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ASIAN PERSPECTIVES

MODERN EUROPE AND THE CREATION OF THE "ISLAMIC WORLD"

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This article attempts to demonstrate that the notion of "Islamic world" was a creation of the modern age, emanating from north-western Europe in the nineteenth century. The term incorporates two opposing ideological meanings: on the one hand, Europe representing modern, positive values is set against the Islamic world, representing pre-modern, minus values, while on the other hand, the Islamic world was the common bond among all Muslims for their solidarity and unification against European colonialism. The article goes on to investigate why, how and when precisely the two concepts of "Islamic world" were created under the influence of modern European thought. It is stressed that in much of today's discourse too we can still perceive the two different meanings of the term, and this has often led to confusion and misunderstanding in discussion. Modern historians have played a role in substantiating the ideology of the "Islamic world", because modern historiography has often described political objectives as actual reality.

INTRODUCTION

The expression "Islamic world" is used today not just by politicians and journalists but also by historians, for whom it has become an important concept; indeed, many study the history of the "Islamic world" thinking it a natural paradigm upon which to discuss history after the rise of Islam. At the very least, in Japan "Islamic world" is commonly understood, and widely used, as an historical term signifying a civilization parallel to "Europe", with which it repeatedly both interacted and clashed. This essay attempts to show how the expression, which has given rise to this kind of understanding of the past, was created in "Europe"[1] in the nineteenth century, and how it incorporates two opposing

1 As a general rule, the word "Europe" has been frequently used unrestrictedly to denote a single historical realm stretching from the medieval (sometimes ancient) period to the present. I consider there are serious problems with this usage. As I show below, the dichotomous perception itself between "Europe" and "Islamic world" is the origin of the whole problem. It is necessary to make a strict distinction between "Europe" as a geographical entity and "Europe" as an idea. In this sense, it would be better not to use the term "Europe" without quotation marks. Sometimes, it requires a footnote. At the very least we must be cautious about using the word "Europe" when referring to pre-eighteenth-century history.

ideological meanings underlying modern European thought. By doing so, I hope to demonstrate the difficult problem we face when we use it to describe history.

Before entering into my argument, I would like to point out the fact that many modern scholars and intellectuals use the concept of "Islamic world" as an unconscious premise in their discourse. That is, they employ expressions such as "Islam" and "Islamic world" ahistorically when discussing how people in what we now call Europe perceived and understood Islam as a religion and the "Islamic world", using the terms to apply to the whole period from the birth of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century down to the present.[2] My investigations have shown that these concepts are clearly a modern creation, and that people writing before the eighteenth century did not share our understanding that they refer to a single region. Modern scholars who discuss the meaning of Islam in "pre-modern Europe"[3] are projecting their own conceptions of "Islam" and the "Islamic world" on the past, cutting and pasting from historical documents those portions which they think fit their understanding, and discussing the attitudes and discourse of people of the past corresponding to them as "Islam" and the "Islamic world".

Let us look at a classical example of such a methodology in Edward Said's highly influential work *Orientalism*.

> Islam excepted, the Orient for Europe was until the nineteenth century a domain with a continuous history of unchallenged Western dominance . . .
>
> Doubtless Islam was a real provocation in many ways . . . From the end of the seventh century until the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, Islam in either its Arab, Ottoman, or North African and Spanish form dominated or effectively threatened European Christianity. That Islam outstripped and outshone Rome cannot have been absent from the mind of any European past or present.[4]

Here, Said is using "Islam" as if it were a word known in "Europe" from the seventh century. However, it seems, in fact, that until the seventeenth century the term was used neither in English nor in French.[5] It is Said himself who considers that Islam "in either its Arab, Ottoman, or North African and Spanish form" dominated the European, Christian world.

At the times when they were the most active, Arab Muslims were called Saracens, Ottoman Muslims were called Turks, while North African and Spanish Muslims were

2 Representative works concerning the perception of Islam in Europe are Southern 1962, Rodinson 1980 and Kabayama 1995. Refer also to their bibliographies. The most recent work on the relations between Europe and Islam also shares the same viewpoint. See Cardini 2000.

3 Here, by the word "pre-modern Europe" I mean the time and sphere designated by post-nineteenth-century people who believe in "Europe" and its past.

4 Said 1985, pp. 73, 74.

5 According to the *OED*, "Islam" appears in English for the first time in 1613, in *Purchas, his Pilgrimage; or, Relations of the World and the Religions observed in all Ages* by Samuel Purchas (1575?–1636). Here it is used in the sense of "Catholicke", that is, a Muslim who holds to the true faith. The word was used for the first time in French by Barthélemy d'Herbelot with the same meaning (see below and the article on "Islam" in *Le petit Robert*).

called Berbers and Moors.[6] Though all were known to be Muslims or Mohammedans (or "Mahometans"), I could not find any contemporary European records which thought of the whole as Islam or the "Islamic world". Of course, we can also say that the thought process itself which places "us" in opposition to the totally other "them" does not change, whether or not the "other" is the "Orient", "Arab" or the "Islamic world". However, we need to be a little more aware when the "other" is expressed in terms of religion.

Said then goes on to say that "[e]ven Gibbon was no exception" to a consciousness that Islam had outstripped Rome, and quotes a passage from the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* which describes how both the Eastern Roman and Sassanid Empires were invaded by the Arabian caliphs, as a result of which 4,000 churches or temples of unbelievers were destroyed by the Saracens and 1,400 mosques were built for "the exercise of the religion of Mohammed". The word "Islam" appears nowhere in the original passage. It is the modern author Said who reads Arabian caliphs and Saracens as "Islam". Gibbon had no such understanding. It is when we attempt to depict the understanding and consciousness of people of the past and capture their meaning in and of themselves, without projecting our modern understanding on them, that we have to admit there is a problem with Said's turn of phrase.

