

THE POLITICS OF THE LIMIT: EUROPEAN IDENTITY, THE DENMARK
CARTOON DEBATE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW DISCURSIVE
COMMUNITIES IN THE ONLINE WORLD

by

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Abstract

With increasing cultural, ethnic and religious heterogeneity in European populations, new challenges are being posed to the “European Project” as its focus shifts from economic and juridical integration to social integration. In the wake of these challenges, traditional notions of European Identity and Europe’s aspirations towards building a pluralistic society have increasingly come under attack. These tensions are exemplified through a number of struggles, including debates on the Islamic headscarf, and Turkey’s pending accession to the European Union. This thesis examines one challenge facing Europe through a critical discourse analysis of weblog entries related to the September 30, 2005 publication of 12 cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad in Denmark’s Jyllands-Posten newspaper. Central to this examination is a critique, of the modern, Habermasian concepts of republican citizenship and deliberative democracy, through Michel Foucault’s work on power and knowledge. This study looks at how online discursive communities resist and challenge “Europe’s” identity as well as its historical and contemporary construction of Islam and Muslims as its inherently violent, pre-modern oppositional “Other”. This is carried out by examining the limits of tolerance and intolerance, selfhood and otherness, and finally, essentialism and de-essentialism.

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Introduction

In the fall of 2005 Denmark's best-selling newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*, published an editorial featuring the now infamous 12 cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. The editorial was ostensibly a response to the fear of encroaching self-censorship within the Danish media on issues critical of Muslims and Islam. At the heart of the debate was the implicit claim that Islam is not compatible with modernity. While the publishers and defenders of the cartoons frequently claim that the cartoons refer only to violent Islamists, the cartoons have been widely perceived as representing an essentialized stance on Islam (Henkel, 2006a). The depictions of the prophet (particularly the cartoon in which he has a bomb in his turban¹) implicate Islam itself in the violence perpetrated by terrorists in the name of the Prophet, and work toward culturalizing Islam as inherently violent. Similarly, Muslim reaction to the cartoons has been widely reported as violent and intolerant of basic democratic freedoms, most notably, freedom of speech. Conversely, it has been frequently claimed in the media that the cartoons and the corresponding reaction to them reflect public opinion not only in Denmark but throughout Europe and other "Western" secular democracies. Here too an essentialized position is circulated that similarly ignores the heterogeneity of discourses within "secular" non-Muslim European society.

However, the cartoons, which on first glance may seem hardly noteworthy, need to be analyzed both within the immediate context of their publication (discussed in detail below), and in their broader historical context. Europe's longer historical narrative is marked by an important tension with Islam. As David Theo Goldberg points out,

¹ In the context in which three of the more controversial cartoons are depicted in figures 1, 2 and 3 of the appendix, the power of the images is inverted. Rather than an image of an essentialized, violent, and intolerant Islam, the cartoons should be interpreted instead as a caricature of Europe's own long standing anxieties about Muslims. In their original context, the images challenge the ability of Muslims to be integrated into an inclusive "Europe". As *Jyllands-Posten*'s culture editor, Flemming Rose, noted in a February 2006 interview responding to the outcry following the publication of the images, "...by treating Muslims in Denmark as equals they made a point: We are integrating you into the Danish tradition of satire because you are part of our society, not strangers." (Rose, 2006) However, in the context in which they are displayed here, the cartoons are instead meant to challenge the ability of Danish and "European" society to integrate Muslims without singling them out for special treatment that would be unacceptable for other groups. Rather than focusing on analysis of the individual cartoons, this work instead looks at the responses to images. As such, the images are not included in the main text, but still must be addressed.

'The Muslim' has haunted the continent from the earliest moments of its modernity, inherited of course from the medieval contest between Mediterranean Christianity and Islam. In Elizabethan England, 'the Moor' characterized the mix of religion, godless members of the 'sect of Mahomet'...By the late Enlightenment racial hierarchization of national character, Immanuel Kant could wedge 'the Arab', 'possessed of an inflamed imagination, 'between the basest of (Southern) Europeans and the Far East, but significantly above "the Negroes of Africa' (Goldberg, 2006, p. 344).

As Edward Said (1994) demonstrates, in the wake of 19th century European colonialism in particular, Muslims of the "Orient" came to symbolize a historically backward tribalism, characterized by violence and inferiority. Islam was presented in contrast to European modes of rationality, self-governance and modernity that also served as the justification and legitimation for the Imperial projects of the period. This genealogy has continued well into contemporary European society. Tensions have accumulated due to a growing Muslim presence within the European population, largely as a result of post-colonial migration and globalizing economic pressures. These tensions have been exacerbated in the wake of emerging terrorist threats and in the presence of second and third generation Muslims in European states who no longer accept their ascribed identities as immigrants, but are demanding to be acknowledged as citizens of European states. This longer historical narrative is now tinged by the characterization of Muslims as fundamentalist, fanatical, and most importantly, inherently violent and unfit for co-existence within Europe's advanced, modern democracies.

The "European Project" which has mainly been comprised of increasing juridical and economic integration of "European" States and economic expansion under the banner of the European Union (EU), also carries an important cultural element. This is embodied in the idea of a common European identity and culture. The basis for this cultural union lies in the belief that European national cultures share not only common essences and values, but also universal principles that will allow national communities and identities to come together under a united Europe. The homogenizing tendencies of the "European Project" face important challenges not only from traditional cultures represented most commonly through identities attached to European nation-states, but also due to an increasingly heterogeneous migrant population with their own histories, cultural traditions, and practices. It is within this broader historical, political, and cultural

context that the Jyllands-Posten cartoons must be read.

Responses to the original publication by Jyllands-Posten and subsequent responses related to the original in the mainstream media must be contextualized within the broader global constellation of power and inequality. Here, it is instructive to note Michel Foucault's contributions to debates on power and discursive communities. Foucault's theory of power and knowledge, the subjugation of knowledges, and the rise of subjugated knowledges are central to this paper and inform later discussions on the social transmission of power/knowledge throughout societies (Foucault, 1980, 1990 and 1994).

Rather than focusing on the discourses of the state institutions that naturalize meanings and practices in shaping the dominant ideological discursive formation, this work focuses more on the "subjugated" discourses that circulate through traditional and non-traditional media (Foucault, 1980). I look at how dominant discourses are used to "govern" Muslims in Europe and subjugate those discourses that threaten long established narratives that uphold notions of a "European" identity.

My examination of subjugated discourses relies on a critical discourse analysis of weblogs, a "new media" publishing format located on the internet that has allowed new discursive communities to emerge. The importance of this development is that weblogs not only allow for resistance to the exercise of power through dominant discourses, but also have the ability to promote dialogue with dominant discourses and challenge them through the medium itself. Following the publication of the Jyllands-Posten cartoons, weblog owners worldwide participated in a debate not only by posting entries that engaged with the cartoons and their effects, but also through a feature embedded within the medium which allows readers to comment on entries and to respond to the comments of fellow readers. Therefore, weblogs become an extremely rich text for critical analysis of the discourses that permeated the cartoon debate. While the democratizing aspects of the internet and weblogs may be somewhat overstated due to socio-economic factors that severely limit access and work to reinscribe binaries between North/South rich/poor and first/third world, the heterogeneity of discourses and discursive communities available provide valuable insights not often found within traditional mainstream media.

In adopting critical discourse analysis as a methodology for textual analysis, I hope to achieve two main goals. The first is to examine how critical responses to the Jyllands-Posten publication were presented and to allow the voices of those who were left out of the debate to enter into the dialogue and add to our understanding of the main issues. The second goal is to uncover the social construction of a Muslim "Other" in Europe, to look at how the Jyllands-Posten cartoons contribute to the portrayal of an essentialized image of Islam in Europe, and the power of weblogs to resist this "Orientalist" discourse. It should also go without saying that the intent here is not to have the following weblogs represent the entirety of Muslim and non-Muslim European opinion, but rather to account for and analyze some of the main arguments made by those who both supported and resisted the cartoons' publication.

While the EU has sought to use republican citizenship and deliberative democratic processes to incorporate a variety of diverse social projects it has encountered significant obstacles to achieving the inclusive European identity that is its goal. Three central themes are common within most weblogs that address the Jyllands-Posten debate and the problem of European identity. This paper can be seen as an attempt to assess the limits and possibilities of republican citizenship and deliberative democracy to deal with the limits of tolerance and intolerance, self and other, and essentialism and de-essentialism. In order to foster the pluralistic society it seeks, I conclude that the EU must include not only those traditionally accepted as "European" but also those it has traditionally defined as outside itself without reifying them to suit "European" political ends. An analysis of the Denmark cartoon debate gives valuable insights into the compatibility of both Muslim and non-Muslim Europeans with the demands of this new "European identity" and the problems posed by the long historical narrative of anxieties within both groups.

In the following section, I place the cartoons into their immediate context, describing the events that led to their publication, as well as the various responses to the cartoons and how these responses were interpreted. This is necessary in order to establish linkages with the broader historical and political context of the cartoons. Then I outline the methodology for a critical discourse analysis of weblogs and show their

importance in both supporting and resisting dominant discourses. The main body of this work is concerned with the analysis of the weblogs themselves. It is divided into three sections that describe the limits of the "European Project". In a concluding section, I return to the broader historical context in which the cartoons are located and to the theoretical discussion of approaches to power and resistance that highlight both the importance of the cartoons and the responses to their publication.

The Cartoons in Their Immediate Context

The cartoons, which were published on September 30, 2005 were in part a response to an earlier debate in the same month, on self-censorship and critiques of Islam in the Danish media. While the cartoon debate is symptomatic of other controversial issues that revolve around Europe and Islam, including various debates on Muslim headscarves, the comments made by Pope Benedict XIV in 2006 and Turkey's accession to the EU, these claims arose directly as a result of the inability of Danish writer and journalist, Kare Blutengen, to find an illustrator for his children's book The Koran and the Life of the Prophet Muhammad. He claimed that his difficulties were due to the supposed Islamic ban on depictions of the Prophet as a form of idolatry. The comments appeared as part of a featured article in the Danish broadsheet Politiken titled "Dyb Angst For Kritik af Islam" (Profound Fear of Criticism of Islam) (September 17, 2005). However, the arguments made on self-censorship were primarily a reaction to the public murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh on November 2, 2004, in response to his short-film "Submission". The film's script was written by Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a Muslim member of the Dutch parliament and prominent critic of Islam, who has been especially vocal on issues of gender. The film focuses on the abuse against women in Muslim cultures and features the thinly veiled bodies of naked women, inscribed with Koranic verses attributed to the poor treatment of women in Muslim society. (Van Gogh, and Hirsi Ali, 2004).

Jyllands-Posten, one of the leading Danish broadsheets, publicly invited cartoonists to contribute cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad as a direct challenge to those who would otherwise censor themselves on matters concerning Islam.

Accompanying the cartoons was an editorial from Jyllands-Posten's culture editor Flemming Rose. Addressing the debate on self-censorship, he commented that "[translated]...It is incompatible with contemporary democracy and freedom of speech, where you must be ready to put up with insults, mockery and ridicule. It is certainly not always attractive and nice to look at, and it does not mean that religious feelings should be made fun of at any price, but that is of minor importance in the present context" (Rose, 2005)². Rose later attempted to explain his position in a February 2006 interview in the US, adding that,

[t]he cartoonists treated Islam the same way they treat Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and other religions. And by treating Muslims in Denmark as equals they made a point: We are integrating you into the Danish tradition of satire because you are part of our society, not strangers. The cartoons are including, rather than excluding, Muslims (Rose, 2006).

It is interesting to note that when a series of Jesus cartoons was offered to the same newspaper in 2003, they were refused on the grounds that "...Jyllands-Posten's readers will [not] enjoy the drawings. As a matter of fact, I think that they will provoke an outcry. Therefore, I will not use them" (Reynolds, 2006). Rather than including Muslims as representatives of Jyllands-Posten claimed, the cartoons had the opposite effect by singling out Islam as antithetical to Europe. The images establish an important cognitive link among readers not only in the immediate context of the debate on self-censorship, but with the historical genealogy that portrays Islam as violent, intolerant and unfit to co-habit within modern society and the more recent "war on terror". The cartoons repeat the familiar trope of "Muslim" incommensurability with the "West" and can be seen as caricatures not just of the prophet but also as caricatures of "European" attitudes towards Muslims.

In response to the cartoons (whose specific offence to Muslims is discussed below) leading Danish Imams took their complaints to the international arena to air their grievances to a more receptive audience. This was a result of long standing tensions

² This translation which appears to be universally accepted, although the translator is unattributed, seems to originate from the "wikipedia" entry dealing with the cartoon debate. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jyllands-Posten_Muhammad_cartoons_controversy

within Denmark between the ruling parties (at the time of publication, the government consisted of a coalition between the centre-right Venstre party and the “notoriously racist” Dansk Folkeparti (Henkel, 2006a)) and Muslim immigrants. In a controversial move, before leaving for the Middle East, to demonstrate the intolerant climate in which they lived, the Danish Imams added additional cartoons and pictures (some published in popular media outlets, others received as hate mail) to a dossier that also included the original 12 cartoons. Eleven Ambassadors from Muslim countries were later denied a meeting with Danish Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, on the grounds that it was impossible for him to intervene in the matter, as government interference would contravene Denmark’s freedom of speech statutes. The Egyptian Minister for foreign Affairs had not in fact asked for government intervention but rather, “[a]n official Danish statement underlining the need for and the obligation of respecting all religions and desisting from offending their devotees to prevent an escalation which would have serious and far-reaching consequences” (Johnson, 2007). This statement was excerpted and recontextualized in various ways by mainstream media outlets to focus only on the notion of “an escalation which would have serious and far-reaching consequences”. Interpreted as a thinly veiled threat, the intervention of the Muslims states was held as further proof of the special treatment demanded by Islam and its incompatibility with basic democratic freedoms, such as free speech. Ignored to a large extent was the first part of the statement, calling on the Danish government to uphold the equal rights of all persons and religions and to take measures to repair the harm done to interfaith relations.

