



Sexual politics, torture, and secular time

Judith Butler

If one wants to begin with most common of beginnings, namely, with the claim that one would like to be able to consider sexual politics during this time, a certain problem arises. Since, it seems clear that one cannot reference 'this time' without knowing which time, where that time takes hold, and for whom a certain consensus emerges on the issue of what time this is. So if it is not just a matter of differences of interpretation about what time it is, then it would seem that we have already more than one time at work in this time, and that the problem of time will afflict any effort I might make to try and consider some of these major issues now. It might seem odd to begin with a reflection on time when one is trying to speak about sexual politics and cultural politics more broadly. But my suggestion here is that the way in which debates within sexual politics are framed are already imbued with the problem of time, of progress in particular, and in certain notions of what it means to unfold a future of freedom in time. That there is no one time, that the question of what time this is, already divides us, has to do with which histories have turned out to be formative, how they intersect – or fail to intersect with other histories – and so with a question of the how temporality is organized along spatial lines. I'm not suggesting here that we return to a version of cultural difference that depends on cultural wholism. In fact, I oppose any such return. The problem is not that there are different cultures at war with one another, or that there are different modalities of time, each conceived as self-sufficient, that are articulated in different and differentiated cultural locations or that come into confused or brutal contact with one another. Of course, at some level, that could be a valid description, but it would miss an important point, namely, that hegemonic conceptions of progress define themselves over and against a pre-modern temporality that they produce for the purposes of their own self-legitimation. Politically, the questions, what time are we in? are all of us in the same time? and specifically, who has arrived in modernity and who has not? are all raised in the midst of very serious political contestations. The questions cannot be answered through recourse to a simple culturalism.

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Published by Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK and 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148, USA on behalf of the LSE. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-4446.2007.00176.x

It's my view that sexual politics, rather than operating to the side of this contestation, is in the middle of it, and that very often claims to new or radical sexual freedoms are appropriated precisely by that point of view – usually enunciated from within state power – that would try to define Europe and the sphere of modernity as the privileged site where sexual radicalism can and does take place. Often, but not always, the further claim is made that such a privileged site of radical freedom must be protected against the putative orthodoxies associated with new immigrant communities. Let's let that claim stand for the moment, since it carries with it a host of presuppositions that I'll be trying to understand later in this paper. But let's remember from the outset that this is a suspect formulation, one that is regularly made by a state discourse that seeks to produce distinct notions of sexual minorities and distinct communities of new immigrants within a temporal trajectory that makes Europe and its state apparatus into the avatar of both freedom and modernity.

In my view, the problem is not that there are different temporalities in different cultural locations (and that, accordingly, we simply need to broaden our cultural frameworks to become more internally complicated and capacious). That form of pluralism accepts the distinct and wholistic framing for each of these so-called 'communities' and then poses an artificial question about how they might overcome their tensions. Rather, the problem is that certain notions of relevant geopolitical space – including the spatial boundedness of minority communities – are circumscribed by this story of a progressive modernity; certain notions of what 'this time' can and must be are similarly construed on the basis of circumscribing the 'where' of its happening. I should make clear that I am not opposing all notions of 'moving forward' and am certainly not against all versions of 'progress' but only that I am profoundly influenced, if not dislocated, by Walter Benjamin's graphic means for rethinking progress and the time of the 'now', and that that is part of what I am bringing to bear on a consideration of sexual politics. I want to say: a consideration of sexual politics *now* and, of course, that is true, but perhaps my thesis is simply that there can be no consideration of sexual politics without a critical consideration of the time of the now. My claim will be that thinking through the problem of temporality and politics in this way may well open up a different approach to cultural difference, one that eludes the claims of pluralism and intersectionality alike.

The point is not just to become mindful of the temporal and spatial presuppositions of some of our progressive narratives, the ones that inform various parochial, if not structurally racist, political optimisms of various kinds. But rather to show that our understanding of what is happening 'now' is bound up with a certain geo-political restriction on imagining the relevant borders of the world and even a refusal to understand what happens to our notion of time if we take the problem of the border (what crosses the border, and what does not, and the means and mechanisms of that crossing or impasse) to be central

to any understanding of contemporary political life. The contemporary map of sexual politics is crossed, I would say, with contentions and antagonisms, ones that define the time of sexual politics as a fractious constellation; the story of progress is but one strand within that constellation, and it is one that has, for good reason, come into crisis.¹

My interest is to focus on how certain secular conceptions of history and of what is meant by a 'progressive' position within contemporary politics rely on a conception of freedom that is understood to emerge through time, and which is temporally progressive in its structure (Asad 2003; Connolly 2002; Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2004; Mahmood 2005). This link between freedom and temporal progress is often what is being indexed when pundits and public policy representatives refer to concepts like modernity or, indeed, secularism. I don't mean to say that this is all they mean, but I do want to say that a certain conception of freedom is invoked precisely as a rationale and instrument for certain practices of coercion, and this places those of us who have conventionally understood ourselves as advocating a progressive sexual politics in a rather serious bind.

In this context, I want to point to a few sites of political debate involving both sexual politics and anti-Islamic practice that suggest that certain ideas of the progress of 'freedom' facilitate a political division between progressive sexual politics and the struggle against racism and the discrimination against religious minorities. One of the issues that follows from such a reconstellation is that a certain version and deployment of 'freedom' can be used as an instrument of bigotry and coercion. This happens most frightfully when women's sexual freedom or the freedom of expression and association for lesbian and gay people is invoked instrumentally to wage cultural assaults on Islam that reaffirm US sovereign violence. Must we rethink freedom and its implication in the narrative of progress, or must we resituate? My point is surely not to abandon freedom as a norm, but to ask about its uses, and to consider how it must be rethought if it is to resist its coercive instrumentalization in the present and have another meaning that might remain useful for a radical democratic politics.