How then were "Islam" and "Islamic world" understood in pre-eighteenth century European writings in various languages? I would like to examine this question by looking at some of representative works from the period.

MAHOMETANS AND SARACENS

Bibliothèque orientale, ou dictionnaire universel and *Le dictionnaire universel d'Antoine Furtière*

Let us first examine the *Bibliothèque orientale* (published posthumously in 1697) by Barthelémy d'Herbelot (1625–1695), introduced by Said as the standard reference work on the Orient in Europe until the early nineteenth century.[7] It is a kind of encyclopaedia, which lists and explains names, places and technical terms in alphabetical order. When preparing the manuscript, d'Herbelot read a large number of works in Oriental languages, including Persian, extracting numerous proper nouns and appending explanations to them. One such proper noun is "Islam".[8] This represents the first appearance of the word in a French publication and is explained as follows:

> *Eslam.* Islamism or Musulmanism. Also pronounced Islam. Musulmans or Mahometans call their religion thus. The word means perfect submission of body and soul to what God and Mahomet manifested. Before Mahomet spread

6 On this point Kudō is of the same opinion. "The enemy in the Mediterranean (during the age of the absolute monarchies) was, above all, the 'Turk'. That is, there is no sense that Islam is being convicted as a heretical religion." Kudō 2003, pp. 354–55. For the distinction between "Moors", "Arabs" and "Turks" see Kudō 2003, p. 357.

7 Said 1985, p. 64.

8 In the original text, the Persian form "Eslam" is used. This suggests that d'Herbelot knew of the existence of the word through the Persian language.

> the religion, all those who believed in a single God were considered Musulmans or believers . . .
>
> The place (*le pays*) that Musulmans or Mahometans possess is called in Arabic Bilād al-Islām (the place of Islam). It is also called Eslamiat, Islamism or Musulmanism. In the same way we call the entirety of the place where Christians dwell Christendom (Chrétienté).[9]

We should note two points here. The first is that at the end of the seventeenth century there was no special word in French that corresponded with "Islamic world". If such has existed (i.e. *le monde musulman*) then there would have been no need to use the wordy explanation for Bilād al-Islām that we see here. Secondly, Bilād al-Islām refers to an actual physical space where followers of Mahomet live. In the section following, d'Herbelot explains that, at the end of the tenth century, Bilād al-Islām stretched from Transoxiana in the north to the Arabian Peninsula in the south, and from Anatolia in the west to the Deccan in the east, and also consisted of the coastal regions of North Africa. This description seems to follow the world view of classical Arabic geographies.

There is no item for Islam or Islamism in Antoine Furtière's French language dictionary published seven years before the *Bibliothèque orientale* in 1690 and which represents the knowledge of French intellectuals of the time. Thus it was unknown among native French speakers at the end of the seventeenth century. However the dictionary does have an entry for "Muslim" (*musulman*), which is explained as a misleading usage of "Mahometan" (a follower of Mahomet), meaning in their language "true believer". Further, it goes on to say, it is a great honour for Turks to be called "Musulman" and that this word was first used to designate Saracens. At the end of the seventeenth century, then, European intellectuals did not use "Islam" or "followers of Islam", but commonly used expressions such as "Mahometism" and "Mahometan", as in the medieval period. However, these two words do not appear as separate items in Furtière's dictionary. This suggests perhaps that Islam, the religion of Mahomet, had as yet hardly entered the field of vision of most speakers of French.

When we look at the entry for Turk (*turc*), we find the definition "subjects of emperor of the Orient who believe in the denomination of Mahomet". Examples of its usage which are introduced include "Turkish religion" and "Turkish clothes". French intellectuals were far more strongly conscious of the Turks and their military might, to which they had been subject for more than two centuries, than of Islam or Mahometism.

Furtière stated that beyond the realms governed by the Ottoman emperor, "*le Grand Turc*", was Persia, ruled by the dynasty today called "the Safavids". The Shah of Persia was often called, in French and in English, the Grand Sophy (or Sophi). When we check Furtière's dictionary for *sophi* we find a couple of explanations as to its derivation. One is that it means "wool" in Arabic; from the time of the first monarch, Isma'il, the Persian kings wore around their heads a cheap red cloth,[10] according to the "new religion"

9 d'Herbelot, p. 656.

10 This explanation by Furtière does not reflect the truth, of course. The *qizilbash* ("red-head") was introduced at the time of Junayd, grandfather of the first Safavid king, Isma'il.

(*nouvelle Religion*). It is not specified here that this "new religion" of the Persian kings was the "denomination of Mahomet". From the use of such an expression, I would assume that the religion of the Persian kings (actually the Shi'a branch of Islam) was not regarded as being the same as the "denomination of Mahomet" followed by the Turks. Thus there is no idea in Furtière that the empire of the Orient (the Ottoman empire) and Persia combined to rule a common "Islamic world" under the sway of Muslims. Neither empire was considered to comprise a single and particular space called the "Orient", shaped by the elements of Islam or Mahometism.

Jean Chardin's *Travels in Persia*

Jean Chardin (1643–1713), a French jeweller and merchant, travelled twice to India via the Ottoman empire through Persia in the latter part of the seventeenth century. After his second return in 1680, he found himself in the midst of Louis XIV's persecution of French Protestants (Huguenots), of which he was one, and he left France to settle in London.[11] An account of his travels in Persia, based on a portion of his travel notes, was published in 1686. The complete work was published two years before his death, in 1711. It comprises a fairly detailed description of the various regions he travelled through, from the Middle East to India. When he was in Surat in India, he met François Caron (1600–1673), who had spent over twenty years in Japan as an official of the VOC (Dutch East India Company) factory in Hirado, and learned from him conditions in the regions east of India as far as Japan. He also entered this information into his travel record upon occasion. As a result, his *Travels* were essential reading for anyone who wanted to discuss the lands of the Orient.