The Danish government recommended that the offended Islamic parties address their grievances to the Danish courts. On January 6, 2006, the courts made their final ruling, determining that the cartoons had not in fact violated Danish blasphemy laws and were considered to be part of “the public interest” which is protected by free speech.³

³ This raises questions as to the integrity of the Danish legal system. Before the case even went to trial before the court, it was the duty of the public prosecutors office to determine whether the cartoons violated the articles in Danish law (section 140 and section 266b) that protect religions and their followers from “mockery scorn and degradation”. While the public prosecutor’s office found no grounds to continue with the charges against Jyllands-Posten, they did note that, contrary to the claims found in the editorial that accompanied the cartoons, “scorn, mockery and ridicule” are incompatible with free speech under Danish law. The conclusion of the article from public prosecutor’s office ending criminal proceedings says, “Section 140 of the Danish Criminal Code protects religious feelings against mockery and scorn and

Shortly after, on January 30, 2006, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Arab League demanded that the UN pass a resolution (that has not since been passed) to protect religions against blasphemy and to possibly impose sanctions on Denmark and any other State where the cartoons were published. The resolution was interpreted as somewhat hypocritical given the nature of publications and editorials in some of the OIC and Arab League's own Member States. In particular, and equally deserving of lengthy analysis was the "holocaust cartoon contest"⁴ announced by Iran's *Hamshari* newspaper. The contest encouraged "revisionist" holocaust cartoons reflective of discourses in Iran on Israeli-Palestinian relations and the existence of the state of Israel.

The internationalization of the incident however had several consequences. The debate on free speech spread throughout the world as media outlets debated whether to republish the cartoons. This engaged both secular and religious publics worldwide in a broader debate on multiculturalism and its place in liberal democracies. In the Middle East, the Danish and Norwegian embassies were attacked in Syria, as well as the Danish embassy in Lebanon. Individual death threats and bomb threats were issued against the cartoonists and publishers of *Jyllands-Posten*, while various planned and executed terrorist attacks have been attributed to the cartoons. In total, approximately 150 people were killed in violent incidents related to the cartoons mainly in Nigeria, Libya, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Furthermore, mostly Muslim countries participated in a boycott on Danish goods, which has had serious consequences for Danish exports (Harding, 2006).

Not only were the cartoons a contribution to the debate on the compatibility of Islam and modernity but also on multiculturalism and the differentiated rights demanded

section 266 b protects groups of persons against scorn and degradation on account of i.a. their religion. To the extent publicly made expressions fall within the scope of these rules there is, therefore, no free and unrestricted right to express opinions about religious subjects. It is thus not a correct description of existing law when the article in *Jyllands-Posten* states that it is incompatible with the right to freedom of expression to demand special consideration for religious feelings and that one has to be ready to put up with "scorn, mockery and ridicule". The ruling highlighted power relations within Denmark and Muslim access to institutions of power such as the public prosecutor's office. This issue is dealt with in more detail in the concluding discussion of governmentality and power.

The Director of Public Prosecutions, File No. RA-2006-41-0151, March 15, 2006. "Decision on Possible criminal proceedings in the case of *Jyllands-Posten*'s Article "The Face of Muhammed".

http://www.rigsadvokaten.dk/media/bilag/afgorelse_engelsk.pdf

⁴<http://www.irancartoon.com/120/holocaust/index.htm> contains all prize winning cartoons from the contest.

by Muslims living in Europe. The purpose of the cartoons was to challenge and even provoke Danish Muslims' ability (or lack thereof) to perform the self-criticism and reflection demanded by modernity.

While the cartoons themselves demand attention, this work is more concerned with the responses to the cartoons by a variety of different discursive communities. In particular, I am concerned with those responses in weblogs that resist both the message of the cartoons as well as the characterization of any criticism of the cartoons as stifling free speech and democratic freedoms.

Methodological Orientations

Weblogs have been described as a tool "that links information and knowledge appropriation and propagation directly" (Burg, 2003, p. 9). Writers can link directly to specific articles, other weblogs and websites, offering critique, analysis and commentary. Through date and "timestamping", it is possible to determine precisely when a particular entry is engaging with third party material, as well as the identity of the particular author. New discursive communities also emerge as weblogs link to each other and engage each other in dialogue. While the content and sheer volume of the number of weblogs that fall into dominant ideological discursive frameworks is overwhelming, there is also more room for resistance than is available in traditional mainstream media and publishing formats. Important discursive communities that subvert dominant paradigms can be found within those weblogs that challenge dominant ideological formations.

Nevertheless, despite their utility, weblogs pose problems for discourse analysis. Content can be changed, weblogs may disappear when web servers go offline and authors can choose to make content unavailable. Additionally, the identity of authors is often unclear, as weblogs may be published anonymously, under pseudonyms, and under assumed identities that purposely mask intention. As speech acts, weblog entries operate both as a dialogue with the outside world, and as a monologue, similar to a diary entry. Without a thorough knowledge of the author, basic assumptions must frequently be made by the reader regarding the nature of the entry, its purposes and motivations. Furthermore, the accessibility and democratizing nature of weblogs is frequently

overstated as access to the internet and its potential limits the intended audience of weblogs and determines the socio-economic composition of those who own weblogs and use computers. All these factors necessarily create a bias in the content, character and socio-political outlook of weblog producers and consumers.

Nevertheless, well constructed weblogs can be useful for critical discourse analysis. Weblogs may allow the reader to gain insight into an author's personal life and political views through the inclusion of biographies, through the frequency and diversity of entries which offer insight into the author's lifeworld, and through an author's willingness to engage in dialogue with outside discourses and not merely to offer a self-reflexive monologue.

This work, therefore, looks at a broad selection of weblogs chosen for their topical relevance, the period of publishing (determined as the nine month period following the initial Jyllands-Posten publication), as well as the thoroughness of weblogger biographies. As this study focuses specifically on Europe, the majority of weblogs pertaining to this work are written by both self-identified Muslims and non-Muslims living in Europe. While this selection of weblogs is by no means representative of the entirety of European public opinion, and in fact necessarily essentializes a multiplicity of viewpoints, the intention is to uncover those normative viewpoints not represented in the mainstream media. Specifically, these weblogs are selected for the persistence of their engagement both with the immediate events surrounding the Jyllands-Posten publication, and for how they address broader issues on Islam's place within Europe. Each weblog entry discussed deals specifically with the publication of the cartoons, and those that supported their publication also reproduce the images themselves. These images have been widely "searched" in the online world, often leading to wider global engagement between readers and the authors of the weblogs, as well as the images themselves due to the global reach of the internet.

Rather than attempting to speak for respondents, a critical discourse analysis in this case should allow the weblogs to speak for themselves. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak notes, it is not the role of the critic or intellectual to privilege historical accounts by defining "which 'concrete experience' will become *the model*" (Spivak, 1999, p. 256). Spivak claims that Michel Foucault's work ignores the role of the intellectual in

valorizing the position of the oppressed. She insists that the role of the author should be a vital element within critical discourse analysis. Spivak herself is aware of this problem within her own work. As colonized subject turned privileged intellectual, through influential essays such as "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1999), she demonstrates that through persistent self-critique and self-awareness of her chosen methodology, it is possible to allow marginalized voices to enter into dialogue with dominant ideological discursive formations. The role of critical discourse analysis then must carefully walk this thin line. While privileging marginalized voices through a strategic essentialism conscious not to become reductively essentialist in itself, I hope to allow the voices of weblog writers to be heard. The goal of critical discourse analysis "is not to describe 'the way things really were' or to privilege [one] narrative of history as the best version of history. It is, rather, to continue the account of how one explanation and narrative of reality was established as the normative one" (Spivak, 1999, p. 267). The goal of this work's critical discourse analysis is twofold. First, it can be seen as a move to uncover the prevailing perceptions of how the Jyllands-Posten cartoons' publication and the responses to it were portrayed and to reinsert the voices of those who were omitted from the dialogue to contribute to a new understanding of the debate. Secondly, and more importantly, it looks at the genealogical construction of a Muslim "Other" in Europe, and the role of the Jyllands-Posten cartoons and their performative work in continuing to advance the essentialized image of Islam in Europe.

A critical discourse analysis of the position advocated by Jyllands-Posten, other mainstream media sources, official sources and web log commentary is thus provided through textual analysis. Rather than focusing on a purely linguistic analysis (vocabulary, semantics, grammar, etc.), this work centres on intertextual analysis. Through intertextual analysis I also hope to unmask the historical and social dependencies of particular texts (Fairclough, 1995, p. 189). Texts are able to both reproduce and resist these dependencies. The performative function of weblogs in particular, with their ability to open spaces of resistance and a potential to transform social formations and institutions, will be illuminated through this type of analysis.

While the goal of this work is to give voice to those opinions and ideas excluded from the dominant ideological discursive formation, it is important to note how

power/knowledge is enacted in conventional media stories. A critical discourse analysis will illustrate those features of mainstream media reporting that uphold different ideologies and discourses that institutionalize power/knowledge. Teun Van Dijk outlines a strategy for conducting discourse analysis, using three general characteristics and then shows how these characteristics can be applied to media discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1993). The first, functional characteristic refers to how surface structures and meanings are understood in discourse. The characteristics of the speaker, the relationships between the speaker and audience, and the social context of the discourse are all part of its functionality. Through its lexicalization and surface structure (including sentence structure, word choice and theme) a discourse is a reflection of the social structure in which it exists and therefore its functionality operates to convey the message of the discourse itself as well as underlying messages related to social structure. Meaningfulness, the second characteristic of discourse, refers to coherence at both local and global levels. Sentences are structured locally within a specific discourse to relate to each other to convey their message, while at the global level, a specific discourse relates to broader social contexts and themes. A discourse will work from the specific to the general in order to establish global coherence within a larger discursive framework. Goal-directedness, van Dijk's third characteristic of discourse, draws attention to the purposes of discourse itself (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 277). Any discourse is created or enacted in order to reach some goal. The failure or success of the discourse to achieve its goal is due to the structure of the discourse and its meaningfulness. Thus, something as simple as ordering a meal at a restaurant cannot succeed if the initiation of the speech act, its lexicalization, structure, tone and style, are incoherent to the waiter. All discourse has some purpose, even if it is just to engage in conversation as a purely social act. Its goal is achieved through the structure of the discourse and its local and global coherence.

Prior to examining the potential of weblogs to resist dominant ideological formations, it is important to see, if only through a brief example, the type of discourse they resist. The following example illustrates how power/knowledge is enacted in mainstream media discourse

The February 2, 2006 online issue of the German centre-right news magazine Der Spiegel (Heflik, 2006) included an article titled "'It Was Worth It': Editor Reflects on

Denmark's Cartoon Jihad". The article exemplifies the ways in which mainstream media upholds the dominant ideological discursive formation, while simultaneously appearing as though they offer a balanced unbiased account. A critical discourse analysis of the article reveals how its main characteristics, as defined by van Dijk, contribute to a normalization of practice, language, grammar and ideology.

The caption to the photo that accompanies the article reads:

Young Danes in Copenhagen hold up a banner reading 'Sorry' in support of those offended by the newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*. The newspaper has apologized for publishing caricatures of the prophet Muhammad, but key editors say they don't regret the decision.

While initially, the caption seems to posit the contrition of the *Jyllands-Posten* editors as linking their apology to the sentiments of those holding up the banner, it later reveals that "they don't regret the decision." The title, which refers to the debate as a "Cartoon Jihad", in combination with the *Jyllands-Posten* editor's comments that "It was worth it" and the photo caption all prompt the reader to conjure up pre-existing knowledge or understanding of the event. In particular, it assumes some normalized language, ideology and practice regarding topics related to Islam in Europe. These triggers direct the reader to accept without question the particular ideology the article exhibits through lexical choices, in particular "Cartoon Jihad". Rather than referring to the ongoing event as a controversy, debate, dialogue or discussion, (more neutral terms), the headline opts for a phrase that has a more negative connotation. Jihad in the minds of Western readers and certainly in this context, derisively refers to the event as necessarily violent and deadly. The term "Cartoon Jihad" evokes images of actual physical violence and death. In terms of its local coherence, this is perhaps valid as the article is a response to bomb threats and other threats of violence against the staff and offices of *Jyllands-Posten*. However, in terms of its global coherence, the article largely ignores, or minimizes, the types of non-violent resistance already well under way and essentializes the violent acts of a small minority of Muslims as representative of the entire Muslim population.

The title and caption also serve to alert the reader to the later stylistic structure and lexicalization of the article. The article uses what Norman Fairclough refers to as “indirect discourse” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 57)⁵ to characterize the ideological discursive formation that guides European Muslim and Arab Muslim discourse. The article describes representatives of Denmark’s Muslim population leading a “storm of protests”, the “wave of outrage from the Arab world flooding Denmark as *unrelenting*”, the paper as resisting attempts to “muzzle” its right to freedom of speech, and so on. The article simultaneously casts the publishers of the cartoons and their supporters in a far more favorable light, stating that the newspaper’s staff and political editor Joern Mikkelsen are “staying strong”, despite the controversy that surrounds them, referring to Jyllands-Posten’s editors as “trailblazers” for freedom of speech, in particular it portrays Mikkelsen “pausing briefly and answering his own rhetorical questions” as a paragon of democratic rights and freedoms in opposition to the discursive violence of European and Arab Muslims who would silence him.

The article achieves coherence locally through its stylistic structure and global coherence by presenting the newspaper editor’s measured opinions and statements as fully upholding democratic freedoms while characterizing the “Muslim” response in direct opposition to such freedoms. The article thus represents European Muslims as unable to meet the requirements of secular democratic societies. Even in the brief passage where the article seeks comment from Imam Akkari, leader of the Danish Muslim delegation’s tour of the Middle East, his seemingly favorable comments are later mediated to reflect this global view. He states that, “[o]ur intention was never to introduce censorship or to ban criticism of issues related to religion,” and affirms his commitment to “the political path of discussion” and his “strong condemnation” of “violent and potentially violent responses”. The story nevertheless proclaims the lack of respect for democratic and political freedoms by Muslims, despite Akkari’s “strong condemnation” of violence and his advocacy of open dialogue and discussion through

⁵ Looking at discourse representation in media, Fairclough theorizes creates primary, secondary and tertiary categories of discourse reporting. Indirect discourse involves secondary reporting of a discursive act, rather than a direct quote. The importance of this distinction is the ambivalence of the writer’s voice. Using the active voice, a writer tells of a direct action, while the passive allows the reader to infer meaning. The writer is then able to selectively use either voice to attribute characteristics to the subject of the discursive act. In this case, generally the writer uses the active voice to attribute negative connotations to Muslim acts, while performing the opposite for the editors of Jyllands-Posten.

widely accepted democratic channels (protests, demonstrations and legal recourse sought in the lawsuit against Jyllands-Posten).

