Chapter 4

Notes on Locality, Connectedness, and Saintliness

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The Place of Saintliness within the Sociology of Islam

This is the second issue of the *Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam* to be dedicated to saintliness with regard to 'locality', a fact that witnesses the strategic importance of this topic for the overall project of the sociology of Islam. The thematic link between saintliness and locality stimulates some reflection on the founding paradigm of such a sociology, on what is specifically sociological about it, or also on whether a clearer opening to anthropology might enrich the project. This is not just a special theme, but a topical question that embraces the core issue of the 'ambiguous positioning of Islam in the global construction of society', as we read in the flap page presentation of the *Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam*. A discussion of the special theme of saintliness and locality might reveal a fundamental ambiguity concerning how sociology positions Islam within its purview.

One main potential of the overall project of the sociology of Islam lies in the fact that the study of phenomena related to Islam might lead to revise basic categories and relocate fundamental antinomies within social theory at large. The project can include a more radical, yet situated, critique of the classics of social thought than it has been possible thus far though various 'immanent' critiques of modernity and modern society. Such critiques, like the work of Michel Foucault, revealed the power formations on which modernity rests, and in this way strengthened modernity's own capacity of theoretical regeneration via nourishing the spiral of challenges and transgressions internal to its own logic.

Many ambiguities of social theory are inherent in how sociology itself was constituted in Europe by instituting a strategic link between religion and modernity, also through the influence of studies on Islam. Notably in the work of Max Weber, modernity appears as the completion of the semi-rationalizing spirit of religious traditions, whereby reformers and modernists within those traditions play the role of the midwifes of modern social worlds (cf. Turner 1974). Yet the study of Muslim saints (as in volume 5 of the *Yearbook*) has

already triggered off a more basic interrogation: can an archaeology of Muslim saintliness question the sociologically received character of the inherent link between religion and modernity? Wouldn't rather the study of Muslim saintliness help resituate the tension and ambivalent relation between religion and modernity and so show in a clearer way the extent to which the ambiguous positioning of Islam in global society is not primarily due to alleged rationalizing deficits of Islamic traditions? Can this ambiguous positioning be instead related to Islam's ongoing role of a counterexample and/or background screen to the spiraling antinomies inherent in the functioning of global, Western-centered modernity? Would then the way be open for a more productive use of the sociology of Islam for deflating the binary logic on which those antinomies of modernity have been based? Could such a deflation of the tension restitute a more lucid look at how religious traditions, their carriers and contesters, ingrain into the economic and political structures of the modern world? Can this operation ultimately facilitate a more sober but also more nuanced view of the autochthonous modernizers: the 'modernists', the 'reformers', the *salafi*s? (cf. Salvatore 2001; Schielke 2004).

Moving in this direction, it is possible to propose a different reading of the issue of saintliness and locality. We cannot indulge in this brief note in any definitional game about what 'saintliness' is essentially about. If sought, such a definition can emerge through the overlapping topics of the contributions to this volume as well as to volume 5 of the *Yearbook* or can be searched in the work of scholars who singularly tried to provide such a definition (e.g. Cornell 1998: xvii-xxiv). The reason why saintliness is preferred to 'sainthood' or 'saintship' is due to the fact that the latter terms' morphology appears quite immediately oriented to institutionalization processes, or better canonization of saints, notably as available within the Catholic tradition. Local rooting or localization as found in the making of Muslim saintliness cannot be considered an exact counterpart to canonization, though some authors do not consider this difference an obstacle to a unified definition (Ib.). The main emphasis here lies on what is not or not easily definable with regard to saintliness. Therefore I can suggest a reading of saintliness coming into the purview of inherited sociological categories as a syndrome of reconciliation of what is sociologically irreconcilable and not even susceptible to be reduced to a classic sociological antinomy like between individual and society, movement and institution, rationality and authenticity, abstract rational systems vs. local accretions: it is the syndrome inherent in the ongoing and unsolvable tension between relations and locations, between the networks and the movements attending to the construction and reproduction of saintliness and the corresponding sites of accumulation of material riches and symbolic power, between the self-sufficiency of the enactment of a drama of suffering and redemption, of meditation and play (the dimension of immanence and selfness),

on the one hand, and the inherent dispersion of the game itself, the impossibility to contain it into a unity of place, staging and ritual orchestration (its dimension of transcendence and otherness), on the other, between the fluidity of saintly charisma intended as patterns of connectedness and the apparent but often misleading solidity of sacredness as the provider of stability to the dynamics of settled groups. In this perspective, saintliness should be decoupled from sacredness, although the two concepts appear often as conflated, like in volume 5 of the *Yearbook*.