In the contemporary Latin-Christian world,[12] information concerning the territory comprising the Ottoman empire was comparatively well known. Accurate knowledge about Persia, further to the east, was however very limited, and Chardin's writings were very welcome to those wanting to know more about the Orient. We can easily imagine the great influence Chardin's work had on the views on the Orient among contemporary intellectuals when we consider that Montesquieu, in his *Lettres persanes* (Persian Letters), relied heavily on the travel records of Chardin and Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605–1689) for his knowledge of Persia, and mentioned them specifically in the following passage. "So I spoke to him [a Frenchman] about Persia, but scarcely had I said four words when he contradicted me twice, on the authority of Tavernier and Chardin."[13] How then did Chardin describe Islam in his work?

Chardin often used the words "Orient" and "Asia" (Asie) in contrast to his own Europe. All the lands he travelled through, from the Ottoman empire to India, he signified by "Orient" or "Asia", but for him "Orient" or "Asia" did not finish with India, but continued through to Japan. According to his understanding of the world, the vast territory that stretched from the Ottoman empire to Japan was all the "Orient", all "Asia". He did not differentiate the region extending from the Ottoman empire to Mughal India from the rest

11 See Haneda 1999 (in Japanese), Van der Cruysse 1998 (in French).

12 This term refers specifically to the area heavily influenced by pre-Reformation Roman Catholicism and generally excludes areas inhabited by members of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

13 Montesquieu 1964 [1721], p. 125.

of Asia, or call it by any particular name, like the "Islamic world". Thus he did not divide the world on the basis of Islam. When he wished to distinguish one region from another he did so by referring to the name of the country and the people who lived there – that is, Turkey, Persia, India, China and Japan.

Of course he used the term "Mahometans". However, he did not think of them as belonging *en masse* to one space. "The Mahometans are not the greatest traders in Asia, tho' they be dispers'd almost in every Part of it; and tho' their Religion bears sway in the larger part of it."[14] Chardin was aware that large numbers of Muslims lived in "Asia" but he had no conception of referring to the region where they lived by means of the blanket term "Islamic world".

Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

Gibbon's massive work, first published between 1776 and 1788, needs no introduction. It is an historical work on a grand scale covering a period from ancient Rome to the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Gibbon made no mention of the word "Islam" to explain historical events. For him, the main movers of West Asian history were the Arabs (or Saracens), the Mongols and the Turks, as well as the Byzantine Greeks and the Franks, who came in their armies of the Crusades. What identified one person from another was not religion but "nation". Thus, "the three great nations of the world, the Greeks, the Saracens, and the Franks, encountered each other on the theatre of Italy" (vol. 10, p. 3). This passage expresses well Gibbon's fundamental historical understanding.

Nor did Gibbon use the expression "Islamic world". The words he used most to indicate a geographical location were "Europe" and "Asia". As can be seen in the passage: "at the conclusion of the civil and foreign wars, Europe was completely evacuated by the Moslems of Asia" (chapter 64, part 3), these two words were used basically as geographical names. He described how the Mongols overthrew the Abbasid Caliphate as follows: "After a siege of two months, Bagdad was stormed and sacked by the Moguls; and their savage commander pronounced the death of the caliph Mostasem, the last of the temporal successors of Mahomet; whose noble kinsmen, of the race of Abbas, had reigned in Asia above five hundred years" (chapter 64, part 2). Today, in place of "Asia" the phrase "Islamic world" might well be written.

Concerning the Arab conquests, Gibbon writes: "One hundred years after his flight from Mecca, the arms and the reign of his successors extended from India to the Atlantic Ocean, over the various and distant provinces, which may be comprised under the names of, I. Persia; II. Syria; III. Egypt; IV. Africa; and, V. Spain" (chapter 51, part 1). Here too the expression "Islamic world" would doubtless be used today. Gibbon however said only "the various and distant provinces" and uses no such expression as "Islamic world". But of course he knew about Islam and Muslims, using such terms as "the religion [or faith] of Mahomet" and "Mahometans". However we cannot see any idea of "Islam" (or "the religion of Mahomet") as a unit binding Muslims (or "Mahometans") as a whole.

Let us look at this description of the Arab conquest.

14 Chardin 1811, Vol. 4, pp. 160–61; Chardin 1927, p. 280.

> "Under the last of the Ommiades, the Arabian empire extended two hundred days' journey from east to west, from the confines of Tartary and India to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean . . . the progress of the Mahometan religion diffused over this ample space a general resemblance of manners and opinions. The language and laws of the Koran were studied with equal devotion at Samarcand and Seville: the Moor and the Indian embraced as countrymen and brothers in the pilgrimage of Mecca; and the Arabian language was adopted as the popular idiom in all the provinces to the westward of the Tigris" (chapter 51, part 9).

From the nineteenth century, the unity of faith, language and law and the importance of pilgrimage were often cited as being characteristic of the "Islamic world" and here we can see the seeds of this concept. However, Gibbon speaks of "the Arabian empire" as extending over this vast area, not the "Islamic world". It may therefore be stated with certainty that Gibbon did not have any clear concept of a spatial "Islamic world".

As a result of the above investigation of several important and influential seventeenth- and eighteenth-century works, we can confirm the fact that they did not speak conceptually of the Orient in terms of the "Islamic world" either geographically or spatially. At the very least, until the latter half of the seventeenth century, in works written in European languages, it was the general rule to call the regions of the East vaguely the "Orient" or "Asia". Indeed, the term "Islamic world" was not used generally even after d'Herbelot introduced the concept of Bilād al-Islām.

