

Islamic Perspective

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Malcolm X on Violence, Religion and Extremism

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Abstract

The question of violence in relation to religion and extremist acts has preoccupied the minds and hearts of many social theorists since the inception of disciplinary social sciences. But the importance of Malcolm X as a social theorist has been less debated in regard to fundamental questions of humanities and social sciences. To be more accurate, it could be argued that he has been systematically neglected within mainstream sociology and social theory. In other words, little is known about the significance of the Malcolmian social theory as what is known about him in academia is mainly related to his image as a political activist or militant black fanatic who preached hate against American White population. In this article, the author has attempted to uncover less debated dimensions of Malcolm X's social theory in relation to violence, religion and extremism

Key Words: Malcolm X, Religion, Violence, Extremism, Race

Introduction

It is not a secret that the world is in a mess. The scope of chaos is not regional but global in nature and like a virus moves all over the world with an unprecedented speed. Many scholars and distinguished intellectuals across the globe have attempted to address questions which are directly or indirectly related to violence, extremism and mass suicides either under the banner of religion or the so-called humanitarian-bombing-paradigm/humanitarian-peace-bombing-paradigm.

Regardless of posteriori reasons which are made up by politicians and terrorists for their inhumane activities the results are surprisingly similar in both camps, i.e.

devastating forms of atrocities around the globe. But the question is how should we understand the current situation? The roots of these atrocities lie in *militant secularism* and *fanatic religionism*. Both of these perspectives are totalitarian in nature and do not allow any free space for the *truly different*. The militant secularism bans all forms of beings under the pretext of ‘transcultural reason’ and the fanatic religionism forbids all forms of knowledge by resorting to a ‘mythical pure perception’. In both of these readings the living forms are negated any kind of relevance and doomed to be re-formed along the abstract form of reason and mythical mode of perception. In other words, the problems which have overwhelmed humanity today are not only of political nature but they have intellectual roots which should be attended if we are serious about tackling them. If we focus on the political dimension alone then we shall repeat the stupidities of our forefathers but in different forms and modalities which could have destructive consequences beyond sound imagination. In this context, we think the outlook of Malcolm X is of great significance as he realizes the important dynamism of religion in the public square, on the one hand, but he, at the same time, does not disregard the significance of diversity in matters of society, politics and culture. In his speech in the Cleveland on April 3, 1964, he makes clear that he is a Muslim but the problem is that this concept is not an innocent term today. We see images of people who shout on top of their voices that they are Muslims but commit abhorrent atrocities against fellow Muslims or fellow human beings on different channels on TV every now and then. In other words, we need to have a critical approach toward the concept of ‘Muslim’ and see in what sense Malcolm employed this term as this is a controversial issue in a post-globalized world. In his view, religion is not a means for oppression but a medium for inquiry and this distinction is of pivotal significance. He argues that “I’m still a Muslim ... [but] ... I’m not here to try and change your religion” (1966. 24). What does this mean? What does he mean by being a Muslim and not desiring to change the religious views of the others? In a *missionary mindset* of both militant secularism and fanatic religionism which embraces all dimensions of our life today, it is hard to understand what Malcolm X stands for. In other words, why should he argue that the dialog is possible even when we have differences? To be more accurate, it seems Malcolm X is of the opinion that dialog is only possible when we not only concede to the principle of diversity but also celebrate differences as the absence of diversity would benumb the possibility of growth in the world of humanity. To put it differently, he was convinced that diversity was not only a fact but also a ‘divine sign’, i.e. a means for manifestation of divinity in the world of humanity-and as such it should be

cherished and employed as a fertile form of dialog. If this is a sane argument then both forms of exclusivist interpretations of militant secularism and fanatic religionism should be combated as modes of politics and religiosity in the public square.

In other words, it is possible to envision Malcolm X's approach to human problems in a non-secular as well as non-religious fashion which celebrates diversity without denying one's own identity. However, there are scholars who have approached Malcolm X differently and argue that he was a militant and fanatic. Was he a militant and fanatic? In other words, it is impossible to employ the legacy of Malcolm X in overcoming militancy, extremism, violence and sectarianism in a divided world which we find ourselves today.

Some may argue that Malcolm X's position is ethnocentrism or 'inverted racism', i.e. Black Racism against the racism waged on Afro-Americans by the Whites. Although it is undeniable that there is a rage in X's speeches but it is wrong to assume that he is a black racist or Muslim fanatics. Why do I argue this? Could this claim be backed up by solid evidence? Are there references in his work which could support my argument?

