

Two French Authors Confront *l'Islamisation*

REVIEWED BY MARTIN WITKERK

Nobody knows just how many Muslims currently live in France; the government prohibits the collection of data on the subject. A commonly cited estimate puts the number at around 6 million, or one tenth of the total population, the largest figure in Western Europe. Muslims continue to multiply in France—no longer so much through immigration, although immigration is ongoing, but through the higher fertility of those already settled in the country. France's second city, Marseilles, is expected to become the first majority-Muslim European city within about fifteen years.

Frenchmen criticize dispossession at their peril. Since 1972, the law has prohibited “provocation to hatred” (i.e., criticism) of persons or groups “on the grounds of their origin or their membership or non-membership in a particular ethnic group, nation, race, or religion.” Such laws are toughened every few years in a country otherwise notoriously lax on criminals, and the government allows professional “anti-racist” organizations to initiate prosecutions. (The American reader is invited to imagine the SPLC or ADL being able to drag anyone who said something they disliked into court.)

The two authors under review here have endured such prosecutions for remarks concerning Islam, but boldly return to the subject in their new titles. Political commentator Guillaume Faye was actually condemned to pay a fine of about \$60,000 for warning of the demographic threat posed by Islam in his book *The Colonization of Europe* (2000). In *Understanding Islam* (2012; eventually to be published in English by Arktos Media, Ltd.) he goes deeper into the intrinsic nature of the politico-religious doctrine which threatens us.

The story inevitably begins with Muhammad, an illiterate camel-driver who claimed (and possibly believed) that messages from God were periodically revealed to him by an angel. These messages largely consisted of threats and commands. Their specific content often changed as the situation Muhammad

found himself in evolved; Muslims have no difficulty believing that the eternal God *changed his mind* several times over the course of his prophet's career.

Muhammad called his new religion “submission,” meaning submission to God, of course, but also to himself as the supposed oracle of God. His initial success was largely limited to the poor and marginalized of his hometown of Mecca; local authorities considered him a troublemaker and eventually drove him and his small band of followers into exile.

COMPREHENDRE L'ISLAM [Understanding Islam]

Guillaume Faye

Blois: Editions Tatamis, 2015

324 pages, EUR 20 softcover



SUBMISSION: A Novel

Michel Houellebecq

New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015

256 pages, \$14.20 hardcover

They went to Medina, where Muhammad intrigued among rival clans until he rose to a position of eminence. He began leading raids on rival groups and passing caravans, teaching his followers that theft, fraud, and violence are all permissible against “unbelievers.” Soon he was ordering the killing of opponents, critics, and even those followers whose commitment to him seemed half-hearted. He had the entire Jewish community of Medina exterminated when they refused to “submit” to his new teaching. After conquering Mecca and exhorting his faithful to attack their neighbors in order to spread Islam, he died without having established a successor: Sunnis and Shi'ites fight over the issue to this day.

The character of Muhammad left a lasting imprint on Islam; his life and actions remain the supreme model of holiness for Muslims to this day. Even petty Muslim criminals in today's Europe justify their actions as permissible because directed against “infidels.” So-called Islamic radicals are doing little more than copying the cynicism and brutality Muhammad himself displayed,

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justifying anything and everything by appeal-ing to supposedly holy ends.

In Faye's view, Muhammad (and not any twentieth-century dictator) was the inventor of *totalitarianism*. The salient traits Islam shares in common with more recent ideological dictatorships include: (1) the aim of converting or dominating the entire world through jihad; (2) criminalization or inferiorization of unbelievers; (3) a social life entirely structured around the official religion and its obligatory rites; (4) the prohibition against any opinion, writing, or investigation contrary to its own official truth; (5) existence of an authoritative book embodying the official doctrine; and (6) a violent discourse calling for the extermination of



(and never reasoned debate with) external enemies and traitors within.

The great enemy of Islam, as of communism, is the subjectivity at the heart of the European tradition, viz.:

individual freedom, the particular nation or city, the rejection of homogenization and massification [*sic*]. Totalitarian thought abhors individualism, that subjectivity of the citizen, the entrepreneur, the sovereign fatherland. Islam, like secular totalitarianism, interprets this subjectivity as selfishness or—in a typically puritan reflex—as vulgar consumerism, the “commodification” of the world. They prefer regimenting individuals in a homogeneous and compulsory system where both ideas and the state obey the same rules.