The perspective here adopted concerns the universe of binary oppositions developed within social theory, the mother of which is the dichotomy between tradition and modernity. This is not to deny that a social scientist might in good faith try to apply social theory concepts to explain social phenomena related to Islam. Yet the aporias that result from their use might lead us either to pragmatically revise, or at least to question some binary concepts stemming from the ambiguities and antinomies inherent in the development and self-understanding of Western social science. In this way, the scope of a sociology of Islam would not be restorative vis-à-vis the problem of the universal applicability of social science concepts, but rather genealogical, through locating the conceptual and also historical junctures where tensions emerge and strictures are created. The goal would not be to produce new or better concepts, but to show how aporias arise and contribute to construct and stabilize relations, both internal to societies and between them. In this perspective, the ambivalence mentioned in the presentation of the *Yearbook* project appears not related to Islam's positioning in global society, but ingrained in the dynamics, contradictions and conflicts of global society itself. The study of Islam from a social theory perspective might help to understand them better.

Connectedness vs. Locality?

I will refer to one chapter of volume 5 of the *Yearbook* in order to understand how saintliness might reflect a syndrome of reconciliation between connectedness and locality. Saintliness might then appear as resistant to a rationalizating path of a Weberian type. My argument questions the euro-christianocentric dimension of notions that are prominent in the European classics of sociology, like internalization, extraordinariness, habitual intellectualization, the nexus between 'calling' and 'office,' eruption and routinization, virtuoso religion, and, last but not least, charisma: the ultimate matrix of power and agency where all contradictions in the conceptual chain are recollected and redeemed.

Patrick Franke's study of Khidr, the 'Man in Green' of both Islamic and pre-Islamic lore, can be taken as an example, since it tackles a root figure of Muslim saintliness by direct reference to the sacralization of places (Franke 2004). In volume 5 of the *Yearbook* Franke analyzed in particular how Khidr,

a prototypical character of Islamic saintliness who appears and disappears at different places and through various epochs, is widely evoked in narratives that are intended to sacralize a certain place, for constructing its territorialization or more precisely *Landnahme,* the 'taking possession of the land' in the 'theo-political' sense elucidated by Mircea Eliade. Khidr intervenes in several narratives concerning the institution of such major sacred places of Islam like the Kaaba, the Dome of the Rock, and the Aya Sofia. This seems at first glance to institute a close relation of saintliness to locality, or rather to its legitimization. Nonetheless Khidr is at the cusp of the system itself of saintliness, intended as the capacity to create grace and distribute blessings first of all through caring for the concrete other who is the reflection of the abstract, absolute Other: the poor and the weak, the *alter* to *ego* who are closest to *Alter*, i.e. God. Khidr is like the backup system of the entire network of Muslim saints. As shown by Franke, many key saints, often founders of the most important orders (*turuq*), are narratively related to Khidr and his authority. In today's Cairo, one of the biggest metropolises of the world, several devotees, including Sufi sheikhs, claim to have met Khidr during critical moments of their lives. Khidr is known as the sheikh of those who have no sheikh and preexists all of them. He connects and relates. He works as a primeval hyperlink of what human society needs above anything else, i.e. the almost self-referential care for the integrity of the social bond and the capacity to act in the world, as represented, in its most critical situations, by the care for the needs of the neediest.

On one hand, Khidr exists to visit places and then to escape, transcend them. He can justify their sacralization, in modern parlance, by showing that in a universalistic religious tradition the local can only be an instantiation of the global, by literally running through the globe, disappearing here and reappearing there. The legitimization of locality is therefore as much needed for the politics of instituting local networks as it is impossible to justify in purely local terms. It needs a transcending imagination de-personalizing local links, before they are re-personalized through historical saints rooted in their environment. On the other hand, neither prophet nor angel, Khidr is a perfect *wali* ('friend' of God, therefore saint), so perfect that he is unlike any other *wali*, while he endorses the biography and legitimizes the authority of many of them. He is the symbol itself of what in principle needs no symbolization since it is a pure eruption of practice and blessing, reflected in the factual normativity of the social bond, whenever there be need. E.g. Franke mentions that ambulance services in Turkey today are sometimes still called 'Khidr-Service' (Francke 2004: 26). Khidr is not properly a presence but rather the making-present of what is necessarily absent, the satisfaction of a legitimate need. This situation corresponds to the idea itself of grace or blessing. He is the absent convivial guest to which one offers a meal. He witnesses the neces-

