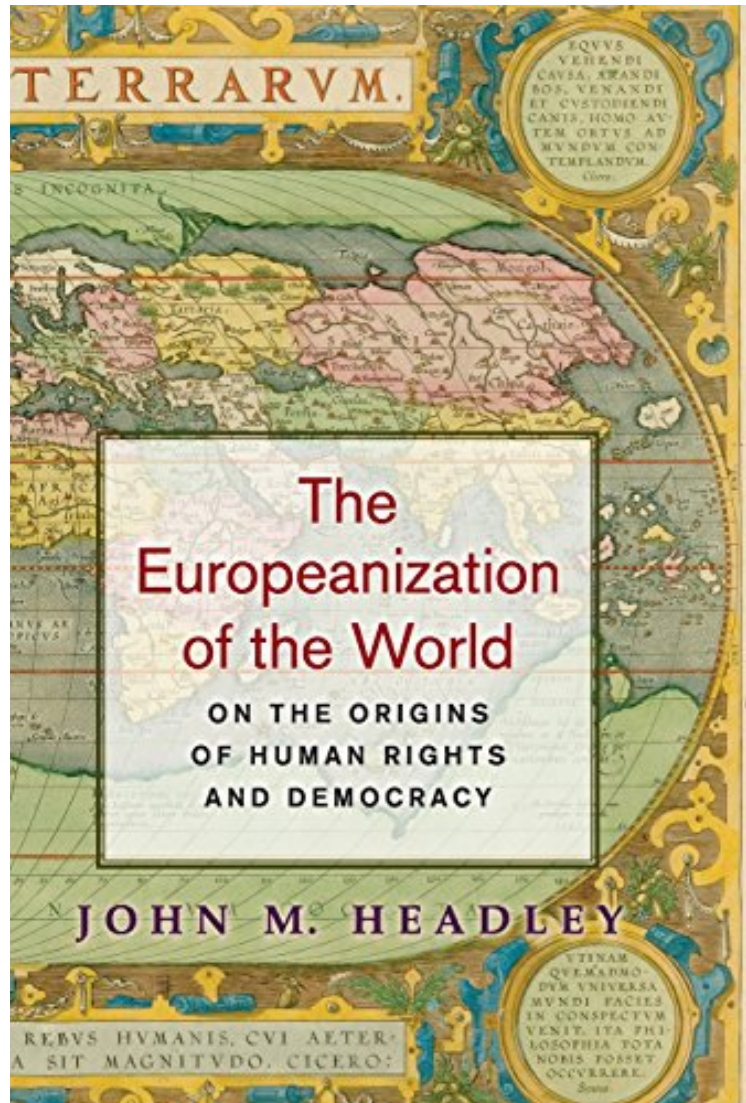


(Download) The Europeanization of the World: On the Origins of Human Rights and Democracy

The Europeanization of the World: On the Origins of Human Rights and Democracy

John M. Headley

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John M. Headley : The Europeanization of the World: On the Origins of Human Rights and Democracy before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Europeanization of the World: On the Origins of Human Rights and Democracy:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Well Argued By R. Albin Globalization means Europeanization, with the Europe of the latter term referring to what some historians call the Atlantic world of Western Europe and the

Americas as it developed in the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment. The nation-state, industrial capitalism, liberal democracy, the socialist alternatives to liberal democracy, and the scientific world view are all European products that now dominate the world's political systems, economies, and intellectual culture. In this concise and well written book, Headley concentrates on the genesis of 2 particularly important European contributions to global culture - the closely related concepts of common humanity and universal rights, and the tradition of political dissent that leads to modern republics-democracy. In this discussion, Headley is particularly concerned with emphasizing the positive aspects of Europeanization. This is not a tendentious argument, as he specifically and clearly acknowledges the reality and importance of European imperialism and colonialism, and the horrible realities of 20th century events such as the Holocaust. While this is not a traditional polemic, Headley is concerned with what he regards as unfair denigration of the Western tradition from the left, and also with what he regards as distortion of that tradition by the right. Headley opens with an interesting section on how the European voyages of discovery generated the first approximately accurate view of globe among educated Europeans. Among this knowledge was the discovery of numerous humans living in virtually all parts of the globe. Headley essentially argues that this general geographic understanding formed the necessary backdrop for developing the idea of common humanity. An experienced scholar of early modern Europe, Headley demonstrates that the roots of the ideas of common humanity and universal rights are deeply embedded in the western tradition. He identifies the monogenic origin of humanity in the Christian creation myth and the Stoic ethical tradition as particularly important sources of these great ideas. He does a nice job of tracing the evolution of these ideas in early modern Europe, stressing the increasing secularization of this line of thought, culminating in the ideals of universal humanity and rationality enunciated, for example, by Kant at the end of the 18th century. Much of this discussion is both concise and informative. The summary of the natural law tradition, in particular, is a model of brevity and insight. Headley's discussion of the genesis of the tradition of political dissent is also concise and insightful. Again, this is a story very much of secularization of ideals, particularly prompted by the agonies of warfare generated by the Reformation, the necessity of religious toleration, and the gradual expansion of secular Republican ideals. Not much of Headley's story is new. Much of this story will be familiar to readers knowledgeable about intellectual history and early modern Europe. The presentation is very accessible and the quality of writing is very good. Headley is a thoughtful and careful analyst. While Headley argues well that the European origin of these ideas was sufficient, was it necessary? That is, could these ideas arise only in the unique circumstances of Europe and within the European intellectual tradition? This is impossible to say. It's possible that ideas like this are a necessary component of the development of industrial capitalism. If Song China had developed an industrial revolution and then become a great expansionary state, would we now be discussing Confucianism as the source of the idea of common humanity? Headley concludes with a definitely polemical section on contemporary American politics. This expresses his considerable disgust with the events of the last decade, particularly the policies of the Bush II administration. He is also quite disturbed by what he sees as the erosion of values by the inappropriate intrusion of dogmatic conservative Christianity into politics and other aspects of American life. His book is good corrective to the fantasies of those like Rodney Stark who wish to reduce all the positive aspects of the western tradition to an aspect of Christianity. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. bold and timely