The Left's tenderness toward Islam is thus not mere cowardice (although there is plenty of that as well) but a genuine fraternal recognition.

In their ignorance of Islam, many in the West imagine it by default as analogous to Christianity. Faye devotes much space to explaining the essential differences. The most important of these is undoubtedly Islam's fusion of religion with law and politics. Within the Christian tradition, it was the founder himself who set the example of distinguishing the spiritual from the political in sayings such as “My kingdom is not of this world” and “Render unto Caesar...” No such distinction exists within Islam, whose prophet, once he became successful, was a classic Asiatic despot and warlord who dictated every aspect of his followers' lives. Persons

steeped in the Muslim tradition may have difficulty even getting their minds around basic Western concepts such as the distinction between church and state, the sacred and the secular.

To Muslims, only divine law possesses legitimacy: the very idea of human beings *making* laws is blasphemous. Not only democracy, but any form of participatory politics, is incompatible with Islamic thinking. Hence, the Muslim world wavers constantly between despotism based on *de facto* power and ever-recurring demands for theocracy and *sharia*.

Much of the Bible consists of poetry, and Christ spoke in parables, which demand an effort of interpretation. Islam and its holy book are far simpler, as Faye explains:

The oracle Muhammad has spoken: there is no more room for thinking and commenting; one must obey. [Islam] undoubtedly possesses strength, but not a philosophical genius. It is addressed to simple souls. But it also simplifies minds, at the risk of infantilizing them, wearing down any critical spirit.

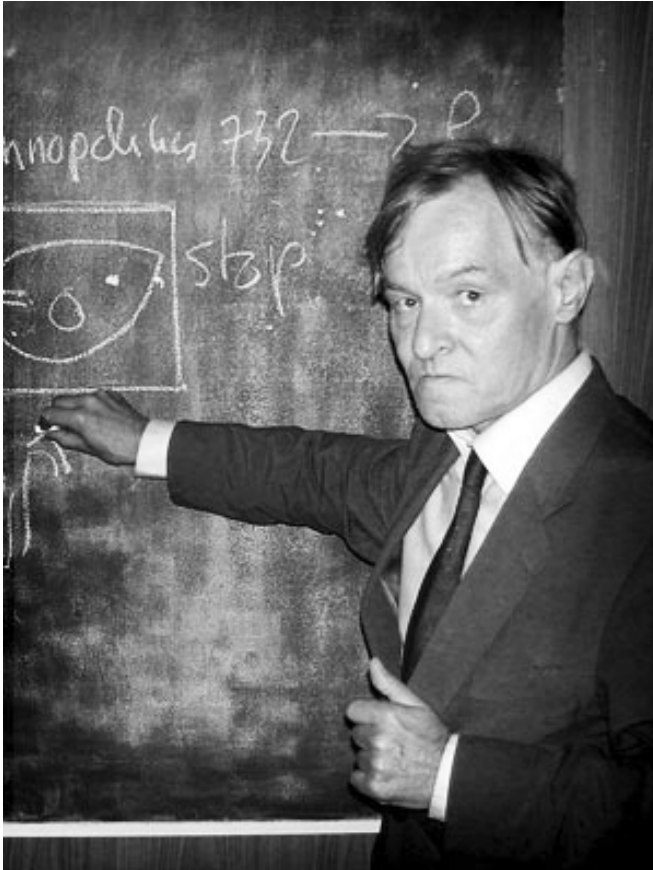
Since the tenth century, Muslims have even been formally forbidden to attempt to interpret the Koran: instead, they simply memorize it. Muslim prayer shares the same character:

It is ritual without freedom, a repetition of Koranic verses in a prescribed posture of kneeling submission. It is not a personal dialogue with a protecting God, but a recitation of formulas learned by rote. The Muslim has no personal, unconstrained relations with God, who is an intransigent and unhearing master who never forgives anything. Islam forbids any personal spiritual quest. It is a superstitious and aggressive collectivism.