THE CREATION OF THE "ISLAMIC WORLD"

Ernest Renan's View on Islam

According to some statistics, in late nineteenth-century France, whereas Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* sold 130,000 copies over eight years, the *Vie de Jésus* (Life of Jesus, 1863) of Ernest Renan (1823–1892) sold 1,300,000 copies in four years.[15] Renan portrayed the life of Jesus in the same way as any other man, and by so doing brought the wrath of the Roman Catholic Church upon himself, and precipitated his removal from his post at the Collège de France. He was a philosopher who exerted a strong influence on both the French and European society then in the process of being formed.

On 29 March 1883, he gave a lecture at the Sorbonne called *L'Islamisme et la science*. "Islamisme" was an antiquated expression that corresponded to "Christianisme"; today we would use "Islam".[16] Let us look briefly at the contents of his lecture. He began by criticizing the backwardness of "Muslim countries".

> People who know even a little about what is going on in the world today can clearly discern the backwardness of Muslim countries (*des pays musulmans*), the

15 Kudō 2003, p. 269.

16 In the most recent edition of the text, "Islamisme" has been amended to "Islam". See Renan 2003. It is this text that has been used in the following discussion.

> decadence of states governed by Islam (*les Etats gouvernés par l'Islam*), and the intellectual void of people whose culture and education come from this religion alone.[17]

His next passage is very important for our own discussion.

> Believing that God gives good fortune and the ability to do what to him is good, and without taking into count education or personal qualities, the Muslim has the deepest contempt for education, science, and everything that constitutes the European spirit. This habit, inculcated through the faith in Islam, is so strong that all differences of race and nationality disappear when a person converts to Islam. Berbers, Sudanese, Circassians, Malays, Egyptians, and Nubians, becoming Muslims, are no longer Berbers, Sudanese, Egyptians and the rest; they are Muslims.[18]

Here, Renan declares Muslims, irrespective of race or nationality, are all contemptuous of the modern European spirit. As we have seen above, before the eighteenth century in the Latin-Christian world, it was usual to understand groups of people in terms of country or ethnicity, rather than religion. The difference between this outlook and Renan's is decisive. Though Renan used the expression "*les pays musulmans*" (lands of the Muslims) more frequently than "*le monde musulman*" (the Muslim world),[19] there nevertheless existed clearly in his mind the concept of a space where lived people who were united by one religion, Islam. We should keep this point in mind.

After thus convicting Islam and the countries of the Muslims, Renan entered the main body of his argument with his basic question.

> This Islamic civilization, now so brought down, was very brilliant. It had learned men and philosophers. For centuries it was the mistress of the Christian west. Why is it still not so? This is the exact point on which I want to make my argument. Was there in fact an Islamic science, or at least a science permitted and tolerated by Islam?[20]

His own reply to this question comprises the core of his lecture, which may be summarized as follows:

To answer this question we need to look at history. We should divide this into two periods, the first from the middle of the eighth century to the middle of the thirteenth century, and the second from the middle of the thirteenth century to the present. During the first period, a large number of brilliant intellectuals and thinkers appeared in Muslim countries. However this was a result of a kind of "Persian Renaissance". Because the works of Fārabī and Avicenna were written in Arabic, they are called Arab philosophy, but in fact

17 Renan 2003, p. 10.

18 Renan 2003, p. 11.

19 He certainly used *le monde musulman* also; see for example Renan 2003, p. 12.

20 Renan 2003, p. 12.

they are Graeco-Sasan philosophy. Kindī was the only exception to the rule that none of the philosophers and intellectuals came from the Arabian Peninsula.

If the brilliant learning of the first period is not Arab philosophy, is it then Islamic philosophy? The answer is "no". Why? Because most of this "Islamic philosophy" was written by Zoroastrians, Christians, Jews and members of heretical Muslim sects. The religion of Islam itself always suppressed science and philosophy. The scientific advances we saw during the first period were able to occur because orthodox Islam had not been sufficiently systematized and did not behave fanatically. Science and philosophy were developed, not by the Arabs, but by those who were not orthodox Muslims.

In the second period, orthodoxy gained in strength under barbarian (Renan refers here to the Turks) rule. An age of despotic dogmatism had begun. The Muslim countries entered a period of intellectual decay, and with Ibn Khaldun a rare exception, Islam eliminated philosophy and science from within. This marks a clear contrast with Europe, which at that very time had started to seek scientific truth. In places where Islam ruled despotically, there was no division between the spiritual and the secular. There was no place for free thought, and the development of science was blocked.

Western theologians, like orthodox Islam, were oppressors. The difference between the two is that the western theologians were not able to destroy the modern spirit. Science is reason. Science gave birth to military and industrial superiority, and eventually to social superiority. By eliminating science, Islam found itself in an inferior position in the world.[21]

I am not concerned here with the vehemence of Renan's language or with the rights or wrongs of his assertions. What is of central concern are two points: his conviction that human society has advanced as a result of the benefits of science (not only the natural sciences but the humanities and the social sciences as well) and that the "Islamic world" lags behind modern Europe because Islam has suppressed science. This view of Islam would certainly have been very persuasive in a secularized and industrialized Europe, whose people were then filled with confidence.

This was not the first time Renan had aired negative views about Islam. In a famous open lecture given at the Collège de France in 1862, concerning the contributions made by the Semitic peoples to the history of civilization, he harshly censured Islam.

> At the present time, an essential condition for the broad transmission of European civilization … is the destruction of the theocratic power of Islamism, that is, the destruction of Islamism itself … Islam is the complete negation of Europe. Islam is fanaticism … Islam despises science and denies civil society.[22]

Thus from comparatively early in his life, Renan had not put a high value on Islam.

Afghānī's Reply

In 1883, when Renan gave his lecture *L'Islamisme et la science* at the Sorbonne, Jamāl al-Dīn Afghānī (1836–1897), who was later to be known as a pan-Islamist, was staying in Paris.