sity of an absence, and the presence of a necessity. He completes relations in what they can never be completed: in the attainment of perfect, symmetrical reciprocity. If there were perfect reciprocity, there would be no social poor, i.e. those made poor by imperfections or failures in rules of reciprocity. Yet Khidr does not personify the injunction itself of giving to the poor: he immediately fills the gap through the sheer evocation of his presence, yet to vanish again and make the gap painfully felt by those who remain.

In the Introduction to *Yearbook* 5 it is stated that "Max Weber transformed the idea of the 'primitive magician' and his charismatic qualities being the *Ursprung* (origin) of professional man into a genealogy of the human character, office and institutional governance in modernity" (Stauth 2004: 8). Yet in Weber's analysis the type of dynamics through which the charisma of institutional governance is distinguished from a charisma of eruption, effervescence and transformation is rigidly wrapped into a dichotomy opposing a supposedly 'authentic' or 'intrinsic' force of charisma to its routinization into an institutional form crystallizing in 'office.' Weber was conscious that prophecy was the main example, probably the pinnacle of such a charismatic breakthrough. This did not lead him to paying enough attention to the dimension of care for the social bond inherent in the eruption, since this dimension would rather be assigned to the moment of institutional routinization that follows the eruptive momentum. Thus the caring or reforming dimension of the breakthrough is conceptually diluted in the theoretical grid of dichotomizing social processes. In my view, the same fallacy is present if we lay too much emphasis on a primeval location as an autonomous factor in the institutionalization of saintly networks. This is like putting the cart before the horse and constructing a primeval sacredeness tight to a *genius loci* or even a charisma of the place, laying an undue emphasis on the inertial continuity of the *locus* and its irreducibility to the painful reconstruction of connectedness across localities and via relations and networks. An 'inner impetus' of charisma and its sacredness is so transferred from persons to places. The question is evaded concerning how relations are formed by virtue of just such 'charisma.' In an interpretive context influenced by the Weberian concept of charisma, the significance of location risks to be played out against relation and connectedness. The machine of ritual consumption reposing on the locus might then become an anti-systemic, yet equally functional reflection of the modern—national and global—disciplinary systems of power. Here we see both the danger of a dualism and the possible seeds for a fruitful reframing of the basic tensions underlying modern antinomies, in order to understand them no longer as antinomies but as contingent and ambivalently relational tensions. We could then focus on relations and locations as two spheres in mutual tension, whose reconciliation might be facilitated by a focus on 'saintliness' as the relational dimension of 'spirituality' that can't evade the dynamics of places, yet builds

its authority by connecting and ultimately transcending them: this is also the pattern of formation and operation of Sufi *turuq*. This alternative approach might facilitate overcoming any excess of emphasis either on charismatic rupture or on ritual per se. It could also help performing preparatory steps for giving a dignified burial to the time honored, but sociologically abused notion of charisma.

In parallel, we could de-emphasize what in Weberian terms is defined as a 'substantive' or 'value oriented' rationality, a traditional type of rationality seen as rooted in 'religion'. In this context one cannot neglect that some strands of older Orientalist scholarship were important precursors of the identification of such a rationality also by reference to saintliness in Islam. They even added to it a vivid functionalist coloring. As reminded by Georg Stauth in the Introduction to *Yearbook* 5:

> from the perspective of the founders of modern Islamology, such as Goldziher, C.H. Becker and Snouck Hurgronje, Islamic mysticism was considered as filling the function of closing the gap between law, theology and individual piety. Accordingly, Sufism was labeled as being secondary to the dominant conception of religion (Stauth 2004: 10).