The structure of the article, which accords with van Dijk's "proposed conventional superstructure of news discourse", offers a hierarchical representation of the story. The most important information is contained within the first two-thirds of the article, while Imam Akkari's comments fall within the final portion of the article, where readers are prepared to receive it as supplemental to the events or arguments addressed at the beginning of the article. Furthermore, the structure of the article has a two-fold effect by giving illocutionary force to Akkari's statement of "strong condemnation" and then stripping it of sincerity by later claiming that he is merely "concerned" with escalation. Akkari's statements are thus recontextualized and it appears the comments made by him and his counterparts gave rise to the xenophobia expressed towards the end of the article. Yet, Akkari is speaking out against violence and in favor of democratic freedoms and no evidence is offered to the contrary.

The purpose of the article seems to convey the message that the utility of the cartoons was to initiate a societal debate, which outweighs any recognition that the cartoons themselves may have been ill conceived, and even damaging to Muslims. In fact, the story seems to demonstrate, and to performatively uphold the impression that the worldwide response of Muslims has only solidified Danish opinions on Islam and multiculturalism. An alternate version of the story might have addressed Imam Akkari's role as both a "leading" Danish Muslim cleric and representative of Danish Muslims, rather than focusing on the individual who made the initial bomb threat that is the subject of the article. This perspective would then delegitimize the xenophobic comments that perpetrate discursive violence against Muslims (through negative portrayal and its performative function) at the conclusion of the article. While the article raises a valid point on the role of the cartoons as instigating discussion and debate, the article presumes to have already resolved the debate itself. Through the uneven portrayal of Muslims and the culturalization of Muslim violence, the article stifles debate and discussion and continues the work of the cartoons by portraying European Muslims as unfit for membership in democratic society. This occurs not only in the immediate context of the article itself or the cartoons, but also as a part of the longer genealogy. By creating the

image of the violent "Muslim" it becomes legitimate to deny him/her equal discursive rights. If he/she is unable to meet the demands of modernity and democracy, his/her exclusion from discourse is not only justified but perhaps even necessary.

While the article analyzed above is meant to represent the role of the mainstream media in the normalizing tendencies of ideological discursive formations, it is important to note that each newspaper and media outlet has its own biases and some may even lie outside of the dominant ideological discursive formation (these are usually independent publications that do not rely on corporate sponsorship or have strong ties to governments) which paint a more sympathetic portrait of Muslims in light of the debate that surrounds the Jyllands-Posten cartoons. Through its normalized practices (the very structure of news articles), lexicalization, and self-selected themes, mainstream media contribute to the "subjugation of knowledges", (Foucault, 1980) and the maintenance and renewal of hegemony. Media discourse has the ability to relate texts, whether written, delivered through a speech act, or other representation to the production of ideological discourse itself.

Therefore, a critical discourse analysis of weblogs should reveal not only how ideology and practice are normalized, but also how resistance to dominant ideological discursive formations is deployed. The following section assesses the ability of "The European Project" to cope with the challenges that critical discourses pose to the dominant ideological discursive formation and looks more closely at what those "subjugated" discourses actually have to say.

The Politics of the Limit

Introduction

The "European Project", which has mainly been comprised of increasing juridical and economic integration of "European" States and economic expansion, also carries an important cultural element. The European Union seeks also to promote a common European identity and culture that transcends national and historical differences. The basis for this cultural union lies in the belief that European national cultures share not only common essences and values, but also universal principles that will allow

national communities and identities to come together under a united Europe. These common values are generally seen as democracy, reason, tolerance, human rights, universal freedoms and social responsibility with roots in Greek classical antiquity, the rise of Christianity and the development of Enlightenment rationality. It is these values that allow the European multicultural project of “unity in diversity” – the official EU motto - to go forward. These common values are the proposed links between European member states and their citizens that will allow European citizens to forego their allegiances to particularistic local identities and cultures. Nevertheless, the EU simultaneously seeks to allow the maintenance of difference, particularly the co-existence of national cultures and identities as stated in Article 6(3) of The Treaty on European Union: “The Union shall respect the national identities of its Member States.”

Increasingly problematic for the European project is the challenge posed to its universal values by an increasingly diverse population. Following World war II, waves of post-colonial migrants and workers from Europe’s periphery and external borders arrived to fill increasing labour shortages throughout the 1970s. Thus, the EU has been faced with the task of “including” an increasingly diverse population. Anthony Pagden notes that,

“[a] true European Union, that is, may need not only compelling cultural symbols and representative political forms in order to persuade the Danes and the British that what they are being asked to identify with is as much ‘their’ Europe as it is the Europe of the French or the Germans; it also may need sufficient adaptability to provide a common *patria* for Algerians and Malays, Muslims and Hindus” (Pagden, 2002, p. 12).

While the Member States of the EU must contend with how to include their own forms of traditionally constituted identity, in an age of ever increasing global economic interdependence they now also face the challenge of including identities traditionally defined as being outside of Europe.

Modernists like Jurgen Habermas (most notably in The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory, 2000) and Seyla Benhabib (in Rights and Others: Aliens, Residents and Citizens, 2006) argue that there are two central components to fostering the

types of inclusive identity that culturally and ethnically heterogeneous modern democracies require. First, while traditional notions of citizenship are rooted in the historical culture and ethnicity of the majority, republican citizenship instead defines belonging as an allegiance to constitutionally defined political processes. This avoids the tendency of the majority culture to shape and dominate political discourse in the first instance and can allow for the emergence of pluralistic societies. Second, deliberative democracy is the public process by which members of society arrive at agreements based on context-transcending truths in order to establish a legal order. Universal claims to truth are contested and normative standards are set by democratic majorities. Over time, not only do legal norms and rights change, but so do the institutions that uphold them. Republican citizenship and deliberative democracy decouple territorial and national claims from claims to political membership. This encourages what some have described as an iterative deliberative process based on public deliberation, debate and learning whereby "...universalist right claims are contested and contextualized, invoked and revoked, throughout legal and political institutions as well as in the public sphere of liberal democracies" (Benhabib, 2006, p. 19). This process is necessary in order to mediate the universal claims made by constitutions and the inherently exclusionary act of constitution making (discussed below in the section on the limit of self/other). The ideals of republican citizenship and deliberative democracy work towards rights based citizenship built on a framework of universal inclusion and context transcending truths.

However, republican citizenship and deliberative democracy are complicated by a set of limits that hinder the ability of modern democracies, and Europe in particular, to foster the inclusive pluralistic societies that are required with their increasingly heterogeneous populations. Referring to a psychological condition first described by Karl Jaspers (Bornemark, 2006), the term "limit situations" describes moments of fear, guilt and anxiety, where the human mind is forced to deal with the limits of its experience and capacities for knowledge. In order to progress, the human mind must confront the self-imposed boundaries and limits it sets to maintain its sense of security. Only then can it move past these limits, achieving a new self-consciousness. Likewise, communities also experience these moments. Europe is currently experiencing a limit-situation in

defining its actual and conceptual borders⁶, and must either progress to a new form of self-consciousness or else devolve into some pre-existing conception of itself (if such a thing has ever existed⁷).

In the following sub-sections, I locate three important limits that define the cartoon debate and raise broader questions on the future possibilities of a “European Identity” and the inclusion of Muslims, despite historical and contemporary narratives of “Orientalism” and exclusion. The first is the limit of tolerance and intolerance that is the crucial foundation of republican citizenship. To live in a pluralistic society requires a commitment to the tolerance of different groups and individuals, and recognition of their right to practice that difference in accordance with the constitutionally defined political framework. The second limit addresses the tensions between concepts of self and other, a central component in the construction of identity. While identity is based on self-ascription, it is also based on a displacement. Identity can be based as much on what one “is”, as what one is not. Third, the limit of essentialism and de-essentialism addresses the difficulty of ascribing group identity. To essentialize identity in this instance ignores heterogeneity, while at the same time a de-essentialized group identity risks the removal of important group markers. However, it is also important to recall that all three of these limits are negotiated within a sphere of unequal power relations that deeply influence their outcome.

Tolerance/Intolerance

For Jurgen Habermas, the EU potentially embodies a new form of constitutional democracy that bases its identity not on shared ethnic, cultural or national traits, but rather on shared values that allow for a plurality of “ethical communities integrated around different conceptions of the good” (Habermas, 1975, p. 134). In Habermas’ idealized conception of the democratic state, citizens are integrated into multicultural states not through shared values and agendas, but rather through shared recognition of the

⁶ See Balibar, Etienne (2004), “The Borders of Europe” pp. 1-10 and “World Borders, Political Borders” pp.101-114 in We, The People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship

⁷ See below for further discussion of the historical problem of defining and locating a “European” identity.

procedures for the legitimate uses of power and the enactment of laws. Such recognition allows for the rights of minority groups to be respected while resisting the tendency of majority groups to claim as universal normative values that reflect only the majority culture. Democracy and constitutionalism are seen as the only form of legitimate government by Habermas, and are mutually reinforcing. For governments to be legitimate, citizens must simultaneously see themselves as both the authors and addressees of the law. This occurs through democratic processes, as well as public engagement in deliberative processes that ensure the evenness of communication, the free flow of information, and equal discursive rights for all participants. This notion of deliberative democracy is inherently tied to Habermas' theory of communicative action and follows from his "discourse principle" that "just those action norms are valid to which all possibly affected persons could agree as participants in rational discourses" (Habermas, 1996, p. 107). Therefore, democracy and constitutionalism are mutually reinforcing. Citizens are *constituted* as free and equal under the law while also the very authors of the law itself.

There is however, an unresolved tension between constitutionalism and democracy, as Lasse Thomassen (Thomassen, 2006) notes. This is a result of the very mutual reciprocity that Habermas says makes constitutional democracy work. If a constitution is to be legitimate it has to be created constitutionally, with citizens exercising their democratic rights. However, without an existing constitution, on what are citizens to base these initial democratic rights? Habermas attempts to resolve this tension through what Thomassen terms "iterability"; the historical contingency of both constitutions themselves and the law, which are transformed over time, potentially through the type of public deliberation that occurred following the publication of the Jyllands-Posten cartoons. For Habermas, what makes constitutional democracy work is that constitutions like laws are alive, "there must...remain a role for democracy in putting into place and interpreting constitutionalism, so that the performative aspect of democracy exceeds the constative aspect of constitutionalism" (Thomassen, 2006, p. 185). Legitimacy is derived from a combination of democratic rights and processes inscribed within the constitution as they gain normative power over time through repetition and their own normative force, as well as the alterability of the constitution

through those same democratic channels. This is what allows for the iterability of constitutional democracy. Thus, it is important to note the potential contributions that weblogs can offer to this deliberative process. This is particularly important, as weblogs can open new discursive spaces free of the constraints that traditional mainstream media often place on discourse.

Seyla Benhabib notes that the real success of Habermas' deliberative democratic model is that it "distinguishes between the *ethnos* and the *demos*.... Democracies are not formed through the mystical sovereignty of nations but through the constitutional principles which people adopt in order to govern themselves by and through the institutional arrangements which they set into motion" (Benhabib, 1994, p. 14). In addition to this division of *ethnos* and *demos*, constitutional democracies also "allow in their midst the formation of an independent public sphere in which questions of identity, legitimacy and sovereignty can be perpetually debated and discussed." This in turn allows "new identities to come to the fore, delegitimization processes to be aired and the meaning of sovereignty be re-established" (Benhabib, 1994, p. 16). For Habermas, it is this ongoing deliberative process that makes constitutional democracy work.

However, what holds Habermas' notion of constitutional democracy together is also contested. It is his rational reconstruction of the notion of tolerance that allows pluralistic societies such as the European Union to function. This is the first limit that pluralistic societies face, and provides the rationale for the emergence of republican citizenship. While he is critical of traditional, normative readings of the notion of tolerance central to the critiques of post-structuralists and post-modernists such as Jacques Derrida and Jean Francois Lyotard, he believes that through constitutionalism, legitimate processes of governance can be established. It is the deliberative process embedded within constitutional democracies that allows them to avoid the paternalistic forms of traditional notions of tolerance, and their inherently exclusionary nature.

The very notion of tolerance, which Habermas shows as growing out of the 16th and 17th century reformation of the Christian Church, was originally formulated to allow various forms of Christianity to co-exist in one state: "the philosophical justifications given for religious tolerance point the absolutist state in a direction away from *unilaterally* declared religious toleration, the limits of which are defined by the

authorities, and towards a conception of tolerance based on the *mutual* recognition of everybody's religious freedom" (Habermas, 2004, p. 5). The basic problem with the notion of tolerance however, remains. The act of tolerance, in fact, is also one of exclusion as it sets a limit on what can and cannot be tolerated. Habermas attempts to escape this paradox with reference to the emergence of republican citizenship and constitutionally granted basic freedoms (religion, speech, association, etc.). It is the formation of constitutionally defined democratic communities through iterative processes that allows tolerance to exist without exclusions based solely on the privileged position of the majority culture. As Habermas notes, "[t]he norm of complete inclusion of all citizens as members with equal rights must be accepted before all of us, members of a democratic community, can mutually expect one another to be tolerant" (Habermas, 2004, p. 10). Tolerance then forms the basis for the inclusive citizenship required by pluralistic societies.

Importantly, Habermas also notes that tolerance is not one-sided. Minority groups are similarly required to adhere to the constitutional principles that allow their membership within the community. As such, religious communities become engaged in the deliberative process itself in order to receive the benefits of inclusion in the constitutional State. "With the introduction of a right to freedom of religious expression, all religious communities must adopt the constitutional principle of the equal inclusion of everyone. They cannot merely benefit from the toleration of others, but must themselves face up to the generalized expectation of tolerance, with all the consequences this entails" (Habermas, 2003, p. 6). This requires recognition among religious communities of their dual membership in a democratic community as well as a religious community that may not be able to tolerate the existence of other religious worldviews. Cognitive links can be established between the moral imperatives of inclusion in both the public and private sphere, the one reinforcing the other.