21 Renan 2003, pp. 12–33.

22 Renan 1992, pp. 197–98.

Renan and Afghānī had met prior to the lecture, introduced by an acquaintance, and there appears to have been a great battle of opinions between the two. This meeting, Renan said, triggered his decision to choose as the topic of his lecture at the Sorbonne the scientific spirit and Islam.[23] Afghānī, who had read a translation of the lecture, published in the *Journal des débats* on 29 March, wrote a lengthy refutation that was published in the 18 May edition of the same journal. After praising Renan's insight and erudition, he then made the following four points:[24]

1. Modern Europe is a society born out of a strict and intolerant Christianity, which it has overcome, now standing free and walking a road which values progress and the sciences. It is very possible that Islam too, which emerged several centuries after Christianity, will follow the same path.
2. Renan cites only al-Kindī as a pure Arab scholar, but men like Ibn Bājja, Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and Ibn Tufayl should also be considered as Arabs. If they were not thought of as Arabs, Italy would assert that Mazarin and Bonaparte are not French. If all Europeans are said to be one kin, then all Semites can be called Arabs.
3. It is true that Islam as a religion obstructed the development of science, but the same thing happened with Christianity. Religions are all the same. Islam is no exception.
4. There is no reconciliation between religion and science (he uses here the word "philosophy"). As long as the human race exists, discord between religious injunction and the freedom of thought, between religion and science, will continue. This conflict will not necessarily result in a victory for science. The masses do not like reason; reason is something that is understood only by the intellect of a minority elite.

What we notice first in Afghānī's comments is that he is setting up a counter-argument according to the framework that Renan has already laid out. He recognizes that science has a decisive meaning for the progress of human society. Over and above that, he recognizes that Islam has ignored and rejected science. Afghānī's point is that surely the same thing can be said about Christianity also, and he argues, accepting Renan's thesis, that Islam, having come into being centuries after Christianity, may sooner or later accept science too.

It is completely natural that Afghānī, who is seen as a pan-Islamist, should have used the concept "Islamic world" (*le monde musulman*) in his argument. We also have to remember that he was debating with Renan in French (even if through translation). Even so, both men are arguing on the same wavelength, using the expressions "Islam" and "Islamic world". This is clear from Renan's reply the following day (19 May) in the *Journal des débats*, which may be summarized as follows.[25]

Renan stated first that there was not necessarily a complete lack of consensus between his views and those of Afghānī's. At root they were in agreement. Afghānī had criticized him for concentrating his talk on Islam and science rather than on the resistance of all religions to science, but he had not touched greatly on Christianity, not out of any hidden agenda but because his audience was already familiar with his work on that subject. Of

23 Renan 2003, p. 50.

24 Renan 2003, pp. 35–47.

25 Renan 2003, pp. 49–56.

course Christianity, like Islam, was hostile to science. Here Renan accepts Afghānī's argument that all religions are the same. However, he did not say that Christians should reject Christianity, or Muslims Islam; what was important was that religious creeds should stop denouncing science.

Further, just as the so-called Christian countries had begun their expansion after breaking down the authority of the medieval Church, the regeneration of Muslim countries would probably occur with the weakening of Islam. Muslims were the principle victims of Islam as a religion. Fanaticism comes from a handful of dangerous people binding others to religious practice through fear. It was important for Muslims to win free of religion's yoke.

Of course there was a great difference between Renan and Afghānī in their evaluation of Islam itself. As we can see from his reply, Renan saw only a minus value in what he conceived as the "Islamic world"; it was something which needed to be weakened. Afghānī on the other hand was well known as a person trying to make the Islam religion the common bond when calling for widespread solidarity to withstand western colonialism. It was impossible for him to reject either Islam or the "Islamic world". The principles of Islam had a positive value, for they had the potential to bring about coexistence and cooperation, over and above sectarian or ethnic differences. Though Renan and Afghānī are approaching the "Islamic world" from two opposed viewpoints, there can be no doubt that both men acknowledged its spatial existence, and found within it something of great significance. Thus we can say they are arguing on the same wavelength.

According to Kurita Yoshiko, modern Islamists[26] criticize Afghānī and his follower, the Egyptian Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905), for being drawn into "the magnetic field of Europe" and paralysing Muslim activism. Certainly as far as the contents of the debate between Renan and Afghānī over science and Islam are concerned, Afghānī indeed argued within Renan's framework, and to this extent we can say that the criticism of the Islamists is fair.[27] Since there is no reason to think that in the pre-modern period, Muslims in West Asia were conscious of any dualism between the "Islamic world" and "Europe", we should understand Afghānī's argument to be a "modern" one.

As we follow the progress of the debate between Renan and Afghānī we can see how the concept of an "Islamic world" was taken for granted by two scholars representative of their time. When we recall that Gibbon, writing a century earlier, used this expression neither as a term nor a concept, we must conclude that there was a decisive difference between the two periods and that a great change had occurred in the course of the intervening century in the global perspective of European intellectuals, on the ideas based on it, and on the understanding of the world by Muslim intellectuals, who were influenced by it.

26 "Islamism" is "a political (and at times social and cultural) movement which aims at building a nation (*'umma*) which upholds Islamic principles and which ultimately is systematized according to Islamic law; also, its ideology. It is a modern growth." Ōtsuka 2002.

27 Kurita 2002, p. 14. In an extremely interesting argument, Kurita analyses the circumstances under which Afghānī was criticized both by western orientalists and Islamists as being "untrustworthy" and points out a complicit relationship between the two.