Whereas Christians are promised the “vision of God” in the next life, the Muslim heaven is a kind of celestial cathouse where believers indulge for all eternity in the sensual pleasures forbidden them during their lifetimes. Faye quotes one semi-pornographic passage from a respected Muslim sage assuring the faithful that in paradise their erections will be eternal. Examination of the remains of Muslim suicide bombers often reveals that they have gone to great lengths to protect their private parts.

Such is the primitive belief system which is now waging war on a West that refuses to defend or even reproduce itself. As Faye points out, no technology, however advanced, can make up for a loss of character and vital strength. Muslims, astonished at the ease with which they have entered and begun to take over the cities of Europe, speak of their progress as a “miracle of

Allah.” Theirs is, as Faye notes, a conquest from below, by means of migration and demographic competition. The spectacular crimes committed by the more impatient disciples of Muhammad capture the headlines (and are likely to become a recurring feature of European life), but they are infinitely less important than the steady progress of Muslim demographics ignored by the press.



Author and political commentator Guillaume Faye

Muslim leaders in Europe have a keen sense of their hosts' weakness, and understand that the road to power lies in claiming victimhood. In fact, Islam enjoys a privileged position in France analogous to that enjoyed by supposedly oppressed minorities in America. The construction of mosques is subsidized by the government; *halla* dietary regulations are increasingly imposed on everyone; secularism is violated in their favor while being rigorously enforced against French Catholics; Muslims benefit from employment preferences; etc., etc. Over 100,000 native French have converted to Islam, and they have not done so in order to be oppressed.

But occasionally mosques get vandalized—usually involving nothing more than graffiti. Muslim leaders refer to these minor episodes as an “onslaught of Islamophobia.” Organizations such as the Muslim Legal Defense League and the French Anti-Islamophobic Collective have been sprouting up like mushrooms to

counter the largely imaginary threat. False accusations of discrimination and mistreatment are a common tactic, analogous to the racial hoaxes on American college campuses. It is not the invaders and terrorists who are the real aggressors, we are asked to believe, but the native French who presume to defend their way of life. And the French Left happily goes along with all of this.

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While Guillaume Faye's work is a polemic likely to raise the reader's blood pressure, Michel Houellebecq's novel *Submission* is a gently comic story of a spineless and apathetic nation sleepwalking into dhimmitude. The imaginary date of the story, 2022, has been criticized as implausibly close, but that is undoubtedly part of the intention: the story is a satirical exaggeration of all the worst failings of contemporary France.

The first-person narrator is François, a professor of literature at the Sorbonne specializing in the work of *fin-de-siècle* novelist Joris-Karl Huysmans. Apart from his intelligence and scholarly attainments, he represents *l'homme moyen sensuel* of today's France. He has no family or close friends, and does not even seem to like his university colleagues very much. Living alone in a rented apartment, he consumes pre-prepared microwaved meals in front of the TV set. He carries on desultory sexual relations with a series of female students, rotating them approximately each academic year—an arrangement that seems to suit them as well as him. When no students present themselves, he fills the gaps with prostitutes.

The first forty pages are devoted to a leisurely description of the life of this representative modern-day Frenchman before François casually mentions that an election is approaching:

I felt about as political as a bath towel. It's true that in my youth elections were as uninteresting as possible. A candidate of the center-left was elected for one or two terms, according to his personal charisma, then the population tired of him. A phenomenon of *democratic alternation* was observed, and the electorate brought to power a candidate of the center-right, also for one or two terms according to his particular nature. Curiously, western countries were extremely proud of this electoral system which was hardly more than a sharing of power between rival gangs. They even launched wars in order to impose it on countries which did not share their enthusiasm.

In the France of 2022, the National Front is the most popular political party by several percentage points, but has been kept out of power through the collusion of all

the other parties. A first attempt at building a Muslim political party has already failed through excessively open anti-Semitism and flirtation with the “extreme right,” but a shrewd and ambitious politician named Mohammed Ben Abbes has learned from the experience. His Muslim Fraternity “positions itself as a moderate party, offers only lukewarm support for the Palestinian cause, and maintains cordial relations with Jewish religious authorities.” Ben Abbes despises jihadists as rank amateurs, and counts instead on lulling France into acceptance of Islam with reassuring promises to non-Muslims.