The role of public and private spheres and the rights to free speech and expression are the issues most commonly addressed in the weblogs of both European Muslims and non-Muslims. This is an extremely important issue within the larger debate, as it relates to the impetus behind the publication of the cartoons in the first instance. Is Islam compatible with "modern" European society and the demands of

republican citizenship? Do Muslim objections to the publications constitute intolerance of basic democratic freedoms? Were their objections protected under those same basic freedoms and thus legitimate based on other democratic grounds? As Habermas notes in a 2001 interview, "in the course of mutual perspective taking (necessary for understanding) there can develop a common horizon of background assumptions in which both sides accomplish an interpretation that is not ethnocentrically adopted or converted but, rather, *intersubjectively* shared" (Borradori, 2003, p. 37). He later goes on to note that "structures of communication free of distortion" are also a necessary element of understanding (Borradori, 2003, p. 38).

The weblogs of non-Muslims Europeans, which constitute the overwhelming majority of available weblogs, demonstrate the limits of "European" tolerance. Indeed, these weblogs are illustrative of the anxieties perpetuated by the existence of Muslims within "European space". It may be useful here to recall the incommensurability of religious fundamentalist positions with what Habermas terms the "discourse of modernity" that grew out of the Enlightenment (Habermas, 2000). Clearly, where a particular group is unwilling to engage in dialogue over issues crucial to the functioning of democratic society, pluralism cannot work. However, the overdetermination of acts of violence and of positions incommensurate with modern democracies does its own discursive and epistemic violence. When Muslim voices in Europe that simultaneously respect basic democratic freedoms and that condemn the cartoons themselves are ignored, deliberative democratic processes and even communication cannot occur. It should also go without saying that the intent here is not to have the following weblogs represent the entirety of non-Muslim European opinion but rather to account for and analyze some of the main arguments made by those who condemn the objections to the cartoons as incompatible with basic democratic freedoms.

A Danish weblog (<http://www.bibelen.blogspot.com>) authored by an individual calling himself "Ateist" provides an exhaustive account of the Cartoon debate from the beginning of the controversy. "Ateist" quotes liberally from Danish news accounts and translates them into English (presenting its own problems for discourse analysis), frequently showing little sympathy for the claims made by Muslims. He only begins writing in English in late December 2005, in direct connection with the cartoon

debate, which is the only topic addressed by the weblog following that entry. Prior to the cartoon incident however, the weblog demonstrates tendencies towards xenophobia and religious intolerance. In one instance, he links to an article on the "Islamization of Europe" as "the result of a careful and deliberate strategy by certain Muslim leaders" (Sookhdeo, 2005).

While the weblog is highly critical of Muslim responses to the cartoon publications, conspicuously absent is any significant attention to the actual claims made by Muslims. The weblog does not critically engage with European Muslims and resorts mainly to commentary from published newspaper reports. While "Ateist" discusses each of the 12 cartoons published by Jyllands-Posten, it is his description of the cartoon of Mohammed with the bomb in his turban that perhaps indicates his position most clearly. He notes that this is the most controversial of the depictions because "it shows the tie between Islam and terrorism", a tie that has been made repeatedly since Sept. 11, 2001. He goes on to say:

But which is the greater insult? A Danish artist indicating a connection between Islam and terrorism? Or those terrorists, who have killed thousands of civilians in New York, London, Bali, Madrid, Casablanca and Istanbul - and have done their dirty deeds in the name of Allah the Merciful?

If terrorism is an insult against Islam, why don't you fight terrorism instead of getting mad with a Danish artist, whose only crime is that he's pointing out your ostrich-like denial. Don't kill the messenger
(<http://bibelen.blogspot.com/2005/12/drawings-of-mohammed.html>, December 27, 2005).

It is interesting to note here how his comments, while noting the evils of terrorism and the ways it has tarnished Islam's reputation, seem to essentialize Islam. Like the cartoons, he too provides the cognitive link between violence and Islam by invoking the names of the cities frequently associated with "Islamist" terrorist attacks in "New York, London, Bali, Madrid, Casablanca and Istanbul" and the sarcastic gesture to the which were committed "in the name of Allah the Merciful". This particular comment achieves coherence locally, conveying the message that moral acts of violence are far worse than a simple image. In addition, Ateist links the cartoon to the broader debate on Muslim complicity in terrorist attacks that have been committed in the name of Islam. The

comment achieves coherence within the larger discursive framework and historical genealogy in Europe that links Islam with a violent pre-modern condition through the use of sarcasm, referring to “Allah the merciful” and “Muslim ostrich-like denial”, the propagation of the “New York, Bali, Madrid, London” meme and the omission of Muslim opinions and actions that may refute his point.

The comments of Sheila Musaji, a Muslim writer from the US, and editor in chief of The American Muslim (<http://www.theamericanmuslim.org>) in a weblog entry at altmuslim.com, demonstrates the willingness of Muslims to engage in self-criticism and uphold free speech. She notes that,

[t]he cartoons are a repeat of old anti-Semitic drawings, complete with hooked noses and swarthy complexions. The cartoons ARE offensive - but the response by many Muslims is more than offensive. Death threats, armed men taking over offices, threats against places of worship, etc. ARE offensive, illegal, immoral, unjust, and against the very spirit of Islam. Threatening to blow up churches in Palestine because a newspaper in Denmark (which is a predominantly Christian country) ran offensive cartoons means that these clowns are saying that every Christian in the world is responsible for the actions of anyone in the Christian world. This is madness just as much as those who hold the same attitude towards Muslims and Islam.... If, as Muslims, we want to show respect for the Prophet, for the Qur'an, and for Islam, then we need to set a noble example of justice, tolerance, and respect. If we want respect from others we need to show them equal respect (http://www.altmuslim.com/perm.php?id=1645_0_25_0_C, February 6, 2006).

In this entry, Musaji demands tolerance from Muslims as well as non-Muslims. In her arguments she represents the diversity of the global Muslim community, many of whom recognize that injustices have been committed in the name of Islam. Here, Musaji also points out the ways in which Muslims and non-Muslims have essentialized one another.

While “Ateist” supports the message put forth by the cartoons, one which characterizes Muslims as terrorists and questions the ability of Muslims to engage critically with the topic of “Islam and terrorism”, Sheila Musaji’s comments directly refute his charge. Rather than critically engaging with Muslims, “Ateist” instead attributes democratically legitimate actions taken by Muslims (in the form of protests, demonstrations and rational arguments that uphold free speech, while objecting to the

racist and essentializing character of the publications) as signs of intolerance and as inherently incompatible with basic democratic freedoms.

This, however, is not an uncommon approach within weblogs, as many more portray Muslims' putative intolerance of free speech while simultaneously displaying questionable commitments to notions of tolerance themselves. On the weblog of Samizdata.net, primarily maintained in London and Belfast, a debate developed shortly after the cartoons were reproduced on the weblog. Initial comments in the exchange consisted of statements such as "whoever is complaining about these needs to get a life" (<http://www.samizdata.net/blog/archives/008395.html#100206>, December 23, 2005), "I couldn't care less about the superstitions of a bunch of primitives living in caves and sand pits" (<http://www.samizdata.net/blog/archives/008395.html#100234>, December 24, 2005), and "I don't care what Islam is, I'm not interested one way or the other. I do know what freedom of the press is, something many people (including you?) do not" (<http://www.samizdata.net/blog/archives/008395.html#104379>, January 31, 2006). In the later stages of this debate, Muslim and non-Muslim writers began to object to the one-sided representation given to the cartoon debate. As a result, the position of supporters of the cartoons becomes more clearly articulated. In one of the most telling exchanges, "Perry De Havilland", the original author of the weblog responds to a call for respect for the religious beliefs of others:

[F]reedom of speech means NOT having to 'respect' points of view we disagree with. Yes, some people do have religious beliefs and I respect their right to hold those beliefs (i.e. I tolerate them), but that is not the same as respecting those beliefs themselves. People have a right to demand tolerance from me, they have no right to demand acceptance and agreement or silence from me.

Tell me, people also have racist beliefs, communist beliefs, fascist beliefs... I respect people's right to hold absurd views about I have no hesitation poking fun at people who hold those views. Are you suggesting otherwise? (<http://www.samizdata.net/blog/archives/008395.html#104288>, January 30, 2006)

These comments on the freedom to hold beliefs and the right to respect freedom are in accordance with Habermasian notions of tolerance. However, the later statement conflating Islam with a series of what we hold to be intolerant beliefs delegitimises the

ability of Muslims to participate in rational discourse. While “disrespect” or disavowal of discourses that do not open themselves to criticism from competing claims may be justifiably maintained under Habermasian discourse ethics, no support is offered or given as to why Islam should also be held in this regard. The comment does not make the distinction between debate and the desire to disengage from debate altogether.

Central to Foucault’s conception of power/knowledge are epistemes, a notion of historical periods based upon specific distinct discourses and worldviews upheld by institutions and the knowledges they produce (Foucault, 1980, p. 197). These formations however, are not transparent and inform and order systems of knowledge and power by shaping background knowledge and the implicit justification for a given episteme (de Certeau, 1986). The power of epistemes is similar to the way in which dominant ideological formations naturalize ideology so that they become “common sense” justifications for social practices and institutions (Fairclough, 1995, p. 41). For Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, epistemic violence occurs where local knowledge is subjugated by both local and global power structures (Spivak, 1988, p. 204). Conversely, epistemic violence also occurs where subjugated knowledges resist the dominant episteme and expose the arbitrariness of their foundations.

What some of those who objected to the cartoons were denouncing was not freedom of speech or expression, but rather the epistemic violence of the cartoons and their effects on Islam. As Henkel demonstrates, the cartoon debate revolved around a “double delegitimation” of Islam (2006a): The cartoons first essentialize Islam with a racist, xenophobic depiction while also making the claim that any objection to the images is intolerant and incompatible with democratic freedoms. Resistance to the cartoons is therefore also resistance to an episteme organized around a discourse that promotes the image of a violent, intolerant Islam. Acts of violence or the threat of violence are incompatible with democratic society, and do little to advance the claims of those who object through rational, reasoned approaches. To focus on those individuals is constructing a totalizing portrayal of an entire population is merely a continuation of the historical anxieties that characterize “European” relations with Islam. What is important in these weblogs however, is their commitment to free speech and the at times

polemically charged dialogues they engage in. Embedded within the structure of weblogs is a function that allows for comments and links to other weblogs, articles and sources. These can and do become good venues for open dialogue and debate. What effect this may ultimately have is indeterminate, but it may mark the beginning of the deliberative process that proponents of republican citizenship feel is essential to its success.

Further examination of selected weblogs that express the views of the European Muslim population serve to demonstrate the heterogeneity of both Muslim and non-Muslim opinions within Europe. The following weblogs have been selected for the way that they assert the compatibility of Islam with the "European Project", and the ability of Europeans to similarly practice the tolerance that they preach. They are written in several European cities and include the life experiences of the authors as they situate themselves within the wider discursive field in which the cartoon debate takes place. These weblog entries can be understood as signs of an "insurrection of subjugated knowledges" (Foucault, 1980, p. 81) in their resistance to the messages of the cartoons and the ideological discursive formation that supports them.

It would however, be unfair to exclude from analysis weblogs that show Muslim intolerance. The following comment, accompanied by posters advocating violent reprisals by a terrorist group known as the "Glory Brigades of Northern Europe", is found on the weblog of "Shawn" from New York. He states:

Denmark was clearly wrong for them to arouse such hostility in their Muslim population with that hateful cartoon. Denmark was very disrespectful and insensitive to do such a thing. Denmark was obviously looking for a fight with it's Muslim population when it did so in which case it deserves what it gets (<http://morning-calm.spaces.live.com/Blog/cns!27161C66D7206B84!6416.entry>, December 3, 2006).

The dominant ideological discursive formation frequently valorizes these types of comments in order to portray a violent and intolerant Islam in a manner consistent with the 18th and 19th century "Orientalism" that Said demonstrates (Said, 1994). The intention of this work however, is to valorize those positions which are frequently

excluded from public discourses and to demonstrate how they are contested within other discursive communities.

Omar Sayid Shah, born in Denmark of Afghani parents and currently residing in the UK, maintains a weblog in both English and Danish that contains lengthy entries on religious issues specific to Islam, as well as a variety of social and political commentaries. In a weblog entry dated February 11, 2006 (<http://al-miftah.blogspot.com/2006/02/something-rotten-in-state-of-denmark.html>) he critically notes the right-wing political tendencies of Jyllands-Posten, as well as its popularity as one of the newspapers with the highest circulation in Denmark. He discusses how both the newspaper and politicians used the democratically legitimate and illegitimate reactions from the Muslim community which were "heated, complete with demonstrations, fierce condemnations and even a bomb threat from a 17 year old boy" to act as "protectors of Danish values" and to condemn Muslim respect for freedom of expression. In what may be his most important insight, Omar Sayid Shah notes that, in light of long-standing hostility towards Muslims in Denmark and the political orientation of Jyllands-Posten,

[t]he fact that a leading "quality" newspaper had so clearly violated the sensitivities of the Muslims citizens of Denmark seemed irrelevant. The Muslim reaction was widely misreported in the press, as anger over the flaunting of the Muslim prohibition against drawing the Prophet, rather than anger over the shameless and derogatory way in which he had been depicted.

Similarly, other weblogs by both European Muslims and non-Muslims pick up on this theme of respect for democratic freedoms. One Muslim writer living in the UK calling herself "Kitty Killer" (<http://kittykittykillkill.blogspot.com/2006/01/free-speech-problem-with-cartoons.html>, January 31, 2006) upholds the right of the press to publish the cartoons, noting that,

[e]ventually** these stereotypes will succumb to a far greater, scarier force than the long arm of the law - public attitudes. If standards on Islamophobia progress in the same way as they have with regards anti-Semitism and Afro-Caribbeans***, then eventually newspaper editors will feel it inappropriate to print such toss.

Another, calling himself Indigo Jo comments on his experiences at a free speech rally in London on March 26, 2003, noting that:

(http://www.blogistan.co.uk/blog/mt.php/2006/03/26/another_weekend_another_rally, March 26, 2006):

It never seems to occur to people that Muslims object to this vilification not because they want to silence debate about religion, but because they fear that it may lead to violence, and particularly when it is accompanied by rhetoric about Muslims grooming and pimping white girls in Yorkshire.

The importance of the comment is found in the author's advocacy of free speech, and the limits imposed on it, where it strays into hate speech and intolerant violence. Importantly, he also notes the performative aspects of representations of Islam in the media, and the potentially violent repercussions. While certainly more scarce, non-Muslim Europeans such as Peter Tatchell also seem to support the commensurability of Muslims with democracy and more importantly the recognition of long standing tensions between "Europe" and Islam.

