really alarming message that one should take away from works such as Bawer's *While Europe Slept*. One problem that is deep within modern European consciousness is a certain divisiveness of the self

(the divided self was a term Hegel had used to depict the pathology of his own age.) That cleavage has the different divisions of the self looking in antithetical directions: one looks back nostalgically. It is the European Romantic, and even when it looks at its own heritage through a romantic lens it looks at something that cannot be retrieved. Generally, though, the modern European Romantic likes to be enchanted by what it cannot have. Islam is partly a gift to the Romantic consciousness, but only when it remains unconnected with its more virile and politicized energies. Not surprisingly though Romanticism also becomes a weapon in a war against Islam such as was illustrated by Anders Breivik's fantasies and crusaders' costumes, and adverts of the Lega Nord also in crusaders' costume.

The other pole, which dominated so much of the social and political transformations of the last forty years is the utopian consciousness. That is the self looking at the future with no concern for the past except to smash it.

Both Romanticism and Utopianism are disorientating – indeed one may say their very existence is a symptom of what Eric Voegelin, following Schelling, calls pneuma-pathologies, spiritual diseases.

Islam by comparison involves a deeply grounded traditionalist approach to reality. Its presence in Europe forces Europeans to know their traditions, not least their traditional interactions with Muslims. But that is what needs to be known for dialogue to being.

The Calvinism of the United States is basically integration by stealth, which requires casting off traditions, because traditions do pull us back in different directions and push us into different futures. Living traditions become chloroformed as taxidetermamists prepare them so they can be safely displayed in museums. In Museums traditions coexist much like they do *in Night at the Museum* – only when the doors are closed and everyone is asleep do they take on life anymore.

The United States has had one civil war, but Europe's twentieth century was one of civil war - in three movements; it has been forced to bring its contradictions together. And its experience of doing so is relatively new. The

invention of parliaments and parties belonged to its earlier institutional inventiveness. The genius of politics through parliament and parties is that it has the potential to ameliorate discord, but the rise of fascism showed all too clearly how fragile this artifice is. Europe's traditions are threatened by many forces. Islam is not at all the most dangerous, but it is potentially dangerous enough if the rest of European society does not see that it must try and understand Islam, while at the same time it must know what it stands to lose if it surrenders the freedoms, including freedom of conscience and association (something that is contrary to the laws against apostates that are intrinsic to traditional Islam) that has given it is flexibility and inventiveness, and its tolerance. It is now Europe's challenge to become friends with the Muslims not only in its midst but in the world at large – for the world has long passed the possibility of islolationism. But becoming friends first of all requires seeing the differences that must be bridged to achieve that.