In the Netherlands, for instance, new applicants for immigration are asked to look at photos of two men kissing, and asked to report whether those photos are offensive, whether they are understood to express personal liberties, and whether the viewers are willing to live in a democracy that values the rights of gay people to open and free expression.²

Those who are in favour of the new policy claim that acceptance of homosexuality is the same as embracing modernity. We can see in such an instance how modernity is being defined as sexual freedom, and the particular sexual freedom of gay people is understood to exemplify a culturally advanced position as opposed to one that would be deemed pre-modern. It would seem that the Dutch government has made special arrangements for a class of people who are considered presumptively modern. The presumptively modern

includes the following groups who are exempted from having to take the test: European Union nationals, asylum-seekers and skilled workers who earn more than €45,000 per year. Also exempt are citizens of the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Japan and Switzerland, where presumably homophobia is not to be found or where, rather, importing impressive income levels clearly preempts concerns over importing homophobia.³

In the Netherlands, of course, this movement has been brewing for some time. The identification of gay politics with cultural and political modernity was effected within European politics by Pim Fortuyn, the gay and overtly anti-Islamic politician who was gunned down by a radical environmentalist in the winter of 2002. A similar conflict was also dramatized in the work and the death of Theo van Gogh, who came to stand not for sexual freedom, but for principles of political and artistic freedom. Of course, I am in favour of such freedoms, but it seems that I must also ask whether such freedoms for which I have struggled, and continue to struggle, are being instrumentalized to establish a specific cultural grounding, secular in a particular sense, that functions as a prerequisite for admission into the polity as an acceptable immigrant. In what follows, I will hope to elaborate further what this cultural grounding is, how it functions as both transcendental condition and teleological aim, and how it complicates any firm distinctions we might have between the secular and the religious. In this instance, a set of cultural norms are being articulated that are considered preconditions of citizenship. We might accept the view that there are always such norms, and even accept that full civic and cultural participation for anyone, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, be included among such norms. But are such norms not only articulated differentially, but also instrumentally, in order to shore up particular religious and cultural preconditions that affect other sorts of exclusions? One is not free to reject this cultural grounding since it is the basis, even the presumptive prerequisite, of the operative notion of freedom, and freedom is articulated through a set of graphic images, figures that come to stand for what freedom can and must be. And so a certain paradox ensues in which the coerced adoption of certain cultural norms becomes a requisite for entry into a polity that defines itself as the avatar of freedom. Is the Dutch government engaging in civic pedagogy through its defense of lesbian and gay sexual freedom, and would it impose such a test on the right-wing white supremacists, such as *Vlaams Blok*, who are congregated on its border with Belgium and who have called for a *cordon sanitaire* around Europe to keep out the non-Europeans? Is it administering tests to lesbian and gay people to make sure they are not offended by the visible practices of Muslim minorities? If the civic integration exam were part of a larger effort to foster cultural understanding about religious and sexual norms for a diverse Dutch population, one that included new pedagogies and funding for public arts projects dedicated to this purpose, we might then understand cultural 'integration' in a different sense, but certainly

not if it is administered coercively. In this case, though, the question raised is: does the exam become the means for testing tolerance or does it carry out an assault against religious minorities, part of a broader effort on the part of the state to demand coercively that they rid themselves of their traditional religious beliefs and practices in order to gain entry into the Netherlands? Is this a liberal defense of my freedom for which I should be pleased, or is my 'freedom' freedom, or is my freedom being used as an instrument of coercion, one that seeks to keep Europe white, pure, and 'secular' in ways that do not interrogate the violence that underwrites that very project? Certainly, I want to be able to kiss in public – don't get me wrong. But do I want to require that everyone watch and approve before they acquire rights of citizenship? I think not.

If the prerequisites of the polity require either cultural homogeneity or a model of cultural pluralism, then either way, the solution is figured as assimilation to a set of cultural norms that are understood as internally self-sufficient and self-standing. These norms are not in conflict, open to dispute, in contact with other norms, contested or disrupted in a field in which a number of norms converge – or fail to converge – in an ongoing way. The presumption is that culture is a uniform and binding groundwork of norms, and not an open field of contestation, temporally dynamic; this groundwork only functions if it is uniform or integrated, and that desideratum is required, even forcibly, for something called modernity to emerge and take hold. Of course, we can already see that this very specific sense of modernity entails an immunization against contestation, that it is maintained through a dogmatic grounding, and that already we are introduced to a kind of dogmatism that belongs to a particular secular formation. Within this framework the freedom of personal expression, broadly construed, relies upon the suppression of a mobile and contestatory understanding of cultural difference, and that the issue makes clear how state violence invests in cultural homogeneity as it applies its exclusionary policies to rationalize state policies towards Islamic immigrants.

I do not traffic in theories of modernity because the concept strikes me as too large, they are, in my view, for the most part too general and sketchy to be useful, and people from different disciplines mean very different things by them; I merely note the way they function in these arguments, and restrict my comments to those kinds of uses. It makes sense to trace the discursive uses of modernity – which is something other than supplying a theory. In this regard, it seems to function neither as a signifier of cultural multiplicity nor of normative schemes that are dynamically or critically in flux, and certainly not as a model of cultural contact, translation, convergence or divergence.

To the extent that both artistic expression and sexual freedom are understood as ultimate signs of this developmental version of modernity, and are conceived as rights that are supported by a particular formation of secularism, we are asked to disarticulate struggles for sexual freedom from struggles

against racism and anti-Islamic sentiment. There is presumably no solidarity among such efforts within a framework such as the one I have just outlined, though we could, of course, point to existing coalitions that defy this logic. Indeed, according to this view, the struggles for sexual expression depend upon the restriction and foreclosure of rights of religious expression (if we are to stay within the liberal framework), and so we can see something of an antinomy within the discourse of liberal rights itself. But it seems to me that something more fundamental is occurring, namely, that liberal freedoms are understood to rely upon a hegemonic culture, one that is called 'modernity' and relies on a certain progressive account of increasing freedoms. This uncritical domain of 'culture' that functions as a precondition for liberal freedom in turn becomes the cultural basis for sanctioning forms of cultural and religious hatred and abjection. My point is not to trade sexual freedoms for religious ones, but, rather, to question the framework that assumes that there can be no political analysis that tries to analyse homophobia and racism in ways that move beyond this antinomy of liberalism. At stake is whether or not there can be a convergence or alliance between such struggles or whether the struggle against homophobia must contradict the struggle against cultural and religious racisms. If that framework of mutual exclusion holds – one that is derived, I would suggest, from a restrictive idea of personal liberty that is bound up with a restrictive conception of progress – then it would appear that there are no points of cultural contact between sexual progressives and religious minorities that are not encounters of violence and exclusion. But if, in the place of a liberal conception of personal freedom, we focus on the critique of state violence and the elaboration of its coercive mechanisms, we may well arrive at an alternative political framework, one that implies not only another sense of modernity, but also of the time, the 'now', in which we live.