An important Muslim scholar and intellectual like Fazlur Rahman started to challenge the classic Orientalist view by showing that Islam would not be what it is today—not least in terms of its diffusion, mobilization, and integration of popular classes—without the key contribution of Sufism (Rahman 1979 [1966]). In this sense, the scholarly association between saintliness and Sufism and thus the functionalization of Muslim saintliness as the factor 'closing a gap' and thus a deficit of rationalization in the Islamic system of knowledge production should be questioned. It is also sociologically relevant to show that Sufism has been re-evaluated as a coincidental source of both socio-religious movements of an Ikhwani type, and of modes of state governance and discipline (Eickelman/Salvatore 2002). But the main issue here is how to situate the 'substantive rationality' carried by Sufism in a modern context, where another type of rationality purportedly prevails, based on science and productivity. Again, relations are probably key, if we do not reduce them to a mere social infrastructure for distributing power, wealth, and prestige which can flexibly fit into different types of rationality systems.

Relations are at the origin of the idea of charisma, before it became an overloaded concept denoting the subjective possession of immaterial sources of power susceptible to accumulation and even territorialization. The Greek idea of *charis* ('grace'), from which charisma originates, denotes the type of situation that makes relations possible, starting from a situation of asymmetry between ego and alter (Szakolczai 2006). Unlike Weber's sociological, per-

sonalized understanding of charisma, but also unlike its Catholic supernatural-institutional formation, *charis* is a genuinely relational concept. As suggested by Szakolczai, there are two possibilities to build relations between *ego* and *alter*, either by violence (see the political theory of Hobbes), or by gift (see the anthropology of Malinowski, Polanyi, and Mauss). In the latter case, a third person appears necessary, and this is where *charis* or grace starts to take form. Wherever grace is not instantly produced by the relation itself, it is bestowed by a god or a saint. The enigma of how relations can be formed should be solved by reference to the new type of tensional power generated by the triadic frame whereby *ego* can connect to *alter* via a special *Alter* who is both internal and external to the relation. It is not the case of a charisma being located in *Alter* or appropriated by whoever is close to him (like the *wali Allah*, the 'friend of God'), it is rather the case of *charis*, the classic name for the triadic framework, that generates the tensional power.

The specific reasons why social theory neglected the *charis* of a triadic construction of relation (Salvatore 2007: 54-67) in favor of the charisma of persons and institutions or to the sacredness of rituals and places, are too complex to ascertain in a brief note. At large, this twist corresponds to the way the modern institutions of Western states happened to function and be legitimized, relying on structures of governance depending on leadership patterns and on representative and monumental seats of office carriers. Yet via the above mentioned interventions of Khidr precisely the opposite happens: the instituted law, the *nomos,* is created through a kind of displacement, of escape from the sacred locus. This movement is the source of all innovative reform, of all 'heterodox' movements, and Sufism as the engine of saintliness is no exception. In a well-known episode of the Qur'an, in the surah of the cave (18: 60-82) this is exemplified by the way an enigmatic character that the several commentators have identified with Khidr (Omar 1993) teaches Moses a lesson, by taking decisions that do not make sense on the basis of the law of Moses but prove to be wise and fair, especially from the viewpoint of the weakest actors involved. It would be tempting to explain this pattern as the way through which saintly charisma supplies to law what it lacks, a sense for the place and circumstances. Yet this reading would be still confined within the limits of the above mentioned functionalist approach, where Weber and islamologists found a common terrain. At a more careful scrutiny, if we adopt the triadic scheme of *charis*, we see that the story of Khidr and Moses show that law can only be practicable if it adheres to the social bond and is able to face its fragility and unpredictability. Real law is not the product of a routinization of charisma but is co-essential with the social bond, instituted ever and again in the framework of the tensional power of the triadic scheme. Saintliness is prior to any distinction between a charisma of eruption and transformation and its institutionalization. Therefore it is also inherently translocal.

Khidr and Moses move through three different places and situations to which they are strangers, in order to reinstitute the social bond. The human and normative resources found in the locus are not enough to preserve and promote human community in it, yet purportedly universal law is also limited, if a sense for the specificity of any situation is not complemented by translocal knowledge and movement.