In the first round of voting, the Muslim Fraternity edges out the Socialists to face the National Front in the second round. When both the Socialists and the dwindling center-right party throw their weight behind Ben Abbes in order to prevent a “fascist takeover,” the result of the second round becomes a foregone conclusion: Ben Abbes assumes power as the first Muslim president of France, with the Socialists and center-right given a few ministerial portfolios as a consolation prize.

The universities are closed for an indefinite period starting the day after the election, and none of the academics have any idea what will happen to them. Finally, François receives a polite letter informing him that he will no longer be able to continue his activities at the University of Paris, which is to reopen as an Islamic university with Saudi financial backing in a few days. He is offered the choice of teaching at one of the new schools being set up for the native French, or accepting a generous pension:

I reread the letter three times before I was able to believe it. It was, down to the last Euro, the same amount I would have received if I had retired at sixty-five, having completed a full career. They were obviously prepared for great financial sacrifices to avoid making waves. No doubt they greatly exaggerated the ability of university instructors to cause problems for them. A protest by university professors, even unanimous, would have gone almost completely unnoticed, but in Saudi Arabia they must not have realized this. At bottom, they still believed in the power of the intellectual elite. It was almost touching.

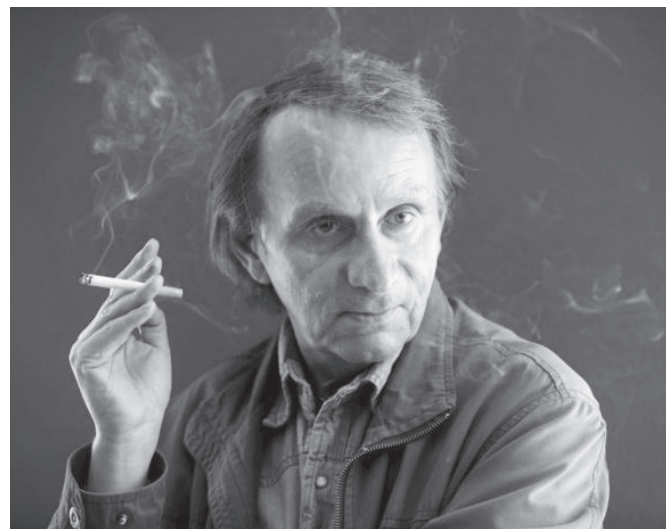
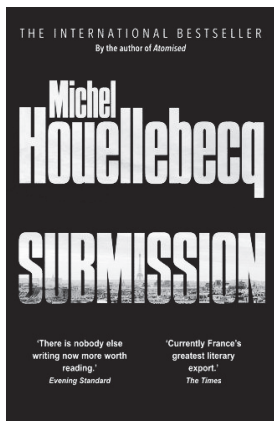
Eventually, François runs into the new director of the Islamic University of Paris, a converted Frenchman

named Robert Rediger, and is invited for home tea one afternoon. Waiting in the antechamber, the narrator observes a fifteen-year-old girl in a “Hello Kitty” t-shirt enter the room. Upon noticing him, she cries out, covers her face, and runs out of the room. When Rediger arrives, he offers his apology, explaining that the girl is one of his wives and had not been expecting a visitor.

They chat for several hours about their academic careers and whether the order of the universe provides evidence for a creator, as another of his host’s wives assiduously keeps them supplied with tea and pastries. Rediger ends by handing him a small work of popularization he had written himself entitled *Ten Questions on Islam*.

At home, François opens the book to the chapter of greatest interest to him: the one concerning polygamy. He finds the practice defended on eugenic grounds. When he meets Rediger again, he expresses doubt whether an ordinary university professor such as himself could qualify for multiple wives. Once again, it turns out the Saudis have greater regard for intellectual attainment than the native French; according to their way of thinking, a successful academic is a highly desirable match. Rediger assures François that he would easily qualify for at least three wives.

A few weeks later, François is accepted into the Muslim community upon completing a brief ceremony of conversion at the Central Mosque of Paris.



Author Michel Houellebecq

The results of France’s regional elections have just come in as I write: the National Front has once again sustained its position as the nation’s leading political party, and has once again been kept out of office by the collusion of the other parties. It seems the only element lacking to make Houellebecq’s vision come true is the appearance of any Muslim leader as cunning as his fictional Mohammed Ben Abbes. ■