It was Thomas Friedman who claimed in *The New York Times* that Islam has not yet achieved modernity, suggesting that Islam is somehow in a childish state of cultural development and that the norm of adulthood is represented more adequately by critics such as himself.⁴ In this sense, then, Islam is conceived as not of *this* time or *our* time, but as *another* time, one that only anachronistically emerged in this time. But is not such a view precisely the refusal to think of this time not as one time, as one story, developing unilinearly, but rather as a convergence of histories that have not always been thought together, and whose convergence or lack thereof presents a set of quandaries that might be said to be definitive of our time?

A similar dynamic is to be found in France where questions of sexual politics converge in some unhappy ways with anti-immigration politics. Of course, there are profound differences as well. In contemporary France, the culture that is publicly defended against new immigrant communities draws only selectively on normative ideals that structure debates on sexual politics. For instance, dominant French opinion draws upon rights of contract that have

been extended through new sexual politics at the same time that it limits those very rights of contract when they threaten to disrupt patrilineal kinship and its links to masculinist norms of nationhood. Ideas of 'culture' and of '*laïcité*' (or secularism) work differently, and one sees how a certain kind of ostensibly progressive sexual politics is sanctioned, again, as the logical culmination of a secular realization of freedom at the same time that the very same conception of secular freedoms operates as a norm to exclude or to minimize the possibility of ethnic and religious communities from North Africa, Turkey, and the Middle East from attaining full rights of civic and legal membership and participation. Indeed, the situation is even more complex, since the idea of culture, bound up with a conception of symbolic law, is regarded as founding the freedom to enter into free associations, but is also invoked to limit the freedom of lesbian and gay people from adopting children or gaining access to reproductive technology, thus avowing the rights of contract, but refusing challenges to the norms of kinship. The arguments that secured the legislative victory for the PACS, those legal partnerships into which any two people, regardless of gender, may enter, are based on an extension of those rights to form contracts on the basis of one's own volition (Borillo, Fassin and Iacub 2004). And yet, once the cultural preconditions of that freedom are abrogated, the law intervenes to maintain – or even mandate – that cultural integrity.

One can rather quickly conclude, on the basis of a variety of opinions published in French journals and newspapers, that there is a widely held belief that, for instance, gay and lesbian parenting runs the risk of producing a psychotic child. The extraordinary support among French republicans for the PACS has depended from the start on the separation of the PACS from any rights to adoption or to parenting structures outside the heterosexual norm. In the newspapers and throughout public discourse, social psychologists argue that lesbian or gay parenting – and this would include single-mother parenting as well – threatens to undermine the very framework that a child requires in order (a) to know and understand sexual difference and (b) to gain an orientation in the cultural world. The presumption is that if a child has no father, that child will not come to understand masculinity in the culture, and, if it is a boy child, that child will have no way to embody or incorporate his own masculinity. This argument assumes many things, but chief among them is the idea that the institution of fatherhood is the sole or major cultural instrument for the reproduction of masculinity. Even if we were to accept the problematic normative claim that a boy child ought to be reproducing masculinity (and there are very good reasons to question this assumption), any child has access to a range of masculinities that are embodied and transmitted through a variety of cultural means. The 'adult world', as Jean Laplanche puts it in an effort to formulate a psychoanalytic alternative to the Oedipal triad, impresses its cultural markers on the child from any number of directions, and the child, whether boy or girl, must fathom and reckon with those norms. But in France,

as you may know, the notion of a 'framework of orientation' – called '*le repère*' – is understood to be uniquely transmitted by the father. And this symbolic function is ostensibly threatened or even destroyed by the presence of two fathers, of an intermittent father, or of no father at all. One has to struggle not to get lured into this fight on these terms, since the fight misconstrues the issue at stake. But if one *were* to get lured into the fight, one could, of course, make the rejoinder that masculinity can certainly be embodied and communicated by a parent of another gender. However, if I argue that way, I concede the premise that the parent is and must be the unique cultural site for the communication and reproduction of gender, and that would be a foolish point to concede. After all, why accept the idea that without a single embodied referent for masculinity, there can be no cultural orientation as such? Such a position makes the singular masculinity of the father into the transcendental condition of culture rather than rethinks masculinity and fatherhood as a set of disarticulated, variable and variably significant cultural practices. To understand this debate, it is important to remember that lines of patrilineality in France are secured in the civil code through rights of filiation. To the extent that heterosexual marriage maintains its monopoly on reproduction, it does so precisely through privileging the biological father as the representative of national culture.⁵

Thus, the debates on sexual politics invariably become bound up with the politics of new immigrant communities, since both rely on foundational ideas of culture that precondition the allocation of basic legal entitlements. If we understand these ideas of culture as secular, then it seems to me that we may well not have a sufficient vocabulary for understanding the traditions from which these ideas of culture are formed – and by which they continue to be informed – or for the force by which they are maintained. It here becomes clear that the theories of psychological development that produce the patrilineal conditions of national culture constitute the 'norms of adulthood' that precondition the substantive rights of citizenship. Thus, Ségolène Royal, the 2006 Socialist party presidential nominee of France, can join Nicolas Sarkozy, the successful candidate, in arguing that *les émeutes*, the 2005 riots, in the *banlieue* were the direct consequence of a deterioration in family structures, represented by new immigrant communities.⁶ The theme of a certain childishness re-emerges in this context as well, such that we are to understand the political expressions of Islamic minorities as failures of psycho-cultural development. These kinds of arguments parallel the parent/child relation that Thomas Friedman articulated in relation to secular modernity, where the 'parent' figured as a fully developed adult. Anachronistic Islam is figured here as the child who suffers permanently from thwarted development. Family politics, even the heterosexual ordering of the family, function to secure the temporal sequence that establishes French culture at the forefront of modernity. This version of modernity involves an odd situation in which an

intractable developmental law sets limits on volitional freedom, but the contract form extends freedom almost limitlessly. In other words, contracts can be extended to any pair of consenting adults – the legal achievement of the PACS that has become relatively normalized for both straight and lesbian/gay couples. But such partnerships have to be rigorously separated from kinship that, by definition, precedes and limits the contract form. These norms of kinship are referenced by the term, *l'ordre symbolique*, which actually functions in public discourse, and it is this order that has to be protected, underwriting contract relations as it must be immunized against a full saturation by contract relations. Whether or not such an order is unambiguously secular is, in my view, another question, an open question, but there are many reasons to question whether it transmits and maintains certain theological notions, predominantly Catholic. This becomes explicitly clear, for instance, in its defense by the work of anthropologist Françoise Heritier who argues, on Catholic grounds, that the symbolic order is both theologically derived and a prerequisite of psycho-social development.