This approach can be related to Marcel Mauss' valorization of connectedness, expanding on the perspective of transcendent mediation and situating it into a wider context of social practice (Salvatore 2007: 33-45). The inclusion of the fellow human being into a given community of salvation was an expansion of the primordially Hobbesian *ego-alter* dyadic relationship. This relationship happened to be buffered by cosmological myth and holistic visions, the undifferentiated collectivity of Mauss's *mana*, the force that humans see as intrinsic to things (Tarot 1993: 565-67). At a further stage, it solidified into the pattern of I-Thou connectedness mediated by a transcendent God. The new triad replaced primordial forms of the contract as gift. This rupture with archaic religion and its intrinsic model of sociality marked the reconstruction of the social bond within the triadic scheme of *ego-alter-Alter*/God, whereby now God is explicitly recognized as the transcendent *Alter*. The breakthrough disengages agents from their dependence on the mediating capacity of objects as gifts. It thus transposes the 'it' of things into the 'It' of divine transcendence. The Weberian vision of charisma as first personalized and then diluted into routine practices contrasts with this view, and can be interpreted as the ultimate outcome of a long trajectory of post-Protestant secularization of sociality that focuses on the inwardness of subjects and misrecognizes the relational and 'spontaneous' (*charis*-like) dynamics of both breakthroughs and crystallizations. This Weberian vision privileges the machine of modernity as the routinization of an ethic of 'office' and reads a metamorphosed charisma originating in prophet 'calling' backwards into it. This is not a wrong genealogy or an anachronism, it is rather an appropriative self-genealogy of hegemonic Western views, whose hegemony did not outlive long the time of their formulations. It cannot account for the deployment of global modernity and the role of religion in it during the last half century.

An important revision of the Weberian paradigm, which saw the light around half a century ago, was the Axial Age theory, usually associated with the name of Karl Jaspers (see volume 7 of the *Yearbook*). It is probably symptomatic that in this theoretical framework the notion of charisma was not subject to critique or revision, but rather swept under the carpet, although this approach, from the time of Jaspers to its sociological reformulation linked to the work of Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, seems to lay a strong emphasis on the momentums of constitution of the reflexive social bond. Concerning the Western civilizational area, the patterns of axial transformations crystallized in the

prophetic role, but a reflective elaboration on the constitution of the social bond and on its religious dimension was equally present in the Greek 'axis', revealed by key concepts like the already mentioned *charis* and *phronesis.* The latter is the 'spontaneous' reason of Eraclitus and Sophocles, the *proto-sophia* or inherent wisdom of the common speakers, the lips of reason or the reason of the lips. It denotes a type of knowledge oriented to action that was later trivialized into the modern 'common sense' of pragmatic reason, via a metamorphosis of the previous standardization performed by Aristotle (Salvatore 2007). Yet in classic Greek philosophy *phronesis* is a virtue that transcends a purely pragmatic accommodation of means to ends and constitutes a singular model of rational action-*cum*-communication. It provides the only possible mediation between the *xenon* and the *idion*, the common and the singular, the public and the private: *phronesis* is the spoken *logos*, uttered via human lips to the extent it is understood by other. In Aristotelian terms, the ultimate Other authorizing the *logos* transcends the human *ego-alter* dyad. *Phronesis*, that some contemporary social theorists like Bourdieu have trivialized into a notion of practical reason sustaining the 'logic of practice' consisting in following a rule (Salvatore 2007: 93-94), presupposes a mediation, a third element, and therefore a triad, via the orientation of the agent to a *telos*, the cusp of the triangle without which the directionality of action would not be able to sustain the practical judgment. Such notions like *charis* and *phronesis* seem to have impregnated the logic of reasoning and action both in a Western and in an Islamic context and have also provided visions of 'connective justice' among human beings. The sociology of Islam could make better use of them, instead of insisting in twisting Weberian concepts to suit a changed world where a Western civilizational and discursive hegemony cannot be taken for granted any more.

The 'secular machine of modernity' does not suppress all axial differences, which are as much due to varieties among and tensions within cultural traditions as to differences in the positioning and repositioning of different localities on a global scale. The question should then be asked whether a reframing of saintliness as accommodating a notion of spirituality through the lenses of a deepening global governance can suppress the politics of grace and gift based on the asymmetry of connectedness, a type of micropolitics of the social bond that is often in tension, but can also be compatible with traditional and modern policies of regulated violence.

As stressed by Georg Stauth:

> since the genealogy of modernity is so intrinsically linked with asceticism and the religious roots of modern dialectics of inwardness and power construction, we need to understand why the Islamic adherence to saintliness would reject any ultimate dialectic (sic) between inwardness and externality (Stauth 2004: 20).