(http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/peter_tatchell/2006/03/free_speech_and_leftwing_1ies.html, March 27, 2006). Tatchell, a self-proclaimed "human rights campaigner, and a member of the queer rights group OutRage! and the left wing of the Green party", maintains his weblog at the British *Guardian* newspaper's website. Contributing to the heterogeneity of opinions among non-Muslim Europeans, he comments on the contributions of Muslims to rational thought and democratic freedoms, while making linkages to the intolerance of European political parties. He writes,

Muslim countries like Bangladesh have produced Enlightenment icons such as the feminist writer Taslima Nasreen; while supposedly cultured nations like Britain and France have spawned the Dark Ages intolerance of the British National Party and the Front National.

Here we see a direct refutation of the claims to the incommensurability of Muslim values with modern European democracy. The preceding weblogs show both Muslims and non-Muslims resisting the discourse of the dominant ideological discursive formation by engaging in acts of free expression in democratically legitimate ways. While it was frequently claimed that the main injury against Muslims was in the portrayal

of the Prophet alone, which is forbidden as a form of idolatry (for two examples, see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4567940.stm>, December 29, 2005 and <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,398624,00.html>, February 1, 2006), this is rarely mentioned within the weblogs of those who objected to the publication of the cartoons⁸. This perception in fact changed over time as the deliberative process began to work and the voices of Muslims who objected to the cartoons were heard. In fact, if we examine the weblog responses of Muslims, what were perceived as far greater injuries were the nature of the portrayal (as stereotypical and racist), the culturalizing effects of the cartoons and other similar portrayals of Muslims as inherently violent in mainstream media and throughout the dominant ideological discursive formation, and the misrepresentation of Muslim objections, which were not all violent or intolerant of free speech.

As a form of resistance, weblogs can be seen as an important site for challenging the limits of tolerance/intolerance. As part of the ongoing deliberative process, weblogs contribute not only to creating heterogeneity of discourses through more even access, but also as a site where dialogue can occur. While some weblogs do not stray far from their prevailing ideologies and in fact approached the cartoon debate polemically, weblogs as a discourse genre cannot escape the deliberative process. Because they are an open forum for discussion, participants are actively engaging with other discourses and challenging prevailing ideologies. This occurs within both dominant and subjugated discourses. Both are forced to confront their opponents by opening themselves up to the possibilities of conversation. This dialogue is far from perfect, as weblog owners are free to remove comments, and may choose not to engage with those who disagree with their positions (<http://eteraz.wordpress.com/2006/05/08/no-more-an->

⁸ The prohibition on images depicting the prophet is subject to interpretation, like much of Islam, Judaism and Christianity. While some claim that there is no specific injunction contained in the Koran, others have interpreted it differently, citing different verses that indicate a ban similar to that found in Judaism and Christianity on the portrayal of God leading to idolatry. Like much of the cartoon debate, these arguments have been variously recontextualized by all parties concerned to suit their various political and social interests in issues surrounding the cartoon debate. While a wider discussion of Islam and the prohibition of images falls outside the scope of this paper, it is important to note how parties on all sides of the debate were able to use this point to legitimize or delegitimize the actions of other parties to suit their political agendas.

infidel, May 8, 2006)⁹. Nevertheless, there is something productive at work in the weblogs as an opening move towards a wider dialogue and a truly pluralistic “European Society”. By at least offering the possibility of open dialogue and debate, weblogs have the potential to make further important contributions to the deliberative process.

Self/Other

While “European Studies” and the “European Project” have been primarily concerned with functional approaches to the economic and juridical integration of European Member States within the EU, the more recent failure of the constitutional treaty in 2005 is indicative of a new phase (Balibar, 2004). In order to work toward the full realization of the “European Project”, Europe has more recently found itself dealing with the problems of social integration. Central to this problem is the second limit that this paper addresses. This is the problem of identity, whose limit is located at the juncture between self and other (Benhabib, 2006, p. 177). The two notions are necessarily bound together as one reinforces the other. Notions of self are inherently connected to notions of otherness, as one cannot be what one is not. At the same time, through the homogenizing process necessary to define identity and reduce it to its essence, it also necessarily includes what it seeks to exclude by virtue of the heterogeneity of the population of modern societies. To ascribe intolerance in the “Other” vests these characteristics to varying degrees within the “Self” as it is a performative act (Borradori, 2003, p. 147). This problem is multiplied when it is assigned as a fundamental characteristic of group identity.

In Europe, this problem is further exacerbated by the complexities of locating any semblance of a “European” self in the first instance. At a loss for any other form of identity, Europe could historically turn to the “Other” both internally, as it did through its Jewish population most commonly until the Second World War, and externally, as with

⁹ This post contains an interesting discussion of this issue. The owner of this particular weblog, a Muslim who advocates free speech and supported the publication of the cartoons while also denouncing their message, joined a weblog community composed mostly of right-wing Christians. Following several exchanges in which he attempted to explain the “Muslim” position on various issues, he eventually had one of his posts removed from the weblog. In protest of the violation of his right to free speech amid a steady stream of verbal abuse he chose to leave that particular community.

the "Orient" and colonial possessions, taken as oppositional poles (Goldberg, 2006). Republican citizenship is seen as a way out of the binary relationship of self/other. Constitutionally based citizenship presents an inclusive notion of the political "self" based on universal principles mediated by democratic and deliberative processes that seek to escape from an entirely normative conception of organizing principles. The "European Project" makes two simultaneous and possibly contradictory moves. It works towards the elimination of difference at the meta or macro level while also striving for diversity and difference at the local or micro level.

The Denmark cartoon debate demonstrates the complexities of this double move towards broader social inclusion. Europe now has to extract not only its own constructed image of Islam from the self/other dichotomy as a key defining feature of European identity, while also having to face the limits of the notion of identity itself. To add a further layer of complexity to this puzzle, European Muslims too are also faced with a similar problem. How can Islam, as divinely revealed religion with its own attendant demands and ethical practices, adapt to the requirements of republican citizenship and the self/other relationship?

Further critical discourse analysis of weblogs will explore these tensions by looking at the responses of Muslims and non-Muslims to the limits of self/other. How did both Muslims and non-Muslims respond to the challenges posed by the notion of self and other and can the deliberative process in fact work towards resolving this fundamental tension? Is there something more at stake in the publication of the Jyllands-Posten cartoons than the issue of free speech and tolerance?

While modernists like Jurgen Habermas appeal to notions of tolerance as a vital element of citizenship and propose republican citizenship as a way around the limits of self/other, poststructuralists and post-modernists including Derrida and Lyotard respectively, strenuously object to this formulation of the problem. Instead, they advocate a notion of hospitality that, unlike the notion of tolerance, sets no limit on inclusion/exclusion. Derrida locates tolerance as a conditional hospitality. However, he also acknowledges that "a limited tolerance is clearly preferable to an absolute intolerance" (Borradori, 2003, p. 128), while admitting that "[a]n unconditional hospitality is, to be sure, practically impossible to live" (Borradori, 2003, p. 129). By its

very nature it would have to be undefined so that it could exist without limits. Therefore, it could not be inscribed either politically or juridically within a society. Following Habermas' model of deliberative democracy, Benhabib critically assesses the postmodern objection to tolerance (Benhabib, 1994). In her account, 'republican foundationalists' such as Derrida and Lyotard strongly condemn the foundational violence of the political act of constitution-making and its homogenizing features. While analysis of the weblogs demonstrate how Muslim and non-Muslim Europeans construct their respective others, by establishing a collective identity where none existed before, constitutions with their "logic of 'We'" confuse a constative with a performative and similarly work to construct a political "self" in this case.

For example, in proclaiming 'We' the people, The French and American constitutions, do not necessarily speak for the people. Instead, the act that the constitution performs is that it establishes a people. It is in this performative moment that the exclusion occurs. The constitutional act performs two functions. First, it inscribes the 'We' and constitutes a historically contingent populace that may or may not actually have access to the procedure of making the constitution. Secondly, it also inscribes the 'We' to whom the nascent law will apply, re-inscribing the limit of self/other. (Benhabib, 1994). The law only applies to those included in this original conception of who constitutes the state. However, these two functions performed by constitutions are not inherently the same. While Benhabib agrees with the notion of foundational violence, particularly noting the exclusion of Native Americans and African Slaves living in the 13 American colonies at the time of American Independence, she notes that this line of reasoning makes two crucial errors. First, it ignores the content of the democratic constitution itself. It establishes the freedoms that allow for an ongoing political, social and intellectual process to begin. Secondly, "[i]t is the ethos of democratic politics that the privilege of being counted an equal is always contested and essentially contestable" (Benhabib, 1994, p. 8). While there is a foundational violence located within the political act of democratic constitution-making, this violence is necessary in order to establish effective authority and legitimacy. The foundational violence of the constitutional act, with its potential for exclusion, is countered by the (at least formally peaceful) processes it inscribes. Modern, democratic constitutions allow for contestation, deliberation and the

legitimate exercise of authority. While there is a clear tension between modern thought and poststructuralist and post-modern thought, the tension between the two schools can be reconciled through the common goal of attaining context-transcending truth, no matter how elusive. For both, it is through persistent critique not only of specific policies, but social institutions and practices that this is possible. While the basis for law and its justification is disputed, what is accepted is the need to re-evaluate, critique and reformulate it when necessary. This is a process that is necessary in order to overcome the limits of self and other. Agreeing with both Jacques Derrida and Jean-Francois Lyotard, Benhabib notes that "the task of philosophical politics today is the conceptualizations of new forms of association that will let the 'differend' appear in our midst" (Benhabib, 1994, p. 16).

It is also important to note that beneath Habermas' constitutional democracy, is the notion of the ideal speech situation that emerged from his theory of communicative action. This ideal speech situation would allow equal communication and the free flow of information without barriers and equal discourse rights for all participants. Richard Bernstein notes that Habermas is frequently misread as advocating an ideal form of life, where all violence and conflict could be settled by rational argumentation through the elimination of normatively based claims. He points out that Habermas recognizes the difficulty of doing away with the historical, normative basis of truth claims. Instead, what he is striving towards is establishing the conditions by which "the only relevant force is the 'force of the better argument'" (Bernstein, 1991, p. 204). Nevertheless, speaking in more practical terms, what happens when this ideal speech situation does not occur? What types of outcomes will emerge in cases where media discourses (guided by elites (Chomsky and Herman, 1988)¹⁰) interrupt this free flow of information and rational communication? What Habermas' account may be missing is a critical evaluation of power relations and their effect on communication.

In the case of the Denmark Cartoon debate, we witness a potential rupture in Habermas' notion of constitutional democracy. The cartoons challenged the ability of Muslims to engage in modern practices of self-criticism and tolerance that constitutional

¹⁰ See Chomsky and Herman (1988) for a much fuller elaboration of uneven elite representation in media discourses.

democracy relies upon. Habermas' discourse ethics are predicated on the notion that for any truth claim to be valid it must open itself to all other competing claims. Thus, it goes without saying that it may be impossible to integrate any group that makes "fundamentalist" claims incompatible with constitutional democracy. What then becomes problematic in the Denmark cartoon debate is the ascription of "fundamentalist" to any claim that objects to the characterization of Islam within the publication. Is it not possible as a Muslim to legitimately object to the publication of "openly racist cartoons" that also constitute a religious slur (Henkel, 2006a) without being accused of intolerance and incompatibility with basic democratic freedoms? It is here that we encounter the limit of self/other. The construction of a fundamentalist "Other" historically, and in this case, within European mainstream media can be seen more as a reflection of Europe's own difficulties in negotiating the identities of its own Member States than as a valid response to inclusionary claims made by European Muslims.

Locating what could constitute a coherent collective idea of Europe as both a political and cultural entity is a complex task. Politically, one of the defining characteristics of Europe may be found in its political organization, as distinct from other similarly loosely imagined geographical regions. This can be characterized as a historical progression towards increasingly representative forms of popular government, with historical roots in Greek and Roman republicanism (Pagden, 2002). While these forms of government has taken on many different shapes, evidenced most recently by cold war politics, the fragmentation of Europe into culturally, nationally and ethnically distinct states would seem to suggest far greater internal heterogeneity than is often recognized.

Imperial expansionism, was broadly seen in Europe as the victory of its own systems of belief, culture and political organization over all others. Stemming from this was the impetus to universalize these normative ideals by shaping the rest of the world in its own image. The Enlightenment seemed to provide the moral and philosophical justification for this early period of European expansion. While Kantian cosmopolitanism in particular did not necessarily advocate a violent cultural, political or economic form of imperialism, it nevertheless promoted what has become the "regulative ideal" (Tully, 2002, p. 334) of a natural, legitimate, universally recognized world order. It is from this "regulative ideal" of moral universalism that Europe draws its strongest

sense of self. However, bound up with the colonial violence that accompanied this period, this aspect of Kantian cosmopolitanism is based on a fundamental contradiction.

As Anthony Pagden notes, this history “has created a double imposition for most modern European states: the need to repudiate their imperial past while clinging resolutely to the belief that there can be no alternative to the essentially European liberal democratic state” (Pagden, 2002, p. 11). As a result, competing conceptions of political and social organization are marginalized and other forms of identity are subjugated to an inherently European notion of cosmopolitanism with roots in 14th century Christianity (Jordan, 2002). The notion of a pluralistic Europe, which is the natural moral and philosophical outgrowth of cosmopolitanism, also competes with a history of violence and global inequality with which it is fundamentally incompatible. How then can the “European Project” include Muslims when it is so crucially connected not only to a loose idea of what Europe actually is, but also tied to Europe as a space of “continuing Christian tradition?” (Pagden, 2002, p. 12) Europe is now faced with the limits of self/other as it must move beyond a conception of itself in opposition to Islam (just as it once stood in opposition to Soviet communism). With its basis in Kantian cosmopolitanism, Europe must live up to the inclusionary standards of republican citizenship that have stood as its defining characteristic.

Further critical discourse analysis of European weblogs demonstrates how both Muslim and non-Muslim Europeans negotiate the limits of self/other. These weblogs demonstrate the ways in which Europe and European Muslims construct their respective “Other”, and base their notions of “Self” on socially constructed readings of race. The weblogs selected are located in Europe, and respond both directly and indirectly to the limit of self/other posed by the notion of a “European identity”. Discussed below, what is most evident and problematic about these weblogs, is the lack of meaningful dialogue between respondents on the subject of identity.