The refusal to grant legal recognition for gay parenting works in tandem with anti-Islamic state policies to support a cultural order, *l'ordre symbolique*, that keeps heterosexual normativity tied to a racist conception of culture. This order, conceived as pervasively paternal and nationalist, is equally, if differently, threatened by those kinship arrangements understood to be operative in new immigrant communities that fail to uphold the patriarchal and marital basis of the family, which in turn produces the intelligible parameters of culture and the possibility of a 'knowing orientation' within that culture. Of course, what is most peculiar about this critique of the absent father in the *banlieue* is not only that it can be found among socialists and their right wing foes, but that it fails to recognize that contemporary immigration law is itself partially responsible for reforging kinship ties in certain ways. After all, the French government has been willing to separate children from parents, to keep families from reunifying, and to maintain inadequate social services for new immigrant communities. Indeed, some critics have gone so far as to argue that social services constitute the emasculation of the state itself.

One can see one such view articulated, for instance, by Michel Schneider, a psychoanalyst who registers his views on cultural affairs, and who has publicly maintained that the state must step in to take the place of the absent father, not through welfare benefits (itself conceived as a maternal deformation of the state), but through the imposition of law, discipline, and uncompromising modes of punishment and imprisonment (Schneider 2005). In his view, this is the only way to secure the cultural foundations of citizenship, that is, the cultural foundations that are required for the exercise of a certain conception of freedom. Thus, the state policies that create extreme class differentials, pervasive racism in employment practices, efforts to separate families in order to

save children from Islamic formations, and efforts to sequester the *banlieue* as intensified sites of racialized poverty, are exonerated and effaced through such explanations. Anti-racist demonstrations such as those that happened in 2005 took aim at property, and not persons, and yet they were widely interpreted as the violent and arelational acts of young men whose family structures were lacking firm paternal authority.⁷ A certain prohibitive 'no' was absent from the family and the culture, and the state thus acts as a compensatory paternal authority in such a situation. That the state then develops a host of rationales for regulating family and school in the *banlieue* is further proof that the state responds to such insurgency through consolidating and augmenting its power in relation to biopolitics and kinship arrangements at every level. Thus, we might conclude that at a basic level, the entitlement to a notion of freedom that is based on contract is limited by those freedoms that might extend the contract too far, that is, to the point of disrupting the cultural preconditions of contract itself. In other words, disruptions in family formation or in kinship arrangements that do not support the lines of patrilineality and the corollary norms of citizenship rationalize state prohibitions and regulations that augment state power in the image of the father, that missing adult, that cultural fetish which signifies a maturity that is based upon violence.

The rules that define culture as supported by the heterosexual family clearly are also those that set the prerequisites for entering into citizenship. Although in France this is the basis of *laïcité*, and the grounds for state intervention to maintain a certain cultural grounding for the rights of men, it is not far from the clearly theological view of the current Pope who voices his condemnation of gay parenting and Islamic religious practice on common grounds. This parallelism raises the question of the status of this idea of culture as part of secular modernity and, in particular, whether the symbolic order is finally a secular concept (and if so, what this tells us about the impurity of secularism). In particular, it raises the question of whether this symbolic order, understood as a binding and uniform set of rules that constitute culture, functions in alliance with theological norms governing kinship. This view, interestingly enough, is not far from the Pope's view that the heterosexual family is what secures gender in its natural place, a natural place that inscribes a divine order.⁸ Whereas in France, the notion of 'culture' is precisely what communicates the universal necessity of sexual difference, understood as the unequivocal difference between masculine and feminine, in present-day Catholic theology, we find that the family not only requires two discrete sexes, but is obligated to embody and reproduce sexual difference as both a cultural and theological necessity.

In his 2004 'Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church in the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and the World',⁹ Ratzinger considers two approaches to women's issues. The first, he maintains, sustains an oppositional relationship to men. The second seems to pertain to the new gender

politics that takes gender to be a variable social function. Ratzinger characterizes this second strand of feminism with the following language:

In order to avoid the domination of one sex or the other, their differences tend to be denied, viewed as mere effects of historical and cultural conditioning. In this perspective, physical difference, termed sex, is minimized, while the purely cultural element, termed gender, is emphasized to the maximum and held to be primary. The obscuring of the difference or duality of the sexes has enormous consequences on a variety of levels. This theory of the human person, intended to promote prospects for equality of women through liberation from biological determinism, has in reality inspired ideologies which, for example, call into question the family, in its natural two-parent structure of mother and father, and make homosexuality and heterosexuality virtually equivalent, in a new model of polymorphous sexuality.¹⁰

He goes further to suggest that this second approach to women's issues is rooted in a motivation understood as 'the human attempt to be freed from one's biological conditioning. According to this perspective, human nature in itself does not possess characteristics in an absolute manner: all persons can and ought to constitute themselves as they like, since they are free from every predetermination linked to their essential constitution'.¹¹

In France, the view that culture itself is carried by the heterosexual family, patrilineally defined, is communicated clearly through the notion that a child without heterosexual parentage will not only be without cognitive orientation, but will be precluded from the cultural and cognitive prerequisites of citizenship. This explains in part why France was able to extend rights of contract through the passage of the PACS, but to oppose every effort to legalize gay parenting. It is, as I argue elsewhere, linked to the conviction that new immigrant communities lack a strong paternal figure, and that full rights of citizenship require subjection to an embodiment of paternal law. For some French politicians, this analysis leads to the conclusion that the state must enter into the regulation of the family where it is perceived that strong fathers do not exist. This has actually led to the forced separation of parents and children through new immigration policy, i.e. one that works in favour of the father and so, the symbolic family, even if it means destroying existing ones.

If the Pope refers to the natural laws of culture when he opposes gay and lesbian sexuality and non-heterosexual parenting arrangements, he refers to civilization when he makes his indirect denunciations of Islam. In late 2006, of course, we had new proclamations from the papal authority. The Pope publicly cited a document that contained the following denunciation of Islam: 'Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.'¹² Ratzinger claimed that this statement was not his, that he was only citing it, but if one looks closely, it becomes clear that he cites it, distances

himself from it, and then mobilizes it to issue a warning about the current threat to civilization that Islam represents. Of course, there are many ways to approach this rather astonishing declaration, most obviously by pointing to the bloodshed by which Christianity sought to spread its own faith over the last many centuries. But I'd like briefly to point to the word 'inhuman' since it is coupled with 'evil' and we have already considered what the Pope thinks about the cultural foundations of the human as such.