"EUROPE" AND THE "ISLAMIC WORLD"

Kudō Yōko, in her ambitious and stimulating study tracing the course of the establishment of the identity of "European civilization" down to the 1870s, has given us a critical re-reading particularly of French works of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. She asserts that

> when Europe spoke of its "civilizing mission" the "civilization" it pointed to was, obviously, "Christian". The set formula that regarded Islam as a hotbed of "fanaticism", "despotism" and "barbarity" began gradually to circulate at the beginning of the nineteenth century, after Napoleon's Egyptian Expedition [of 1798–1799].[28]

As we have already seen above, at the beginning of the eighteenth century "Asia" or "the Orient" were spatial concepts generally used in contrast to "Europe". And there is no doubt about the correctness of Kudō's assertion that by the beginning of the nineteenth century a new binomial schema was in place that set up "Europe" against "Islam". This is clear from the debate between Renan and Afghānī. What then caused this great change in the outlook and world view of intellectuals in the countries of north-western Europe by the nineteenth century?

To answer this question satisfactorily we would need to examine a vast amount of literature in all the European languages of the time and compare and study them with care, so as to be able to show accurately the actual process of change. Such an undertaking would require a vast amount of time and energy, and is certainly beyond the capabilities of any one individual. It would be a task needing the cooperation of experts in the fields of nineteenth-century north-western European history, literature and thought. However if we bring together a number of existing individual studies concerning north-western European society in the nineteenth century and the context of changes in world-view at that time, we may draw the following conclusions.

The experience of the French revolution at the end of the eighteenth century cast doubts within Europe on the absolute social power of the Christian Church, for the revolution had challenged to the hilt both the religious and secular power of the Roman Catholic Church. As a result, one trend in nineteenth-century thought became characterized as "secularization".[29] Secularized north-western European society, even though based on "Christian civilization", experienced ongoing internal reform after the French Revolution, and religion retreated to be a matter of individual belief. We can already see ideas about the progress of human society in Chardin's records, but it was in the course of the nineteenth century that they became widely accepted.

Religion, for example, had run a course from ancient polytheism to monotheistic Christianity, experienced a full-flowering under the Roman Catholic Church, and then retreated as secularization gained force, through the Reformation and the French

28 Kudō 2003, p. 129.

29 The current debate in France over the wearing of headscarves provides a very important subject for research into the understanding of "secularization" in modern Europe and the current world. See, for example, Boudon *et al.* 2001, Baubérot 2000, Baubérot 2004, Baubérot and Mathieu 2002, Lalouette 2005, Roy 2005.

Revolution. The relation between religion and society was seen as "progress" towards an ever higher state. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the achievements of the Industrial Revolution and new scientific discoveries had rapidly raised living standards and people possessed a firm confidence both in their society and the values which had brought it about. The watchwords of the French Revolution, "freedom" and "equality", the "democracy" that was manifested in the United States of America, as well as "science", "progress" and "secularism" were all thought of as positive values, and there was also a consciousness that the society which had brought them about, that is Europe itself, was likewise a positive world. The French expression *à l'européenne* was first used in 1816.[30]

People from "Europe" who went to the lands where Muslims lived and observed their society detected a "despotic" society where "progress" was non-existent because "freedom" and "equality" were not highly regarded and "science" not valued.[31] People who lived in this world were comprehensively bound by the religion of Islam, in terms of both thought and action. Here was an "Islamic world", a "religious" society far removed from the "secularized", where Islam determined everything and caused all to stagnate. A negatively valued "Islamic world" was posited against a positively valued "Europe"; it was at this point that people first became clearly conscious of the "Islamic world", at this point that they first "created" it.[32]

Until the eighteenth century, "Asia" and "Orient" were concepts used in contrast to "Europe". Can we not say, therefore, that "Islamic world" had simply supplanted them? This is however not possible. By around the nineteenth century, it was widely known that Asia was made up of a large number of different "civilizations". Further, European intellectuals regarded India as the birthplace of civilization, and it had become the fashion in Europe in the early nineteenth century to study Indian philosophy.[33] North-western Europeans had far less knowledge about China and Japan in the early nineteenth century. It was well known that China possessed an ancient civilization, and Japan was admired for

30 LeGoff 2003, p. 13. The adjectival form *european* or *européen* had been first used around the fifteenth century. Hay 2000, pp. 54–55.

31 Of course, secularization was not always regarded positively and European society did not necessarily advance like an avalanche. In the course of the nineteenth century, confrontation and compromise continued between secularism and religion. Actual secularization occurred rather in the twentieth century. However, at the very least, in the eyes of a "Europe", where the phenomenon of secularization had been experienced, the "Islamic world", where no such movement could be seen, was extremely religious.

32 Christopher Bayly, in a recent work (Bayly 2004), forwards an extremely interesting argument about "secularization" in nineteenth-century society. It was, he said, the idea of nineteenth-century intellectuals that society had become secularized and religion became a matter for private belief. In fact, this was a time that religion formalized new doctrines and rites, its dynamism spreading its influence far and wide. This did not occur just within the Catholicism and Protestantism of Europe, he says; it can also be seen in revolutionary movements in Islam and Hinduism, and among followers of Buddhism and Confucianism. There is no space here for a lengthy introduction to Bayly's powerful thesis, but his examples are persuasive. One is his assertion that an historical interpretation that sees nineteenth-century religion in retreat is mistaken, if we see the present being shaped by the power of religious fundamentalism. All the same, it is a fact that nineteenth-century European intellectuals saw secularization as a plus and felt that religious influence on their society was decreasing. The English thinker John Stuart Mill advocated removing religion from politics, moving it into the realm of the family, and guaranteeing both religious freedom as well as the freedom to be non-religious, as Bayly himself describes. Therefore, ideas linking secularization and social progress and views that the "Islamic world" was the antithesis of this, are greatly significant in that, at the very least, they belonged to the discourse of intellectuals of the time.

33 Kudō 2003, pp. 299–301. See also Kudō 2004.

the quality of products such as clothing, ceramics and woodblock prints, to the extent that there was a boom in "Japonisme". But these countries were far away and the information about the particulars of their societies rarely available. Perhaps this is the reason that the image of India, China and Japan was not as bad as that of places where Muslims lived.

