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December 2, 2009: Is Islam Different?

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Title: Is Islam Different?

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12/2/2009—Those people who worry about Islam and the future of Europe, like Christopher Caldwell in his recent book, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam, and the West*, or are pessimistic about the struggle with Islam, like Dexter Filkins in *The Forever War*, seem to me to assume that Islam is fundamentally different from Christianity. They assume that Islam will not be subject to the same forces of modernity that tamed religion in the West. They assume that Muslims will continue to believe in a personal God with supernatural powers when many people who are not Muslims and live in the West find such beliefs impossible. Now, why would Islam be different? I suppose people like this assume that Christianity is not as fierce as Islam. But they do not remember that Christianity fought a 200 year battle with modernity and only succumbed, and yes it did succumb, recently. Muslims living in the West are not going to deny evolution forever, as even a moderate Muslim like Tariq Ramadan either does or feels he must pretend to do. Christianity lost its power to impose its will on civil society in the West because its internal wars were so violent. One day Muslims will decide that Islam must be limited in the same way for the same reason. Muslims in the West are going to be more or less like everybody else. It is just going to take a while. The real problem in Europe is the fragility of European culture. That is a weakness in European secularism, which secularists in America so trumpet.