Additionally, as the sword is prohibited as a means of coercing faith in the Qur'an, it surely becomes a term of transference in this scenario, since to whom did the sword belong when it operated in the service of forced conversion if not to Christianity? Precisely because swords are not the weapons of choice in a contemporary sense, they evince a mythical time, a tribalist archaism, and also become precisely the nexus of fantasy. I could go on at length, but I want here only to point out the extraordinary inversion of history that the word 'sword' permits, and the enormous ideological force of distinguishing between the human, as that which is presumably only supported by a Judeo-Christian culture, and the 'inhuman' and 'evil' that follows from a departure from that culture. Let's remember, as Uri Avnery points out, that Islam was never forced upon the Jews, that when Spain was conquered by Catholics and the Muslims were dispossessed of power, the Inquisition was turned against both Muslims and Jews, and Sephardic Jews found hospitality in Arab countries for fifty generations.¹³

When the Pope refers to this 'sword' wielded by those who are less than human, we have to wonder what inversion, displacement, and effacement of history is congealed in this strange proposition, a kind of dream-speak at best, that manifests its profound alliance with what it proclaims to disdain and disavow. Indeed, the entire sequence of proclamations enacted this disavowal and displacement in plain view. It is as if he were saying: I said it, I did not say it; I cited it; others said it, and so it has authority; this is their aggression, this is my aggression circuited through their aggression, though I have no aggression. The figure through which I name the aggression of Islam is a figure of Christianity's own aggression, at which point the figures converge, and the ability to sustain the distinction between Islam and Christianity founders.

Of course, it is that distinction that the Pope seeks to underscore, to make certain, to establish without a shadow of a doubt. But his language upends his argument, starting with the strange way he appropriates and disavows the citation. The paradox has a social and even psychoanalytic valence, but it seems also to proceed from a certain idea of development and civilizational progress (noting here that one has to distinguish between culture and civilization for all kinds of reasons, but that the latter, despite its origin in the replacement of ecclesiastical authorities by civic courts of law, functions discursively at the present moment to effect a syncretism of religious and secular ideals).

Now it may be in relation to the above sorts of arguments that we try to make a case for a purely secular resistance. But I am less sure that our ideas of secularism do not already carry religious content, and that we are, with any of these positions, invoking an unalloyed secularism (it may be that secularism can only be defined by its implication in the very religious traditions from which it seeks to distinguish itself, but that is a broader question that I can only gesture toward in this context). Provisionally, I would suggest that secularism has a variety of forms, and many of them involve forms of absolutism and dogmatism that are surely as problematic as those that rely on religious dogma. In fact, a critical perspective does not line up perfectly with the distinction between religious and secular thinking.

Let us remember that it is the idea of culture in the French instance, a notion of culture that understands itself as 'secular', which clearly works in tandem with the papal argument. And though the Pope argues on religious grounds, there are clearly religious opponents to the Pope's views, a situation that suggests that we ought not to understand secularism as the sole source of critique, and religion as the sole source of dogmatism. If religion functions as a key matrix for the articulation of values, and if most of the people in this global condition look to religion to guide their thinking on such matters, we would make a political error in claiming that religion ought to be overcome in each and every instance. Consider that religion is not simply a set of beliefs or a set of dogmatic views, but a matrix for subject formation whose final form is not determined in advance; a discursive matrix for the articulation and disputation of values, and a field of contestation. Similarly, it won't do to embrace secularism as if it were a monolith, since the diversity of secularisms often gain their definition by the nature of the break they make with specific religious inheritances. However, sometimes secularism achieves its definition through the disavowal of a religious tradition that inchoately and continuously informs and supports its own ostensibly post-religious claims. I think the non-contradictory status of the secular Jew, for instance, makes this point explicitly. We can also see this at work, for instance, in the differential treatment of religious minorities within an ostensibly secular framework, since *laïcité* in France is defined precisely over and against the intrusion of Church authorities into matters of state. The debate on whether girls should be prohibited from wearing the veil in public schools seemed to bring this paradox into relief. The ideas of the secular were invoked to consolidate ignorant and hateful views of Islamic religious practice (i.e. the veil is nothing other than the communication of the idea that women are inferior to men, or the veil communicates an alliance with 'fundamentalism'), at which point *laïcité* becomes a way not of negotiating or permitting cultural difference, but a way of consolidating a set of cultural presumptions that effect the exclusion and abjection of cultural difference.

If I opened this essay by wondering about the implications of secular progress as a temporal framework for thinking about the sexual politics during

this time, I'd like to suggest now that what is at issue is less any and all ways of looking forward (I hold out for those – I look forward to those!), but an idea of development in which secularism does not so much succeed religion sequentially, but reanimates religion as part of its ideas of culture and civilization. On the one hand, the kind of secularism we are witnessing in France denounces and surpasses the very religious content that it also reanimates in the very terms by which culture is defined. In the case of papal authority, we see a different recourse to a framework, presumptively timeless and binding, that is at once cultural and theological, suggesting an invariable implication of one sphere in the other. These are not quite the same as the idea of Dutch civic integration, but perhaps there are parallelisms, even phantom resonances, that are worth exploring further. The problem is, of course, not progress per se, nor surely the future, but specific developmental narratives in which certain exclusionary and ever persecutory norms become at once the precondition and teleology of culture. Thus, framed both as transcendental condition and as teleology, culture in such instances can only produce a monstrous spectre of what lies outside its own framework of temporal thinkability. Outside of its own teleology exists a ruinous and foreboding sense of the future, and what lies before its transcendental condition lurks an aberrant anachronism, threatening, and intruding upon, the political present that becomes the grounds for general alarm within the secular frame.