The weblog of Omar Sayyid Shah introduced earlier offers anecdotal insights into the limits of self/other as encountered by Muslims living in Denmark. Discussing a recent football match between Denmark and Sweden, he notes that of his 12 Muslim friends who watched the match together, 11 supported Sweden. Asked why this was the case, the response was, “Because it isn’t Denmark, and at least they’ve got Ibrahimovic

[the Bosnian Muslim player]. How many Muslims or even immigrants do you see on the Danish team?" (<http://al-miftah.blogspot.com/2006/07/immigrants-muslims-and-new-danes.html>, July 1, 2006). This response, he notes, is somewhat unsurprising given popular Danish attitudes towards Muslims. He later notes the controversial remarks of various politicians on Muslims in Denmark. These include:

Danish Cultural Minister Brian Mikkelsen's comment that, Not all values are equally valid and our society is superior. Medieval Islamic culture can never be as valid as ours.

Many immigrants think that the Muslim culture is equal to the Danish, and expect us to accept this position. Karen Jespersen, former interior minister (Social Democrats).

In 1900, they would not have been able to imagine that so many neighborhoods in Copenhagen would be inhabited by people from a lower level of civilization. Pia Kjaersgaard (head of the Danish People's Party, which is anti-immigration).

Muslims should be interned in camps, better to be safe than sorry. Inge Dahl-Soerensen (Liberal Party).

and

Muslim youth consider it a right to rape Danish girls...and are like a cancer that should be surgically removed." Louise Frevert (Danish People's Party).

Therefore, he points out, it is hardly surprising to see the apprehensiveness of his friends in offering their support to the Danish team, particularly given that some of the above politicians were in fact members of more moderate ruling governments and not members of extremist fringe parties. Removed from their proper context and without accurate sources of explanation, this list of comments achieves a global coherence that clearly goes towards demonstrating a level of intolerance in Denmark that may fail to take into account the statements of opposition politicians and parties. Nevertheless, as public figures and leaders of the dominant discursive community, these comments are instructive in explaining how a popular Danish newspaper could conceive of publishing the cartoons of the prophet Muhammad.

Omar Sayid Shah also notes that,

In recent years, the concept "Christian foundations of the nation" has made a remarkable appearance in Danish politics despite the fact that Denmark is one of the most secular countries in Europe, with the majority of the population being self-confessed agnostic or atheist. Right-wing parties have seized upon their Christian heritage and cynics note that the Christian declaration of faith seems to have been reduced to "I am not a Muslim."

Clearly these comments demonstrate the limits of self/other, as the perception of the writer, is that it is the Danes, and more widely, "Europeans" who are reliant on an essential "Othering" in order to constitute their own identity. Shah goes on to say,

The parliament recently debated the mandatory spreading of immigrant students across schools to have fewer in each class. The main benefit envisaged was not academic progress but rather that teachers would have an easier time teaching subjects such as history and social studies, which 'Highly politicized Muslim students usually sabotaged!'

Here, one could safely assume that the difficulty teachers were having was a result of resistance to the limit of self/other contained in the construction of subjects through the dominant institutionalized curriculum. Schools and national education systems, according to Foucault, are fundamental institutions in the matrix of power/knowledge and constitution of future citizens. Thus, national education systems are an important site for the exercise of governmentality and the subjugation of knowledges, to which students resisted.

Furthermore, Shah also addresses the limits of the self/other relationship among Danish Muslims. He notes that,

the youth have developed a relatively strong "non-Danish" or even "anti-Danish" immigrant identity (including non-Muslim immigrants), espousing a sense of isolation and a cult of victimization. This has fostered a relatively strong and vocal reactionary minority culture.

Additionally, he adds that,

Girls wearing black jilbabs while listening to rap music is not an uncommon sight. Ten years ago, it would have been difficult to find a non-Arab or a young Arab wearing a jilbab or even the hijab (head covering). But it has

now become the default clothing of religious and even semi-religious girls. This is partly because of the immense success of Salafism and Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT), which consider wearing the jilbab an obligation. But perhaps even more importantly, it has become a signal of defiance because it's a garment the Danish society hates....there is an increased feeling of loyalty among Muslims, and the Islamic language and symbols are being adopted by Muslims who are generally not considered "practicing." For example, it is not uncommon to hear semi-religious Muslims defend owning guns by saying "It's sunnah to be strapped!"

It appears then, that there may be a similar current at least among sections of Muslim youth that also encounters the limit of self/other. Much like European identity, which encounters its limit oppositionally, Muslim youth culture may exhibit a similar relational process of identity formation.

Shah also discusses the heterogeneity of Muslim immigrants in Denmark whose origins extend to North Africa, the Arab world and Southeast Asia. He notes the reifying effects of hostile Danish attitudes towards Muslims as essentially "other" and the emergence of a distinct Muslim/immigrant identity. This Muslim/immigrant identity is diametrically opposed to a perceived European identity whose only defining characteristic is its open hostility towards outside cultures.

Heiko Henkel (Henkel, 2006a) points out that there is an important tension in the evolution of modern democracies and modern Islam. Habermas' generally accepted genealogy of modern democracies notes that they are based in political and historical narratives that reject religious orthodoxy and religion as divine revelation. "Religious" Muslims (like any orthodox observer of religion) however, have not fully experienced or do not accept this rejection. Instead, their genealogy is based on a continual reinterpretation of their place in modern society, with which they are increasingly involved. It is therefore difficult for "religious" Muslims to appropriate the logic of republican citizenship in the way its supporters intend. While many Muslims, particularly in Europe, have had to reconcile their religious views with those of democracy, this is not based on the same type of religious rejection on which republican citizenship is prefaced. This is not to say that there cannot be a place for Muslims in the "European Project", but rather that advocates of republican citizenship should be more

cautious about the lack of difficulties foreseen in the process of inclusion. As Henkel notes,

To make 'fundamentalism' the dominant term in the public debate, however, is unhelpful. It suggests that we know in principle all that needs to be known about religious Muslims in Europe, in the absence of any real engagement with the concerns and aspirations of communities that have often come to embrace democratic society along different historical trajectories (Henkel, 2006a).

The ideal of republican citizenship is also being resisted in many corners of Europe by supporters of traditional notions of locally based "European identity". "The Brussels Journal: the essential European blog" (<http://www.brusselsjournal.com>) is maintained in Brussels, Belgium by "European journalists and writers". The biographical information on the weblog states that "We defend freedom and, though we do not pretend to know the ultimate truth, we strive to acquire as much knowledge as possible by presenting facts and views that are hard to find in the "consensus-media" of Europe" (<http://www.brusselsjournal.com/about>). In this case, the term "consensus-media" is meant to indicate a resistance to the homogenizing force of the "European Project" and increased tolerance of the "Other". It is interesting to observe how in this case, resistance to the dominant ideological discursive formation is emblematic of the difficulties Europe is having in coming to terms with the limit of self/other. Supporters of traditional notions of self/other based on national culture, ethnicity and religion are inherently reticent to do away with this limit, which is so fundamental to perceived notions of "European identity". This reticence is evidenced in the following weblog entries, through a constructed image of Muslims both globally, and within Europe, who are assumed to be fundamentally incompatible with democratic freedoms and democratic society. It also raises questions as to the characteristics and even the existence of a dominant ideological discursive formation within Europe.

The dominant ideological discursive formation at the "European" or EU level seems to promote a cosmopolitan vision for Europe based on universal inclusion and republican based citizenship. However, at local levels, dominant ideological discursive formations frequently counter the perceived homogenizing tendencies of the ideological discursive formation at the European level in favor of forms of more particularistic

notions of identity rooted in traditional culture, ethnicity, and nationalism. This tension is fundamental to the problem of the "European Project". The common ground between universal and particularistic notions of identity thus rests in the limit of self/other. "It is easier to define what we are not, then what exactly it is that we are". Anthony Pagden points out that while in Europe there is recognition of Europe's historically heterogeneous culture, it only provides "for a measure of self-description, it is hardly the basis for a distinctive culture" (Pagden, 2002, p. 26). It is this lack of a coherent internal sense of self that so frequently finds "Europe" looking outwards for its own definition.

In the "Brussels Journal" weblog and many others, the discussion of the response to the publication of the cartoons creates this link to the limit of self/other. In the discussion (<http://www.brusselsjournal.com/node/756>, February 4, 2006) of the boycott against Danish products in certain Muslim countries, avowed "libertarian" Paul Belien (<http://www.brusselsjournal.com/paulbelien>) reveals that the international French supermarket chain Carrefour removed Danish products from the shelves of all its stores in Muslim countries. This removal was accompanied by a sign that read "*Carrefour don't carry Danish products*" in both the local language and in English (italics from original). The result, when the image was disseminated across the internet, was a boycott of Carrefour in Belgium and other European countries. Belien notes that, "[t]his illustrates how in the 'cartoon war' it will be hard to remain neutral. Everyone will be forced to take sides." The issue is framed as a binary opposition, either "you are for us or against us". Here, the suggestion is that as a "European" it would be counterintuitive to be in favor of the boycott of Danish products. As a supporter of democratic freedoms it is necessary to retaliate using identical tactics. These tactics, oddly enough, seem to gain legitimacy based on who exercises them. This construction of legitimacy/illegitimacy mirrors the logic of the limits of self/other in Europe and its attendant contradictions. Just as traditional notions of a European self rely on a constructed "other", the illegitimacy of the protests against the cartoons are similarly constructed. While the cartoons themselves constructed an essentialized Islam incompatible with inherently European basic democratic freedoms, the reactions to these objections ignored the basic freedoms on which they were premised. It is important to recall that these debates also

take place within a wider episteme based on discourse that characterizes Islam as necessarily incompatible with "Europe".

What is most evident in the weblogs, however, is the lack of meaningful dialogue on the subject of identity. While there is often quite lively debate in the comment sections of many weblogs on freedom of speech, freedom of expression, hate speech, and multiculturalism, for instance, there is a noticeable paucity of anything other than polemical statements on identity. Far from a Habermasian discourse ethics notion of opening any claim to all competing claims as a measure of legitimacy, frequently the comments are intentionally offensive, openly racist and bigoted, and at times threatening. A small selection of comments responding to the same entry discussed above at the "Brussels Journal" website contained the following:

The first commenter, "Foster" states,

(sic)Muslims are just plain dumb. They are barbarian and anger people who should just stay in their dusty ugly little countries and leave the rest of the world alone. I for one do not tolerate other religions that practice violence. Islam isn't the way to truth, God, or Mohammed. Mohammed was just a normal man, who dreamed up all this crap. The Koran is not a holy book, but merely the work of a mere mortal. Islamic countries rule by force, slavery, and fear. You call that religion? I feel so bad for the poor people in the Middle East and how terribly they are treated by these so called religious leaders. These muslims want world acceptance and want us to be tolerant of them, but yet they can't tolerate our fundamental beliefs or freedoms. These people remind me of Hitler's regime. Long live Denmark, Britain, USA, and any other country that hopefully will have balls to stand up these idiots (<http://www.brusselsjournal.com/node/756#comment-4124>, February 5, 2006).

The second commenter, "bashar" says,

(sic) there where you find teh seven eleven up your mom ass to pour your beer..befor uniting the woouooooooooooooooooorld against muslim strait out your shit in irak asshole win that war they blowing your soldiers asses to pieces poor soldiers i feel pitty for them....there in irak they are indeed pissing on your bible or the tora adn shuffling the cross up the american woman prisioners sorry pussy and the soldieres asses and they are feeding the bible papers to teh camels....staright out irak first and then unite the world against muslim...

you should be proud by your american lousy drug addict society and HIV mentality sick bastard lastest news from haven they found your jesus HIV

positive asshole (<http://www.brusselsjournal.com/node/756#comment-3969>, February 5, 2006).

The following comment by "Jack Straw" is one of the many responses to the above commenter:

Here's what this brilliant Renaissance Man has to say -- I'm now quoting his profile in its entirety:

"asshole you shit europen" (sic)

There you have it.

So, Europe and Europeans:

Stand up to the Islamo-Fascists!

Do not be ashamed to be masters in your own house.

If Europe doesn't adhere to and defend its own civic and cultural values, someone else is ready and eager to take over and be your masters.

In America, we have our own problems with Christianist bigots.

Don't let the Islamo-Fascists dictate how you may live in your own house!

Just as Christians and Jews in Islamic countries must behave according to Islamic laws and customs, Moslems should respect European values in Europe.

There is nothing else that can legitimately be said about this, though I'm sure there's a non-European anus out there who will have something else illiterate to say (<http://www.brusselsjournal.com/node/756#comment-3997>, February 5, 2006).

While I have only provided a very small and purposefully selected sample, the internet abounds with these types of (frequently anonymous) comments. Furthermore, theories of republican citizenship seems to offer little insight into these complex reactions. While the separation of ethnos and demos cannot be expected to happen overnight, supporters of republican citizenship may be overly optimistic about the straightforwardness of this process. To further complicate the matter, the deliberative

process by which these types of tensions are to resolve themselves is constrained. The uneven access to systems of power/knowledge in both European and Muslim states necessarily constrains access to the public sphere. Therefore, the terms of the debate are often constructed with extreme rigidity and mutual suspicion of the "other" as a co-opting force, to advance the political agendas of the dominant ideological discursive formation. This can be seen through comments such as, "Muslims are just plain dumb. They are barbarian[s] and anger [angry] people", "you should be proud by [of] your american lousy drug addict society and HIV mentality", and "Don't let the Islamo-Fascists dictate how you may live in your own house!" These comments are themselves caricatures of how different discursive communities essentialize their respective "Other".

Just as Europe is confronting the limits of self/other in its search for an identity compatible with republican citizenship that still maintains some semblance of local cultural and ethnic identity, Islam too faces a similar struggle. The suggestion that entire historical traditions are easily shed and must be shed to comport with republican ideals of citizenship undermines the ambitions of republican citizenship. Its goal is not the elimination of difference, but rather to allow for the existence of a plurality of ideals of the "good life" under the umbrella of a shared political culture based on a contested notion of universal values. While "Europe" is suspicious that its Muslim population will strip it of the values it sees as fundamental to its identity, Muslims are equally suspicious that it must forego essential elements of its own religious identity. In order to surpass the limit of self/other, if this is indeed possible, both "Europe" and its Muslim citizens must allow for the existence of the "Other" within itself to create the necessary fusion of horizons that republican citizenship demands. To continually frame the "other" as fundamentalist, hostile, or "satanic" (practices that some on both sides of the debate engage in) is ultimately counterproductive to the process of deliberative democracy. However, the weblogs reveal the difficulty of the notion of self/other insofar as it entails an understanding of identity which presupposes a self-enclosed totality. To move beyond this limit requires recognition that both sides of the self/other distinction are not homogeneous and mutually exclusive and that elements of the "other" exist in the "self".