After all, the "Islamic world" was immediately adjacent to Europe. Its religion was, like Christianity, monotheistic and based on revelation. It was the "discovery" of the European intellectuals that those people, who until the eighteenth century had been called Arabs and Turks, were in fact all Muslims, as opposed to Christians. Thus the regions where Islam had power as a religion were cut out of the map of the "Orient" and a new "Islamic world" was conceived. There was no clear distinction between Arabs and Turks there. They all were followers of Islam. And so the special characteristic of the region was found, in the religion of Islam. While "Asia" and "Orient" continued to be used as before into the nineteenth century, "Islamic world" was used in parallel with them, but with a far more specific image in the minds of those who employed it. As the idea of a progressive and secular "Europe" gained ever-increasing positive currency, the neighbouring regions where Muslims lived were excluded, to appear as the negatively valued "Islamic world". In this sense, "Europe" and "Islamic world" are twin concepts.

Bernard Lewis writes that, down to the eighteenth century, people in the Christian world saw their neighbours (the "dangerous yet interesting" Turkish Empire) in "religious rather than national terms", and "even such ethnic names as 'Turk' and 'Moor' were commonly used in a religious sense, as synonyms for Muslims." As evidence he notes that "a European who had adopted Islam was said to have 'turned Turk'".[34] This is partly a valid point of view. Christians needed to differentiate themselves from Muslims. However, should this lead us to consider that people of the pre-nineteenth century Christian world had the idea that not just the places where Turks and Moors lived, but also where, for example, Persians and Malays dwelt, could all be considered one "Islamic world"? Were the Saracens, who were active between the seventh and thirteenth centuries, thought of as Muslims in the same way as the Turks and Persians? The answer has to be "no". Attaching importance to Islam as a religion and to the idea that all Muslims should be thought of as a single group is after all the product of the nineteenth century.[35]

The concept of "Islamic world" as it was created then is a kind of ideology and does not refer clearly to any geographical space. It does exist spatially too, but its borders are ambiguous. In the same way, the "Europe" conceived in the minds of nineteenth-century "European" intellectuals did not necessarily include the Slavic east of the geographical entity that was Europe. They certainly understood vaguely that the Mediterranean lands where Muslims lived were part of the "Islamic world". On this point, we should take note there is a subtle difference here with the clear physical concept of *Bilād al-Islām* as it appears in d'Herbelot's *Dictionnaire*. "Islamic world" came into being in the same period that Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886) set out to write a history of "Europe". Of course, no

34 Lewis 1993a, p. 11.

35 The undercurrent which flows always in Lewis's works is the dichotomy between Europe and the Islamic world. See for example, Lewis 1982 and 1993b. In this sense, his discussions are exactly like those of the nineteenth-century intellectuals and he stays within the same framework as Edward Said.

history of the "Islamic world" then existed. It was to be the later Orientalists who were to undertake this work.

THE TIME WHEN THE "ISLAMIC WORLD" WAS CREATED

It is difficult at the present time to ascertain when, where and by whom the term "Islamic world" was first used. It does not appear in Volney's *Voyage en Egypte et en Syrie*, first published in 1787, which Napoleon used when preparing for his Egyptian Expedition of 1798–1799. In the chapter on the political conditions of Syria, Volney refers to Islam's influence on society. Though Said criticizes this passage, saying "Volney's views are canonically hostile to Islam as a religion and as a system of political institutions",[36] Volney is clearly discussing here the relationship between Muslims and Christians in the specific geographical space of Syria. A quick reading of the *Voyage* reveals that Volney uses the traditional terms of Turks and Arabs to refer to the local people he met.[37] His basic understanding of Islam as a religion did not differ to any great degree from Renan's later on, but his writings show clearly that "Islamic world" was not yet in general use. It seems most likely that "European" intellectuals began using the concept of "Islamic world" with a clear understanding of its meaning some time around the beginning of the nineteenth century when people became conscious of social secularization after the French Revolution.

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859), liberal politician and thinker, and author of *Democracy in America*, wrote the following in a letter to his friend Arthur Gobineau in 1843, which reveals that by this time "European" intellectuals clearly saw the "Islamic world" in a negative light.

> I often studied the Koran when concerned with our relations with the Moslem populations of Algiers and the Orient. I must say that I emerged convinced that there are in the entire world few religions with such morbid consequences as that of Mohammed. To me it is the primary cause of the now visible decadence of the Muslim world (*le monde musulman*), and though it may be less absurd than the polytheism of the antiques and its political and social tendencies are more to be feared, in my opinion, I still regard it as decadent compared to antique paganism.
>
> (Letter to Arthur Gobineau, 22 October 1843)[38]

Renan's understanding of Islam is unmistakably an extension of the understanding of the Muslim world that appears in this letter. As Kudō has commented, "It was fated that what can be called modern European civilization gave rise to a thinker [like Renan]."[39]

36 Said 1985, p. 81.

37 Volney 1959 [1787].

38 de Tocqueville 1959a, p. 69; de Tocqueville 1959b, p. 212.

39 Kudō 2003, p. 415.

We have been looking so far at how the western part of Eurasia was divided by using the two terms "Europe" and "Islamic world" and how the idea of understanding these two spaces in a comparative way belongs to a world view peculiar to the modern period, with its origins in nineteenth-century "Europe".