I write this as one who is trying to come to a critical understanding and a political opposition to the discourse on Islam that is currently propagated by the USA. That leads us to yet another discourse, that of the civilizing mission, and there is not much time to try to delineate its logic here or to trace its resonance with these other developmental patterns I have been trying to discern today. It is probably worth noting in brief, however, that the USA takes its own civilizing mission to be a cross of secular and non-secular perspectives. After all, Bush tells us he is guided by God, and for whatever reason, this is the discourse that he mobilizes at times to rationalize his extra-legal, if not criminal, actions. It would appear that both the secular frame and the civilizational mission, itself only ambiguously secular, are figured as the advanced position that entitles itself to bring notions of democracy to those who are characterized as pre-modern, who have not yet entered into the secular terms of the liberal state, and whose notions of religion are invariably considered childish, fanatic or structured according to ostensibly irrational and primitive taboos. The civilizational mission, as it has been described by Samuel Huntington, is itself a self-avowed mix of religious and secular ideals. The notion that the USA, representing what he calls, somewhat wildly, 'the West', is considered to have undergone modernization, to have arrived at secular principles that transcend and accommodate religious position, that are more advanced and finally more rational and, hence, more capable of democratic deliberation and self-governance.¹⁴ And yet the ideals of democracy that Huntington espouses

are also those that express the values of a Judaeo-Christian tradition, a view that suggests that all other religious traditions are outside the trajectory of modernization that constitutes civilization and its 'missionary' claim to the future.

If the Islamic populations destroyed in the recent and current war are considered less than human or 'outside' the cultural conditions for the emergence of the human, then they belong either to a time of cultural infancy or to a time that is outside time as we know it. In both cases, they are regarded as not yet having arrived at the idea of the rational human. It follows from such a viewpoint that the destruction of such populations, their infrastructures, their housing and their religious and community institutions, constitutes the destruction of what threatens the human, but not the human itself. It is also precisely this particular conceit of a progressive history that positions the 'West' as articulating the paradigmatic principles of the human – humans worth valuing, whose lives are worth safeguarding, protecting, whose lives are precarious, and worth public grieving as well.

Finally, then, let me offer a final discussion on torture and take us back to the question of temporality and the rethinking of cultural difference. Let me suggest first that the USA made use of bad anthropology when it devised its protocols of torture. The Department of Defense assigned a text from the 1970s called 'The Arab Mind', which assumed that there was such a mind, that it could be characterized in general ways with respect to the religious beliefs, and specific sexual vulnerabilities of people from Arab descent (Patai 2002). The text subscribed to that form of cultural anthropology that treated cultures as self-sufficient and distinctive, which refused the global mixing of cultural and social formations, and which considered itself beyond moral judgment and more generally in the service of cultural tolerance. I want to suggest that the massive reduction of Arab life to 'the Arab mind' produced a ready object for the US military and for the protocols of torture enacted under the direction of General Geoffrey Miller. Since of course there is no 'Arab mind', and it is not possible to attribute the same fears and anxieties across the Arab world in its geographical complexity and its cosmopolitan formulations, the text constructed an object that it could then manipulate. Strategies for extracting information from this mind were devised, and they were applied in the various scenes of torture that have become visually available to us as well as those that remain unrepresented in any media form.

Those who devised these schemes of torture sought to understand the specific vulnerabilities of a population formed within Islam; and developed their plans as a kind of sexual targeting that was at once a form of religious bigotry or hatred. But what we have to remember is that the subject of Islam was also constructed through the torture, and the anthropological text, as well as the protocols, were part of the production of that subject within the discourse of the military. I want to be careful here, so let me repeat this

formulation: the torture was not merely an effort to find ways to shame and humiliate the prisoners of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo on the basis of their presumptive cultural formation. The torture was also a way to coercively produce the Arab subject and the Arab mind. That means that regardless of the complex cultural formations of the prisoners, they were compelled to embody the cultural reduction described by this anthropological text. Let's remember that the text does not have an epistemically privileged relation to its subject. It is part of the project to compel the production of that subject, and we will have to ask why.

This perspective has not been considered in most of the debates that have predominated on this issue within the mainstream media. There have been, broadly speaking, two ways to approach this issue within a liberal framework. The first is an argument on the basis of cultural rights and cultural violations. It argues that these orchestrated scenes of sexual and physical humiliation exploit the specific sexual vulnerabilities of these populations. The second position is that one requires a normative condemnation of this torture that makes no reference to culture, since clearly these actions would be wrong and punishable no matter against whom they were perpetrated or who was perpetrating them. The first view, which emphasizes cultural rights, is espoused by the US journalist Seymour Hersh (2004a, b), and the argument maintains that specifically cultural violations occurred in the course of these tortures, ones that have to do with modesty, taboos on homosexuality, and conditions of public exposure and shame. The torture also broke down social codes of sexual difference, forcing men to wear women's lingerie, and debasing women through forced nudity.

I want to suggest that both of these frameworks for understanding the torture are necessary, but finally insufficient. Yes, there were clearly specific cultural violations at work and these acts of torture were clearly wrong according to any normative framework worth its name, but we have to include both of these views within a larger framework if we are to understand how the scenes of sexual debasement and physical torture are part of the civilizing mission and, in particular, its efforts to seize absolute control over the construction of the subject of torture. If we ask what is at stake in producing the Arab subject as a distinctive locus of sexual and social vulnerability, we have to find out what subject position is being staked not only by the US military, but by the war effort more generally. If we want to speak about 'specific cultures', then it would make sense to begin with *the specific culture of the US army*, its emphatic masculinism and homophobia, and ask why it must, for its own purposes, cast the predominantly Islamic population against which it wages war as the site of primitive taboo and shame. I want to suggest that a civilizational war is at work in this context that casts the army as the more sexually progressive culture. The army considers itself more sexually 'advanced' because they read pornography or impose it upon their prisoners, because they

overcome all inhibition in exploiting and breaking down the inhibitions of those they torture.

The ostensible 'superiority' of the army consists in its capacity to wage war not against military subjects, and not only against the putative sexual and moral codes of Islam, but in their ability to coercively construct the Arab subject through the enacted protocols of torture. The point is not simply to break down the codes, but to construct a subject that would break down when coercively forced to break such codes – and I suppose we have to ask – which subject would *not* break down under those conditions? It may be that the torturer postures as one whose impermeability is won at the expense of the radical permeability of the tortured, but that posturing cannot deny a fundamental permeability that traverses all corporeal life. More specifically, for the army to break down those codes is itself an act of domination, but it is also a way of exercising and exemplifying a freedom that is at once lawless and coercive, one that has come to represent and enact the civilizing mission. After all, there can be no civilization with Islam on the 'inside' according to the avatars of Huntington and theorists of the so-called 'Arab mind.' And yet, if we look closely at what is being represented as the civilizing mission, it consists of unbridled homophobic and misogynist practices. Thus, we have to understand the torture as the actions of a homophobic institution against a population that is both constructed and targeted for its own shame about homosexuality; the actions of a misogynist institution against a population in which women are cast in roles bound by codes of honour and shame, and so not 'equal' in the way that women ostensibly are in the West. In this way, we can see the photographs that the US army distributed of women without the veil as a sign of the US 'triumph' in Afghanistan as prefiguring the digital capture and coerced stripping and violation that US soldiers perpetrated in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo.