By Kostas A. Lavdas 'Europeanization' is a concept put to many uses in the last couple of decades. As the European Union became stronger and expanded, EU scholars used the concept to imply the impact of the Union on member states and applicant states as well as the ongoing processes of interaction between the European and national levels. Other scholars, however, persisted in defending a more traditional use of the concept, having little to do with today's EU realities. In this second approach, Europeanization denotes the historical expansion of the geographical, civilizational and technological perimeter of the European/Western world. In his new book, Professor John Headley gives us a concise, bold and timely presentation of the thesis about the historical impact of Renaissance and Reformation ideas on the rest of the world. Headley focuses on the European roots of three Western-turned-global ideas: the vision of a common humanity, the conception of human rights, and the institutionalization of political dissent. These are uniquely European gifts to the world. Without in any way denying the dark and ugly side of Europe's other contributions (wars, colonialism, the holocaust), Headley boldly insists that "the uniqueness of the Western tradition in the creation of a common humanity needs to be reaffirmed". Whether or not one agrees with all the points it makes, this is clearly an important book: his lucid, bold and knowledgeable approach will no doubt provoke debate.

The Europeanization of the World puts forward a defense of Western civilization and the unique gifts it has bequeathed to the world-in particular, human rights and constitutional democracy-at a time when many around the globe equate the West with hubris and thinly veiled imperialism. John Headley argues that the Renaissance and the Reformation provided the effective currents for the development of two distinctive political ideas. The first is the idea of a common humanity, derived from antiquity, developed through natural law, and worked out in the new emerging global context to provide the basis for today's concept of universal human rights. The second is the idea of political dissent, first posited in the course of the Protestant Reformation and later maturing in the politics of the British monarchy. Headley traces the development and implications of this first idea from antiquity to the present. He

examines the English revolution of 1688 and party government in Britain and America into the early nineteenth century. And he challenges the now--common stance in historical studies of moral posturing against the West. Headley contends that these unique ideas are Western civilization's most precious export, however presently distorted. Certainly European culture has its dark side--Auschwitz is but one example. Yet as Headley shows, no other civilization in history has bequeathed so sustained a tradition of universalizing aspirations as the West. The Europeanization of the World makes an argument that is controversial but long overdue. Written by one of our preeminent scholars of the Renaissance and Reformation, this elegantly reasoned book is certain to spark a much-needed reappraisal of the Western tradition.

"Headley flies in the face of post-1960s criticism of the West to argue that the Renaissance and the Reformation laid the groundwork for the world's present understanding of human rights and constitutional democracy. . . . Headley offers considerable evidence for these Western contributions to pushing diverse cultures toward a new, globalized way of life. . . . In a brief epilogue, [he] sets aside his scholarly mien to launch a devastating critique of American policies at home and abroad since 2001. . . . A densely written defense of the Western tradition."--Kirkus s"This is a provocative, compelling, and successful book that traces the culture-transcending qualities of the idea of a common humanity and political dissent in Europe. . . . Balanced and deeply intelligent, Headley's book recasts the role of European civilization in shaping our future."--A.R. Brunello, Choice"John Headley's lucid study of the intellectual origins of human rights and democracy in the European tradition rewards the careful reader. . . . Headley has written an excellent book, penetrating and well-written. The two sections on the United States described above are in brief, isolated sections, and have little to do with the rest of the book. The reader stands to gain a great deal from this senior scholar's broad analysis of these distinctly European values."--John F. Kicza, Renaissance Quarterly"There is much in this book for Renaissance scholars, historical sociologists, and students of contemporary history. For the . . . historically oriented sociologist, the book is an important contribution to understanding the European heritage."--Gerard Delanty, American Historical From the Back Cover"A wonderful book! The author dives deep into his extensive work on the Renaissance in order to explore the roots of human rights and democracy in the European heritage, and then extends his insights into the contemporary period. The scholarship and theoretical sophistication make this book a must-read for all thoughtful people, especially those concerned with political theory and globalization."--Bruce Mazlish, Massachusetts Institute of Technology"This is an important book. The argument that there is something unique about European civilization from a global perspective is highly relevant to contemporary political and cultural debate. The scholarship placing the sources of this uniqueness in the history of the European Renaissance as it encountered and conceptualized other worlds is of the first order."--Joan-Pau Rubis, London School of Economics and Political Science"This is a short book that addresses a very large topic. It is an exceedingly fair-minded, judicious, and learned attempt to deal with an important and controversial topic, and it treats the matter in a challenging and thought-provoking fashion. My judgment is that Professor Headley has succeeded admirably."--Paul A. Rahe, University of TulsaAbout the AuthorJohn M. Headley is professor emeritus of history at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. His books include Tommaso Campanella and the Transformation of the World (Princeton).