ONE OTHER "ISLAMIC WORLD"

Let us next consider the source of "Islamic world" as understood in a positive light by Afghānī. A special characteristic of his thought is that Muslims throughout the world should band together to resist western colonialism. The Muslim community (*umma* in Arabic) is Afghānī's "Islamic world". In this sense, what he calls "Islamic world" cannot be a clear geographical space in the world of his time, for individual Muslims lived scattered all over the globe. We should therefore understand the concept to be first and foremost no more than political ideology. The term *Dār al-Islām*, which can be translated as "Islamic world", certainly existed before the fifteenth century; it was used in some law texts and in Arabian works on world history and geography with the meaning of lands held by Muslim rulers and under the jurisdiction of Islamic law. The term introduced by d'Herbelot, *Bilād al-Islām*, is a synonym. This is a space governed by Muslim rulers, and can be considered to refer to actually existing lands. This is a different use to Afghānī's. Later, the regions where Muslims lived fractured and warred with one another, and so the sense of an actual, geographical space disappears when the idea of restoring them as a single region emerges. Muslim historical and geographical writings after the fourteenth century rarely took this view.[40]

After the middle of the nineteenth century, the "New Ottomans", in other words, the progressive scholars and constitutionalists who appeared in various parts of the Ottoman empire, began calling for "Islamic unification" (*Ittihad-i Islam*), in other words, a programme of pan-Islamism. According to Arai Masami, this word was first used in Turkish in October 1868.[41] Later, in the 1870s, this way of thinking came to have a great influence throughout the Ottoman empire. Those who urged Islamic unification wanted to restore the tottering empire by bringing its people together with Islam as their axis. It was a brave argument, but it completely failed to consider the large numbers of non-Muslims who also made up the empire. As a result, the Ottoman government, aware of public opinion in the various European countries sensitive to the treatment of non-Muslims in Ottoman lands, forbade the use of the phrase.

It is difficult to think that the idea of pan-Islamism and the movement supporting it developed by chance independently within Ottoman society. In "Europe" at the same time nationalist ideas were very influential as the ideology behind the unity of certain national groups; pan-Slavism and pan-Germanism were, for example, being bruited widely at this time. The development of pan-Islamism cannot be unrelated to these. No sooner had "European" intellectuals started speaking negatively about Islam, that people began appearing in the Ottoman empire using the same terminology to evaluate Islam positively.

40 On this point, refer to Haneda 2005.

41 Arai 2002, p. 36.

The earliest New Ottomans used "Islamic world" at the same conceptual level as Slavic or German unification, as a discourse to maintain the Ottoman political system.

The creativity of Afghānī's thought represents an advance on the above ideas, taking "Islamic unification" beyond the borders of the Ottoman empire and using it as an ideology to withstand the advance of European power in the areas where Muslims lived. Afghānī asserted that Muslims throughout the world should, if united, be able to stand up to European colonialism. Thus there was a considerable gap between what his ideas and what the "New Ottomans" maintained. However there is no doubt that Afghānī received his ideas from the former, and in this sense, we can say they were an extension of those of the "New Ottomans". This being so, the "Islamic world" that Afghānī saw in positive terms, even if it emphasized the Muslim community (*umma*), can be thought of as being created under the influence of the ideas and social movements of nineteenth-century Europe.

Afghānī's "Islamic world" was an idealized Muslim community, and not directly connected with the pre-modern Muslim view of the world and historical understanding that was *Dār al-Islām*. Whereas *Dār al-Islām* can be considered an actually existing space, the "Islamic world" was an ideal space, conceived by Islamists. Much of the confusion in discourse about the term "Islamic world" that can often be seen in Japan and abroad down to the present has its origins in the linking of these two "Islamic worlds".

CONCLUSION

The concept of an "Islamic world" was created in nineteenth-century "Europe". It was a word understood in negative terms by intellectuals in "Europe", in contrast to "Europe" which embodied all that was of positive value. "Islamic world" in the sense of an ideal community of Muslims, also created under the influence of nineteenth-century European thought, began to enter the consciousness of Islamists strongly by the end of that century. Both were manifestations of the same kind of ideology, and did not refer to any actually existing space, in a geographical sense. Yet even today there is a large discourse about whether or not an "Islamic world" exists. Since a nineteenth-century-type view of the world still persists in influencing the speech and arguments of some scholars and Islamists, I would like to conclude by pointing out that modern historians have also played a role in substantiating this ideology. This is because modern historiography has often described political objectives as actual existence.

The scholarship founded in the nineteenth century looked at unified human groups, such as ethnic groups, peoples, nations and cultural areas, charting and analyzing changes in them over time and attempted to describe the past as "fact" (*wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*). As a result, the textual analysis of historical documents and logical empirical methodology became established as scholarly procedure, and the resultant discourse became historical fact. In other words, if the past is described by means of the rigorous procedures demanded by historiography, objectives and ideology can be written as being substantial.

For example, the nation-states of "France" and "Germany" had not yet come into being at the beginning of the nineteenth century. However, if we write the histories of "France" and "Germany", we have to presuppose that these nations existed in the past, at least in some archetype. And since we consider that "France" and "Germany" actually exist, we are

able to seek out their past. In other words, when we write their history, we write as if they had always existed. Whether or not this is done intentionally, it is what famous historians like Jules Michelet (1798–1874) and Leopold von Ranke did. It was indeed natural that the nation states that were being formed in the course of the nineteenth century would create chairs of history in universities and apply their best efforts to encouraging and supporting historical research. Meiji Japan too would follow this trend, with a chair of national history soon set up at its new Imperial University of Tokyo. In this sense, it is quite understandable that historians of the European Union should try to describe the history of Europe in a new way, including the histories of all the member states of the Union. If a convincing history of Europe is written, the Union will have a solid intellectual basis for its existence.

Studying and writing history using the framework of the "Islamic world" began with nineteenth-century European Orientalists. Similar efforts were made by the Islamists. As a result of their work, and in all likelihood through the writing of a history which juxtaposes the "Islamic world" and "Europe", it is not surprising that we should accept the "Islamic world" as history. What then lies ahead?

At the very least, those studying and writing about the "Islamic world" need to be fully aware, whether or not they are interpreting it positively or negatively, that they are cooperating in the movement to make this ideology a reality.

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