In addition, we can see here the association of a certain cultural presumption of progress with a license to engage in unbridled destruction. More specifically, at work in this mode of implicit rationalization is a crude deployment and exploitation of the norm of 'freedom' as it operates in contemporary sexual politics, one in which 'freedom' becomes not only the means of coercion, but what some might call 'the jouissance of torture.' If we ask what kind of freedom this is, it is one that is free of the law at the same time that it is coercive; it is an extension of the logic that establishes state power – and its mechanisms of violence – as beyond the law. This is not a freedom that belongs to a rights discourse, unless we understand the right to be free of all legal accountability as the right in question.

There are at least two countervailing trends at work in the scenes of torture. On the one hand, the Iraqi prisoner population is considered precisely as pre-modern to the extent that it is understood to embody certain prohibitions and inhibitions in relation to homosexuality, exposure,

masturbation, and nudity. The army not only makes use of bad cultural essentialism to make this point, but the torture becomes the way of testing and ratifying the thesis of bad cultural essentialism. In fact, I would go further: the torture can be understood in this regard as a technique of modernization. Unlike those disciplinary regimes of subject formation that would seek to transform the tortured into exemplary modern subjects, torture of this kind seeks to expose the status of the tortured as the permanent, abased, and aberrant outside to subject-formation as such. If these are subjects of some kind, they are outside the civilizational trajectory that secures the human, which gives the defenders of civilization the 'right' to exclude them more violently. Because these are coercive techniques of modernization, however, the question of a barbarity specific to secular modernism is also at stake. And in this regard, we can see that the civilizational mission effected by the military in its acts of torture complicates the progressive narrative that would rationalize the war against Islam. We also see in abbreviated form the 'deployment' of a position of sexual freedom to coerce capitulation to sexual humiliation, at which point the 'coercive' dimension of this historical version of the modern secularization project makes itself graphically available. It should be clear that I see the acts of torture neither as aberrant individual acts nor as fully conscious and strategic goals of the US military. Rather, I understand the coercive nature of these acts of humiliation and torture as making explicit *a coercion that is already at work in the civilizational mission* and, most particularly, in the forced instatement of a cultural order that figures Islam as abject, backward, foreboding ruination and, as a consequence, requiring subordination within and exclusion from the culture of the human itself. This logic is not far from the disavowal and displacement that marked the Pope's rhetoric on Islam. If Islam is figured as definitionally violent, yet encumbered by inhibiting rules, to the extent it is violent, it requires new disciplinary rules; to the extent that it is rule-bound, it requires an emancipation that only modernity can bring.

I am not claiming that denying someone rights of immigration is the same as subjecting that person to sexual torture. But I am suggesting that the rigorous exclusion of norms of Islamic community pose a threat to culture, even to prevailing norms of humanization. And when some group of people comes to represent a threat to the cultural conditions of humanization and of citizenship, then the rationale for their torture and their death is secured.

In the case of sexual torture, a noxious deployment of the notion of sexual freedom is at work: 'we embody that freedom, you do not; therefore, we are free to coerce you, and so to exercise our freedom, and you, you will manifest your unfreedom to us, and that spectacle will serve as the visual justification for our onslaught against you.' Of course, this is different from the unveiling of the Afghani women that took place on the front page of *The New York Times*, but is there a common presupposition at work? Have feminism and the struggle

for sexual freedom become, horrifyingly, within these contexts a 'sign' of the civilizational mission in progress? Can we even begin to understand the scenes of torture if we cannot account for the homophobia *in the military* as it acts on populations who are formed religiously through a taboo on homosexuality? What kind of encounter is this, then, at the scene of torture, in which a violent homophobia and misogyny exploit the presumptive homophobia and misogyny of its victims? If we focus on the latter, even within a framework of tolerance or cultural rights or specific cultural violations, we lose sight of the precise exploitation at work in the scene of torture. The homophobia and misogyny seem more central to the scene of torture than any homophobia and misogyny that one may have attributed to the tortured population, or indeed, that one might understand as the specific liability or backwardness of Islam itself. Whatever the relation is between Islam and the status of women, let's begin with the proposition that it is complex, historically changing, and not available to a quick reduction (I want to suggest that Suad Joseph's edited collection on *Women in Islamic Cultures*, four volumes of which have already been published by Brill, might be a good place to start for an English speaking audience).

What is at issue in the scene of torture is the nexus of violence and sexuality that belongs to the civilizational thesis as it has been formulated in the context of this war. After all, the USA is bringing civilization to the ostensibly 'backward' or pre-modern Islamic Other. And what it brings, most clearly, is torture as the instrument and sign of civilization. These are not aberrant moments of a war, but, rather, the cruel and spectacular logic of US imperial culture as it operates in the context of its current wars.¹⁵ The scenes of torture are conducted in the name of civilization against barbarism, and we can see that the 'civilization' at issue is part of a dubious secular politics that is no more enlightened or critical by virtue of its secularism than the worst forms of dogmatic and restrictive religion. In fact, the historical, rhetorical, and logical alliances between them may be more profound than we know. The barbarism at issue here is the barbarism of the civilizational mission, and any counter-imperialist politics, especially a feminist and queer one, must oppose it at every turn. For the point, here, is to establish a politics that opposes state coercion and violence, and to build a framework that can see how the violence done in the name of preserving a certain modernity and conceit of cultural homogeneity or integration is the most serious threat to freedom. If the scenes of torture are the apotheosis of a certain conception of freedom, it is one that is free of all law and free of all constraint precisely in order to impose law and to exercise coercion. That there are competing notions of freedom at stake is obvious, though it is probably worth noting that the freedom to be protected from coercion and violence is among the meanings that have been lost from view. So, too, is the ability to think time, this time, outside of that teleology that violently installs itself as both origin and end of the culturally thinkable. The