Essentialism/De-Essentialism

The reduction of a “European self” to an inalterable essence performs an essentialism that cannot speak to the heterogeneity of modern European society. Much like the objections to the essentialism performed by the Jyllands-Posten cartoons against Muslims, to speak of a coherent, fixed “European identity” ignores the iterative process that continually reshapes identity. Nevertheless, one cannot even begin to speak of any form of identity without performing some measure of essentialism. While any notion or ascription of identity requires critical intervention to detotalize its inclusionary/exclusionary features, there is also a danger in de-essentializing identity. If key historical narratives and cultural practices are removed or treated as inconsequential, important bases for identity may cease to (Kassab, Elizabeth, Suzanne, 2002). Thus, in order to accommodate traditional forms of “European identity” with an emerging “European Islam”, it is important that neither one falls prey to a homogenizing process where its essential characteristics are lost. At the same time, recognition of group identity as the result of historical, socio-political forces needs to be recognized. A heterogeneous body of European cultural, ethnic and national traditions must co-exist alongside a similarly heterogeneous group of Muslims who are not forced to give up one of their own crucially defining characteristics: Islam. In order to make the “European Project” work, Europe must cautiously approach the limit of essentialism/de-essentialism in order to avoid the pitfalls of an overly exclusive identity or an excessively reductionist identity that does not allow for the emergence of the pluralistic society that is its goal.

Talal Asad notes the tensions between traditional notions of “European identity”, and Islam’s place within Europe (Asad, 2002). What is most useful in his account is the discussion of what I refer to as the limit of essentialism/de-essentialism. His critique of Enlightenment claims to universality and the prospects for republican citizenship asserts that, beyond the sheer difficulty of shedding historical experience, a central problem of republican citizenship is the question of whether or not this is even desirable, and to what extent. In his account, the universalism of the “European project” is an extension of a “European history” that has sought to reconstruct the world “in its own Faustian image” (Asad, 2002, p. 218). This universal account requires the de-essentialization of Islam, a

hostile and violent European construction, to allow for the assimilation of a necessarily "other" people. Additionally, Asad demonstrates how "Islam" is historically constructed as a "carrier civilization" without any intrinsic values. Its sole historical role is to import "Oriental" technology and ideas, whose connection to Islam is purely coincidental, to its opposite civilizational pole in "Europe". Following from this reading, Muslims would be required to give up what is essential to their identity (Islam itself) in order to assimilate into "European" society. This is made that much easier by a notion of universalism based on a conception of a universal identity stripped of historical experience. In this case, Muslim historical experience is delegitimized first as hostile and violent and secondly, as largely inconsequential to the historical narrative of Europe. This construction of alterity is fundamental to the construction of European identity. Thus, for Asad, the cultural imperialism of the "European project", based on Enlightenment universalism, is merely a continuation of European colonialism within its own territory.

For Asad and other critics of the possibility of the presence of Islam in Europe, the dominant ideological discursive formation offers two equally untenable positions. The conservative right offers an essentialized account of the violent Muslim incommensurable with European values, as seen in the Jyllands-Posten cartoons. The liberal left, similarly responding to the normative force of historical portrayals of Islam, advocates a de-essentialized Muslim identity that would strip it of its essential religious component in order to fit it into liberal multicultural society. However, notions of liberal multiculturalism maintain an element of unequal power insofar as they are predicated upon the tolerance of a minority by a majority. Again, here we encounter the limits of tolerance/intolerance. For Asad, what is more tenable is a decentered pluralism that would deconstruct all forms of identity and create a condition where Muslims would be a "minority among minorities" (Asad, 2002, p. 225). This would strip liberal multiculturalism of the power dynamics that Habermas' republican citizenship similarly aims to avoid. The important distinction between the two, though, is in Habermas' rational reconstruction of tolerance. While Habermas' acceptance of tolerance is based on a critical reappropriation of enlightenment rationality, Asad's is located within the critical deconstruction of tolerance and its genealogy.

What Muslims in Europe require, if we accept Asad's account, is not mere recognition as adherents of a private faith that should be respected by the public law, or as possessors of a social identity that needs to be protected by the state. Rather, Muslims need to be "able to live as part of a collective way of life that exists beside others in mutual tolerance" (Asad, 2002, p. 227). What is vital to Asad's account is that Muslims in Europe be allowed to exist as a minority without being de-essentialized to the point where their unique identity as a minority group is lost. The claim to universal respect of difference has to be honoured to allow for the existence of both traditional forms of European identity and Muslim identity within a constitutionally defined political framework.

Republican citizenship seeks to avoid the majority culture's influence and dominance of political discourse by virtue of its inherently close relation to the political culture. By defining membership constitutionally, a political framework can be created that allows for the pluralistic societies that modern democracies demand. However, Asad and other critics of the "European project" are skeptical about whether or not this is truly possible due to the inherent "Europeanness" of the very notion of universal rights, republican citizenship and the historical development of these principles and practices.

Deliberative democracy however, is a site intended to allow for the mediation of competing essentializing and de-essentializing identity claims. While the Jyllands-Posten cartoons presented an essentialized image of Islam, the democratic political framework and its institutions allowed for the contestation not only of the publication of the images, but more importantly of their message. While the dominant ideological discursive formation accentuated the violence of Muslims outside of Europe to justify the essentialized portrayal of Islam, Muslims both inside and outside of Europe also used democratically legitimate forms of discourse to resist. As this work illustrates, political and economic demonstrations both in the streets, in weblogs and other discourse genres countered both the essentialized account of Islam, and the potentially de-essentializing thrust of Enlightenment universality.

In this account of Enlightenment rationality as inherently Eurocentric, an important distinction must be made between critical responses to the Jyllands-Posten cartoons by both secular and "religious" Muslims. Were the legitimate responses or lack

of response the result of socialization processes or in fact a product of some features of Islam that make it compatible with democratic freedoms? This determination is difficult to make as it problematizes the effect of the dominant ideological discursive formation on Muslim identity. A central question concerning "European Islam" then becomes: how it is possible to be "Muslim in Europe" without succumbing to the hegemony of the dominant ideological discursive formation? In the case of Muslims living in Europe, this question is complicated by their emigration from what are often illiberal and intolerant regimes within Muslim states (frequently supported by Western democratic states). The very act of wanting to be a part of "Europe" must be interpreted at least in some sense as both acceptance and rejection.

This point is highlighted in the following exchange on the weblog of Safia Aoude, a Danish mother, teacher, Danish Conservative Party candidate and religious Muslim¹¹. The exchange occurred in light of her comments on a photograph of right wing politician and Nasser Khader, whose Democratic Muslim movement took an active role in supporting the Jyllands-Posten publication. Khader is a Muslim member of the Danish Radikale Venstre party ("Radical Left") and member of the Danish parliament, while Frevert is a member of the right wing Folkesparti (Danish People's Party). Safia Aoude comments:

This is a picture of two politicians from our Danish parliament. They are in love with each other - in political love, that is. For Louise Frevert (left) peeking deep into the dark eyes of Nasser Khader (right) is a member of the National Danish People's Party - Denmark's islamophobic cavemen. Yes, it's like seeing Eva Braun in the arms of Theodore Hertzl! (<http://safiaaoude.blogspot.com/2006/02/dance-me-to-end-of-political-love.html>, February 10, 2006)

This elicited the following terse response from "Tarek" who is presumably Muslim, living in the "West", and originally from an "Arab" country:

I guess the \$64'000 question is: Would you accept if RADICAL CHRISTIANS moved to Libya and started telling everyone how they have to live ??

¹¹ Safia Aoude was embroiled in her own controversy after publishing altered pictures on her weblog that portrayed prominent Danish authors as Nazis. <http://safiaaoude.blogspot.com/2007/03/breaking-silence.html>

Truely, if you are so unhappy and not fulfilled in your Radical Islamic life in Denmark why dont you go and live in a more suitable environment for you and let the rest of us (who want to live the European way of life) live hre in peace with the nations that have offered us so much more than all our corrupt fanatic leaders in the Arab World ever will....

There is a saying in Arabic which goes : If your house is from glass dont go throwing rocks at others...

We have a talent at being very vocal and critical when it comes to anyone of a different faith/heritage but forget that 99% of our woes and problems come form within (<http://safiaaoude.blogspot.com/2006/02/dance-me-to-end-of-political-love.html#c114065133080002375>, February 10, 2006).

This exchange highlights the problem of governance within Muslim states as well as the foreign policies of Western governments towards those states and their leaders. This is an important point that goes beyond the scope of this work, but does address the difficulty of assessing the influence of the dominant ideological discursive formation (which in this case may demonstrate global influence, as well as European). Critiques of a de-essentialized "European Muslim identity" stripped of its religious character should also note the "self-selection" of European Muslims. The secular tendencies that are exhibited may be a result of some combination of socialization processes, and reaction to pre-discursive materiality in the home countries of secular Muslims.

This tension between essentialized/de-essentialized accounts of Islam begs the question: Does Islam itself allow for critical reevaluation without losing what is central to "Muslim identity", if such a thing can even exist? To reach this middle ground between essentialized and de-essentialized portrayals of Muslim identity requires recognizing the separation between the religious and social aspects of Islam¹². To deny this is to deny that it is possible for Muslims to be integrated and to co-exist within secular society. However, it is also valid to note that there are in fact a multiplicity of views on contemporary Islam, some of which are noticeably at odds with principles of republican

¹² Ramadan, Tariq (2002). Ramadan notes that while Islam is a divinely revealed religion with prescribed rules in the Quran and Sunna for religious practice (ibadat - worship), social practice does not carry with it the same type of rigidity. As a result, Muslims in Europe are not only allowed to reread and interpret Islam's religious sources, but are required to in their new social context in Europe. This means that a process of renewal (tajdid) is both possible and necessarily prescribed. Of course, there is no guarantee that this process will lead to integration and peaceful co-existence, but as he notes, it is only through mutual understanding that this is possible. For Ramadan, both Muslims and "Europeans" must understand that both of their respective discursive fields represent universal values that can indeed accommodate each other.

citizenship and deliberative democracy. Nevertheless, to deny Islam's ability to integrate within European society ignores Europe's long history of integrating disparate social groups and projects. To essentialize Islam as incompatible enables an epistemic violence against the overwhelming majority of Muslims in Europe who co-exist peacefully alongside secular society.

To use the example of post-war Germany, Habermas' oft-cited model of a constitutional republic, it is evident that it is possible to incorporate a variety of "discursive traditions with radically different ontological foundations and moral projects" (Henkel, 2007). Deliberative processes have shown that, rather than demonstrating fundamental difference, that it is in fact possible to reach a resolution as part of an ongoing dialogue. But this requires an ongoing engagement with Muslims to understand how they view themselves and interpret Islam. While studies of "European" understandings of Islam are important critical interventions, it is also fundamental to the deliberative process that Muslims representing a wide range of positions are brought into dialogue. To allow only secularized Muslims into dialogue with governments, as occurred in the cartoon debate¹³, delegitimizes and again essentializes the identity of religious Muslims. The deliberative process must avoid the "subjugation of knowledges" in order to allow for some common ground to emerge between essentialized and de-essentialized views of "European Muslims".

What complicates all this however, is that mutual essentializing and de-essentializing tendencies elevate the tensions between competing notions of identity. Calls for de-essentialism only reinforce the will of an essentialized group to reassert its identity and resist integration for fear of co-optation. Thus, the limit of essentialism/de-essentialism is realized in the simultaneous resistance to the Islamization of Europe and the Europeanization of Islam.

¹³ Safi Aoude's struggles within the Danish Conservative Party as well as her critiques of Nasser Khader on her weblog offer insight into this area. <http://safiaaoude.blogspot.com>. Similarly, Omar Sayid Shah deals with the issue of Muslim inclusion in mainstream politics within Denmark. <http://al-miftah.blogspot.com>.

Conclusion: Power, Resistance and Accommodation

In this essay I have conducted a critical discourse analysis of selected online commentaries located on the weblogs of Muslims and non-Muslims living in Europe. This approach provides valuable and necessary insights into the ideological and discursive formations that shaped the Denmark cartoon debate in particular, a more complete understanding of Islam and modernity, and the place of Muslims living in Europe. While liberal critics of differentiated rights and multiculturalism make claims regarding the neutral applications of rights and legal practices to treat all equally, they largely ignore existing power dynamics and uneven access to institutional power. In the case of the Jyllands-Posten cartoons, the objections of Muslims must be seen as part of a larger resistance to historical legacies of unequal power and the misrepresentations of Islam.

It is important to see the cartoons not merely as a statement by one particular newspaper at a specific moment in history. Here, Edward Said's book Orientalism (1994) is instructive in the historical construction of an Oriental "Other". Said uses Foucault's conceptions of both power/knowledge and discourse to show how the ideological framework constructed through Orientalist discourse in fact led to the real exercise of power/knowledge through European imperialism and provided its justification. This is a theme continued by writers like David Theo Goldberg, who notes that,

[t]he figure of the Muslim has thus come to stand for the fear of violent death, the paranoia of Europe's cultural demise, of European integrity. For the fear of the death of Europe itself. The Muslim image in contemporary Europe is one of fanaticism, fundamentalism, female (women and girls') suppression, subjugation, and repression. The Muslim, in this view, foments conflict: violence, war, militancy, terrorism, cultural dissension. He is a traditionalist, pre-modern, in the tradition of racial historicism difficult if not impossible to modernize, at least without ceasing to be 'the Muslim' (Goldberg, 2006, p. 346).

Drawing heavily on Foucault, Goldberg notes that power extends from the particular local sites where it is exercised to systems of governance as a whole. The construction of race as a category is embedded in locally configured power relations. In this same sense

then, responses to the initial publication itself must be read as either reinforcing or denying this power along with the image of Islam and 'The Muslim' in Europe. The media, through its ability to impart knowledge, plays an important role in what Foucault's has called governmentality, and is central in the transmission of discourses and ideologies. The image of the violent Muslim is not merely a response to a particular local debate within Danish society, but part of the longer genealogy of anxieties discussed in Goldberg's "Racial Europeanization" (Goldberg, 2006) and Said's Orientalism (1994). The Jyllands-Posten cartoons themselves merely provide a link between the specific debate occurring in Denmark on freedom of speech to the historical representation of Islam as violent and incompatible with basic democratic rights such as free speech. It is through the power of the images themselves that this message is delivered.