Here a crucial question is raised, on which the whole project of the *Yearbook of the Sociology of Islam*, as also illustrated in a seminal essay in volume 1 of the *Yearbook* (Stauth 1998), dangerously hinges: whether the categories of Weber's sociology of religion along with their dichotomous perspective are *at all* feasible for the Sociology of Islam. This Weberian perspective might even presuppose a political theology of the subject that effects, at will, de-localization and re-localization:

> Modernity supposes the transgression of collective norms into individuality, of ethical inclinations into knowledge and of wisdom into individual action, in other words the ever more self-responsible methodization of everyday life. The question that may be asked in this context is whether 'saints' and 'Sufis' open up a specific modern way of individuation and an alternative to Western individualism (Stauth 2004: 20).

Categories like 'individuality,' 'rationalization' or 'methodization' might be too much entrenched in a view of the self-reforming subject and too little bent on a relational perspective on action: charisma being the point of highest vulnerability of this perspective on hyper-subjectivation. Accepting that modernity is strictly associated with an individually willed and managed methodization of life does not require that the issue of saintliness, which implies individualization and methodization to some degree, should be incorporated by default into an issue of modernity—*unless* one follows a strictly genealogical perspective that clarifies the extent to which such Sufi practices delineate a parallel *and* different way of being in the modern world which puts into question the categories of modernity inherited from Weberian sociology.

Against this Weberian background, saintliness might be given a chance to be reconstructed as a syndrome of interaction and connectedness, where locality plays a role, yet within, and as a specification of, the translocal dimension of connectedness as *charis* and the rational dimension of action as *phronesis*. One should not miss the chance, within the Sociology of Islam, to be more critical of the idea that at whatever historical stage, it is always an external power formation that takes over the governing of the ritual staging, so that saintliness cannot exert any control of the stage of human connectedness and only becomes essential, naked, sublimated individuality. According to this view, individuality is first severed from connectedness and then docked again to the impersonal mechanisms of regulation and disciplining imposed by the agents of modernization. This severance is facilitated by the discourse of modern individualism, whose latest stage is the sacredness of life and of human rights. Neither should we reduce this operation to a purely post-Protestant syndrome. The arch-Catholic Louis Massignon has an important place in the genealogy of the dialectic between the inwardness of the self and

the externality of power. A methodically oriented genealogy might prevent twisting the Massignonian approach into a self-affirmative logic.

The archaeological digging into the Islamic machinery of saintliness could then show that this construction does not match any dialectic of inwardness and externality comparable with its post-Protestant, Weberian (or Habermasian) brand. Not by chance the Sufi and saint Hallaj (857-922), Massignon's hero of spiritual selfhood, lost his radical battle for affirming a convergence between God and the self, and was executed. Nonetheless, his execution was authorized by Ibn Dawud Ispahani (d. 910), the author of the most celebrated Arab commentary, in rhapsodic form, of Plato's theory of love (*kitab al-zuhra*). He interpreted love as a divine madness (*junun ilahi*) that is simply there, unexplainable, neither to be praised nor to be condemned, since it is an unsolved perennial tension between lover and Beloved, the self and God. Here relational tension stops short of reaching a convergence (*tashbih*) at the level of inwardness. The Hallajian dialectic between lover and Beloved was identified as the dangerous entry into the *shirk* (associating other divinities to the only God) of a trinitarian scheme, replacing connectedness with a charismatic type of personalization that would signify the almost Hegelian solution (*Aufhebung*) to the dialectic of inwardness and externality or even the psychoanalytic normalization of divine *eros* (Corbin 1964: 275-83).

At the end, the issue concerns, again, the modalities—and limits—of rooting individuality and inwardness in new, modern forms of power. Are Nietzschean resentment and Foucauldian microphysics of power immediately 'applicable' to the global politics of Islam or are they first and foremost the reflex of North-Western European exceptionalism? (Stauth 2005; Salvatore 2007: 28-32). Isn't the ambivalent relation of Western culture to its axial, spiritual sources and their purported authenticity a smoking screen preventing an understanding of the complex workings of civilizing traditions? Isn't such a power-culture syndrome the main marker of a peculiar, globalizing, 'continuously unfolding,' yet not therefore universal 'secular machine of modernity'? (Stauth 2004: 10). No doubt the issue of saintliness—particularly as related to Sufism—is ever more embedded in a 'battlefield of east-west philosophy and cultural globalization', yet it cannot be explained—and sociologically valorized—by this 'embeddedness' alone.

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