possibility of a political framework that opens up our ideas of cultural norms to contestation and dynamism within a global frame would surely be one way to begin to think a politics that re-engages sexual freedom in the context of allied struggles against racism, nationalism, and the persecution of national and religious minorities. I'm not at all sure we need to gather those struggles within a unified framework. As I hope I have shown, at least in preliminary form, to insist on a unified cultural framework as a precondition of politics, whether secular or religious, or both, is to preclude from political contestation precisely such a framework. If, as Marx insists, the point of departure for our analysis must be the historical present, then it seems to me that a new way of understanding how temporalities conflict and converge will be necessary for any complex description of that present. This means, I think, resisting both unified frameworks that would distill the antagonisms in question into equivalent rights claims, but also refusing those developmental narratives that know in advance in what a just view of human flourishing consists. It is always possible to show not only the various ways in which Islam is modern but also, just as importantly, a demonstration of how certain secular ideals could not have been developed without their transmission and elaboration through Islamic practices. But the point is not to show that we are all modern. If modernity seeks to constitute itself through a continuous and unfolding idea of time, and if some of our personal liberties are conceptualized within that notion of a continuous and unfolding realization, then perhaps we would do well to remember Nietzsche's quip from *The Will to Power*, 'Mankind does not advance, it does not even exist' (Nietzsche 1968). More salient, perhaps, is Walter Benjamin's insistence in the thirteenth of his *Theses on the Philosophy of History* 'that the concept of the historical progress of mankind cannot be sundered from the concept of its progression through a homogenous, empty time. A critique of the concept of such a progression must be the basis of any criticism of the concept of progress itself' (Benjamin 1968. All subsequent references to this text are cited parenthetically). He notes in a subsequent thesis that 'the awareness that they are about to make the continuum of history explode is characteristic of the revolutionary classes at the moment of their action' (261). The historian who understands how the past flashes up, how the past is not past, but continues in the present, is one who understand 'the time of the now' as 'shot through with chips of Messianic time' (263). Benjamin's emphatically non-secular reference here does not rely on an ideal future to come, but rather on the interruptive force of the past on a present that effaces all qualitative differences through its homogenizing effect. The 'constellation' which is one's own era is precisely the difficult and interruptive scene of multiple temporalities, ones that cannot be reduced to cultural pluralism or a liberal discourse of rights. For Benjamin, in the final line of those theses, 'every second of time was the strait gate through which the Messiah might enter', an historical condition under which political responsibility for the present exists

precisely 'now.' It is not by accident that Benjamin understood the revolutionary action as the strike, as the rejection of coercive state power. That power relies on a certain taken-for-granted notion of historical progress to legitimate itself as the ultimately modern achievement. To separate the 'now time' from these claims of modernity is to undercut the temporal framework that uncritically supports state power, its legitimating effect, and its coercive instrumentalities. Without a critique of state violence and the power it wields to construct the subject of cultural difference, our claims to freedom risk an appropriation by the state that can make us lose sight of all our other commitments. And only with such a critique of state violence do we stand a chance of finding and acknowledging the already existing alliances and sites of contact, however antagonistic, with other minorities in order to consider systematically how coercion seeks to divide us and to keep attention deflected from the critique of violence itself.

It is only by coming to terms with the epistemic shifts among critical perspectives, both secular and religious, that any of us will be able to take stock of the time and place of politics. If freedom is one of the ideals we hope for, perhaps it will be important to start by remembering how easily freedom can become deployed in the name of a state self-legitimation whose coercive force gives the lie to its claim to safeguard humanity. Maybe then we can rethink freedom, even freedom from coercion, as a condition of solidarity among minorities, and how necessary it is to formulate sexual politics in the context of a pervasive critique of this war.

[NB: This is adapted from the text that Professor Butler gave as the BJS 2008 Public Lecture which took place at the London School of Economics and Political Science in October 2007.]

(Date accepted: November 2007)

Notes

1. See Brown (2001).
2. As reported in <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11842116/>. The statement can be found on the website of the Dutch Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND), at http://www.ind.nl/en/inbedrijf/actueel/basisexamen_inburgering.asp.
3. As reported on <http://sweetness-light.com/archive/dutch-make-gay-acceptance-litmus-test-for-immigrants>.
4. New York Times, November 27, 2001, p. A19.
5. See Fassin (2006); Fassin and Fassin (2006).
6. *Libération*, 2 June 2006. Available at <http://www.liberation.fr/actualite/evenement/evenement1/371.FR.php>
7. See Guénif-Souilamas (2006).
8. Ratzinger goes on to make clear how the doctrine of sexual difference he defends is rooted in the story of Genesis, a story that establishes the 'truth' of men and women. His opposition to gay marriage, which seeks to 'destroy' that truth, is thus linked with his

implicit creationism. One could simply reply by saying, yes, the truth of man and woman that you outline is no truth at all and we seek to destroy it in order to give rise to a more humane and radical set of gender practices. But to speak this way is simply to reiterate the cultural divide that makes no analysis possible. Perhaps one needs to start with the status of the story, of Genesis itself, and to see what other readings are possible. Perhaps one needs to ask which biology Ratzinger actually accepts, and whether the biological theories he supports are ones that consider homosexuality to be a benign part of human sexual variation. It seems that his remark that social constructionists seek to deny and transcend biological differences commits him to a theological reading of social construction, since that 'transcendence' is, presumably, what is to be sought for the 'sacralization' of sexuality in terms of its transcendent function. Can it be shown that the biological differences to which he refers are actually consonant with the transcendent meanings he reserves for heterosexual sexuality in the service of reproduction? In addition to finding out which biological account Ratzinger has in mind, it would be important to understand whether the social practices he seeks to curb, including civil unions for same-sex partners, are either prescribed or proscribed by any ostensible biological function. The point is not to deny biology and to embrace a voluntaristic self-making, but to ask whether and how biology and social practice are understood in relation to one another.

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9. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20040731_collaboration_en.html.

10. *Ibid.*

11. I would like to position myself in neither way, but what way is then left? Ratzinger characterizes positions here, without citation, so whereas it appears that he may have read some of them, he is not beholden to any textual evidence in making his claims. The scripture, of course, is cited, but the positions that defy or threaten scripture are clearly not (as far as my research has yielded).

12. 'Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections', a speech given at the University of Regensburg, 12 September 2006. The speech and the subsequent explanations can be found electronically at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html.

13. 'Muhammad's Sword', 23 September, 2006. Available electronically at <http://zope.gush-shalom.org/home/en/channels/avner/1159094813/>

14. See Huntingdon (1996; 2005).

15. Although some religious constituencies have supported the Bush wars, there are others that have strongly opposed them, including a number of African-American evangelical churches, and Jewish groups, such as Tikkun, Jews Against the Occupation, and Jewish Voice for Peace.

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