For Foucault, the privileging of discourses necessitates two simultaneous moves. These are the "enthronement of one body of genealogical knowledge and the discrediting and loss of legitimacy of those discourses that circulate about it" (Foucault, 1980, p. 85). Foucault's concern is not simply to discredit established knowledges, but rather with the centralizing power they possess and their totalizing claims to authority. The effect of such power is the subjugation of knowledges that "were present but disguised within the body of functionalist and systematizing theory" (Foucault, 1980, p. 82) and the creation of hierarchies of discourse that preserve systems of power and dominance, and that exclude critical discourses. This effect is enacted through what he terms "governmentality", namely, the decentralization of power in advanced democracies whereby the role of the government and its authority expand beyond mere territoriality or a centralized state. As Foucault argues, "with government it is a question not of imposing law on men, but of disposing things, that is to say, of employing tactics rather than laws, and even of using laws themselves as tactics – to arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such and such ends may be achieved" (Foucault, 1991, p. 95). This process has two important consequences. First, citizens are 'regulated' by the state and its institutions, and through discourses that ensure they conform and keep their behaviour in line with prevailing ideologies and discourses. The second consequence is found in the methods of self-regulation. In recognizing the need

for the state, its services and the protections it provides, citizens participate in subject formation through private and state-funded institutions such as family, prisons, the military, education and the media. Therefore, power is vested in the bodies of the citizenry, and not in strictly centralized state apparatuses that would be incompatible with liberal democracy (Foucault, 1980).

Rather than focus on the discourses of the state institutions that naturalize meanings and practices in shaping the dominant ideological discursive formation, this work focuses more on the “subjugated” discourses that circulate through traditional and non-traditional media. Following Foucault, I look at how dominant discourses are used to “govern” Muslims in Europe and subjugate discourses that threaten long established narratives that uphold notions of a “European” identity.

As an important instrument in the formation of subjectivity, ideology and discourses, mainstream media is an important institution for creating subjectivities and governing modern democracies. Discourses that challenge and resist dominant forms of institutional power are therefore excluded from mainstream media accounts. By contrast, weblogs demonstrate not only resistance to the Jyllands-Posten cartoons but also resistance to the longer genealogy of Europe-Muslim relations. The analysis of weblogs published demonstrates how the Jyllands-Posten cartoons reproduce subjectivities and how these constructed identities are resisted.

In my examination of the Jyllands-Posten publication of the cartoons, power can be understood first in terms of the asymmetric capability of participants within the debate to access and transform social institutions and formations. “Social formations” refers here to the relationship between mainstream media and power structures, including government and socio-economic structures, while “social institutions” refers to the relationship between the readers, editors and owners of the publications themselves (Fairclough, 1995). Secondly, power can be regarded as an outcome of the inequality that occurs in the production, distribution and consumption of texts. It is also important to understand that the discourse genre of the “newspaper editorial” operates within certain constraints. It offers the oft-politicized opinions of newspapers’ editorial boards that both invite and provoke responses from the public but are geared towards their own acknowledged audience of readers. Similarly, editorial cartoons frequently offer the

politicized views of newspaper editorial boards. However, this predominantly visual medium carries with it an entirely different set of constraints. While verbal, oral and written forms of communication offer a variety of lexical and grammatical resources of expression the graphic and visual nature of the depictions in editorial cartoons means that they have to be “read” differently. Since images often connote symbols, editorial cartoons which carry political meaning as the proxies of the editors that commission them must be read as political symbols (Diamond, 2002).

It is important to recognize that “symbolic constructs contribute to the creation and contestation of meaning within a given political context of power relations” (Diamond, 2002, p. 252). This means that they can either support the dominant ideological discursive formation or resist it. Furthermore, it is important to note that there are at least three central elements of symbols that political symbols likewise share (Kertzer, 1988). First, symbols are condensed representations: what could be expressed in numerous encyclopedic volumes is often depicted in a simple drawing. Second, symbols are multivocal: they do not speak with one voice but can be read as expressing a variety of speakers’ voices; the illustrator of a cartoon could be speaking for him/herself, as the voice of the newspaper editors, or as reflecting some segment of society (Diamond, 2002). This multivocality leads to the third crucial element found in symbols, which is ambiguity (Diamond, 2002). Symbols, perhaps even more so than other forms of discourse can have many readings, and in the case of editorial cartoons, this may be intentionally so. This is clearly evidenced within weblogs that address the Jyllands-Posten cartoons and the subsequent reactions to the publication. Therefore, as a discourse genre, editorial cartoons are frequently ambiguous. However, when they are properly contextualized, noting the historical period in which they are published, the socio-political orientation of the publishers, as well as the artist, these layers of ambiguity begin to disappear. Ultimately, the newspaper itself shapes semantic content (topics and the way they are discussed) by instructing readers how to properly interpret its message, and thereby contributing to the formation of the dominant ideological discursive formation.

As Foucault insists, power is invested not only in the government and its institutions but in the population itself, including those who legitimize and transfer their

authority to the state. Therefore, from the standpoint of this decentralization of power away from a central sovereign, we look at how power and biopolitical control is manifested through such systems as health, education, justice and the media (Danaher, Schirato, and Webb 2000, p. 125). Since power, whose ends may be indeterminate, is exerted not merely through ideology, but through discursive systems of knowledge that legitimize and justify its existence, the mainstream media plays an important role in regulating discursive flows. Publishers, broadcasters and content producers determine what constitutes an act of discourse or a discursive event, as they possess the ability to privilege or delegitimize specific acts of discourse over others. As a public institution, the media also establish as normative, a variety of truth claims, as a consequence of its role in democratic society as a guarantor of democratic legitimacy and truth. Noam Chomsky's work in this area addresses the role of the media in establishing the narrative that constitutes the dominant ideological discursive formation. He notes that "...reshaped or completely fabricated memories of the past [are] what we call 'indoctrination' or 'propaganda' when it is conducted by official enemies, and 'education', 'moral instruction' or 'character building' when we do it ourselves" (Chomsky, 1987, p. 124). The media therefore plays an important part in extending power from particular local sites to systems of governance as a whole both acting as an identifier of 'official' and unofficial enemies and as a source of normative truths.

While the exercise of power and knowledge is omnipresent, it is by no means omnipotent. There is always room for resistance. As Antonio Gramsci shows in "The Southern Question" (Gramsci, 1988), ruling classes are able to subordinate lower classes by allowing limited forms of resistance, provided they do not threaten the dominant power formation. In their book Empire (Hardt and Negri, 2000), Antonio Hardt and Michael Negri build upon both Gramsci's theory of hegemony as well as Foucault's conceptualization of power and show how the growth and excessive decentralization of power are providing new opportunities for resistance. This paper is specifically concerned with the emergence of online communities and weblogs that opposed the publication of the Jyllands-Posten cartoons, and their importance in resisting "Europe's" long historical "Orientalizing" narrative.

In Antonio Gramsci's conception of hegemony, which grew out of his experiences in early 20th century Italy, there are three layers to what he called Italy's "great agrarian bloc". The first, was the heterogeneous and disorganized mass of the peasantry, the second was the petty rural bourgeoisie and rural intellectuals, and the third consisted of the big landowners and "great" intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971, p. 71-74). Gramsci showed how the second layer, consisting of the medium intellectuals received its political and ideological motivations from the decentralized mass of the peasant class, while the big landowners and bourgeois intellectuals of the third layer centralized the whole mass of the population and created the conditions for the reproduction of the capitalist cycle. Gramsci proposed that, insofar as only those demands of the peasant class taken up by the medium intellectuals were subsumed, the greater mass of the peasantry was largely ignored and relegated to subaltern status. Southern peasants were forever indebted to the big landowners through the mediation of the intellectuals. However, the interests of the peasant classes were subordinated to the interests of the intellectual classes already in service of the interests of the bourgeoisie and its systems of institutional power and knowledge. Thus, the "Southern Question" for Gramsci concerning the uneven development between Italy's North and South regions had two aspects. The first was how to organize the heterogeneous mass of the peasantry to allow for a productive revolutionary base, and the second was, how to avoid the co-optation of the intellectual classes to allow the peasant masses not only to speak, but more importantly, to be heard.

A similar situation can be seen to characterize Europe itself today if we examine social classes and access to power rather than economic classes. My intention here is not to entirely negate or ignore the dilemmas of stratified economic classes, but rather to note how power is enacted in both cases. Certainly, high unemployment rates among young, educated, Muslim males both inside and outside Europe deserve more careful examination. In this study however, primacy is given to voices in those social classes not 'fortunate' enough to be subordinated to the dominant class (and the dominant ideological discursive formation), and thus to be allowed to speak within its controlled confines.

Power however, is not monolithic. As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri contend, there has been a marked shift away from a "disciplinary society" where social command is effected through disciplinary institutions (prisons, schools, hospitals, etc.) that structure social relations, to a "society of control" characterized by biopower, where social structures and social command exist within the minds and bodies of the people. "Power is now exercised through machines that directly organize the brain (in communication systems, information networks, etc.) and bodies (in welfare systems, monitored activities, etc.)" (Hardt and Negri, p. 23). This allows for a wider and more "democratic" normalization of practice as it emerges from within the population rather than through institutions of discipline. This is why the Jyllands-Posten cartoons are so important. Rather than marginalizing Muslims through disciplinary institutions that would explicitly single out Muslims in ways that are incompatible with liberal democracy, they instead subtly instill an image of Islam (despite the brashness of the cartoons themselves) in the minds of "Europeans" that is able to effectively govern Muslims as a violent "Other" that challenges the existence of the constructed subjects that constitute the population.

The disappearance of state sovereignty and the growth of new global networks, including communications and media networks have both facilitated the extent of biopower globally as well as radically decentralized it locally. This has meant a blurring of distinction between those at the margins and the centre, and the subsumption of global labour to the unitary rule of *the Empire*. Historically, however, Hardt and Negri note that [t]he proletariat actually invents the social and productive forms that capital will be forced to adopt in the future...Working-class power resides not in the representative institutions but in the antagonism and autonomy of the workers themselves" (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. 268). While there are normative forces at work, exerted through social and economic relations, not only is there room for autonomy, but also for increased resistance as the periphery becomes the centre. This is particularly evident in Europe where the imperatives of post-World War 2 human rights, and economic necessity (created by labour shortages and increasingly globalized production and consumption) created successive waves of migration from the global periphery to its power centres. This has led to new challenges to the normative truths and social formations that structure European and Global power relations from within, and familiar responses.

The Jyllands-Posten controversy demonstrates the heterogeneity of discourse practices and the development of alternative ideological discursive formations in the dialogue that emerges in online worlds. Here, weblogs served both to support the views expounded within mainstream media that supported dominant social formations, and to refute claims to impartiality and bias-free reporting within the media. In the Jyllands-Posten case, the editorial made no claims to any such standard of neutrality in terms of its content. However, the emergence of weblogs as a unique discourse genre with its own performative function, challenges the ability of mainstream media to reproduce dominance and hegemony. This is achieved by allowing new discursive communities to emerge that allow the voices of subjugated knowledges to be heard. Resistance occurred not only to the cartoons themselves, but more significantly to the historical representation of a violent, intolerant Islam used to justify its ongoing subjugation.

The question now for “Europe” is whether republican citizenship and deliberative democratic processes are able to allow for the accommodation of Islam, or if the limits described in this paper are too inflexible and embedded within existing power relations to overcome centuries of exclusion. Europe must avoid what David Theo Goldberg calls “the absolution of racism”: forgiveness for racist acts that fail to attack the root causes of racism, and instead recognize that exclusion still occurs within Europe not only against Muslims, but also other religious, cultural and ethnic groups (Goldberg, 2006, p. 362). Until then, the polarizing, binary situations characterized by the limit situations that Europe faces will continue to plague identity politics in Europe. Likewise, Muslims are also faced with the responsibility not merely to resist the discursive and epistemic violence perpetrated against them, but also to avoid its reifying effects. All sides must work together to resist violence (physical, discursive, or otherwise) by whomever, and wherever it may occur.

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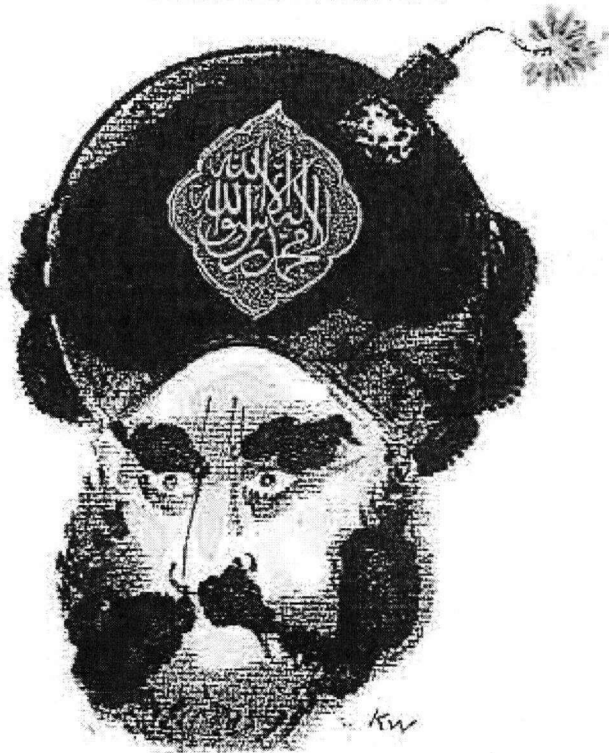
Appendix

Figure 1:



Source: (Malkin, Michelle, January 30, 2006).

Figure 2:



Source: (Malkin, Michelle, January 30, 2006).

Figure 3:



• ROLIG, VENNER, NÅR ALT KOMMER TIL ALT ER DET JO BARE EN
TEGNING LAVET AF EN YANTRØ SØNDERJYDE...

Relax folks it is just a sketch made by a Dane
from the south-west Denmark.

Source: (Malkin, Michelle, January 30, 2006).