In his speech which was delivered in the Cleveland on April 3, 1964, Malcolm X talked on a serious political question which he entitled it 'The Ballot or the Bullet'. In this speech he argued that although

I'm still a Muslim, I'm not here tonight to discuss my religion. I'm not here to try and change your religion. I'm not here to argue or discuss anything that we differ about, because it's time for us to submerge our differences and realize that it is best for us to first see that we have the same problem, a common problem Whether you are educated or illiterate, whether you live on the boulevard or in the alley, you're going to catch hell just like I am. We're all in the same boat and we all are going to catch the same hell from the same man. He just happens to be a white man. All of us have suffered here, in this country, political oppression at the hands of the white man, economic exploitation at the hands of the white man, and social degradation at the hands of the white man. Now in speaking like this, it does not mean that we're anti-white, but it does mean we're anti-exploitation, we're anti-degradation, and we're anti-oppression. And if the white man

doesn't want us to be anti-him, let him stop oppressing and exploiting and degrading us (1966. 24-5).

I quoted this in length to show the spirit and the content of Malcolm X where he makes a clear distinction between 'biological racism' –which was elaborated by Ku Klux Klan, on the one hand, and early phases of the Nation of Islam at the hands of Elijah Muhammad, on the other hand- and 'cultural racism' –which could have socio-politico-economic reasons and for such underlying reasons the proponents of exploitation support 'apparent racial ideologies' for keeping others in submissive modes of life.

In other words, Malcolm X makes a distinction between 'inherent racism of the White' and 'accidental racism of the White' by arguing that the White Man "just happens to be" (1966.24) the political oppressor, economic exploiter, and social degrader of the Black Man "in this country" (1966.24). To put it differently, if we could change the oppressive system then Malcolm would argue that "*we're [not] ... anti-white ... but we're anti-exploitation, ... anti-degradation, ... anti-oppression ...*" (1966. 24-5).

This mode of analysis transforms the theoretical configuration of Malcolm X's social theory by making it transculturally relevant and humanistically significant due to the fact that he addresses the 'real riddles' of the capitalist world-system which is based on 'oppression', 'exploitation', and 'degradation' of the *other*- both within the state and outside the political boundaries of the state. Said differently, racism may be a fundamental element in race-conscious or race-plagued cultures but if there was not any race problem we should not rest in peace in a context which is based on 'OED', i.e. oppression/exploitation/degradation. Because today we may not have racial problem as we had in the 20th century but 'OED' is not over yet as the system could stay alive as long as it does not yield into ideals of justice, fraternity, equality and liberty. In other words, Malcolm X seems to argue that the world capitalist system is not the defender of the Enlightenment Ideals of Justice, Fraternity, Equality and Liberty. On the contrary, it is its destroyer *par excellence* due to the fact that it could only prolong its life as long as a world based on such ideals is not born. The ideals of Enlightenment are the anti-thesis of the capitalism which uses racism, as it did in the 20th century in USA, as an instrument for creating systematic hate, systemic violence, societal division, organized conflict, studied crises and planned war between nations and in the hearts of people so they could not care about each other or lest unite under the same flag of Fraternity, Justice, Liberty and Equality. Malcolm X, by moving away from 'biological racism' freed

himself from 'inverted racism' and also made his discourse more of universal significance-which could be employed by alternative social theorists who are seeking to understand the underlying mechanisms of tutelage of the 'restern world' before the 'eurocentric global hegemony'.

Racial Revolution

By living in Euro-America one could realize that the Euro-Atlantic civilization is one of the most over-conscious and over-sensitive social structures as far as the race and color are concerned. However, it is interesting to note that most of the giants of disciplinary social theory such as Freud, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Small, Parsons and Pareto do never talk about the racial structures of the modern society and how the racially-motivated elements could overshadow the potentials of social structures as well as contours of human agency. The story of sociology was founded upon *Western White Male* (WWM) and in this fashion the mentality of founding constructors of disciplinary social theory conceptualized the Black people in America as the *colored people*. In other words, the subconscious of Anglo-American subject was so deeply engaged with the issue of race that the demarcative lines between various people were constructed along the issue of 'skin color'. This racial attitude was not only confined to lay people but it included all strata of white society both in Europe and America. The founding fathers of sociologists did not fare any better in this regard as most of early social scientists preferred to employ the *dismissive strategy* even in discursive contexts. For instance, in modern American history a myth was constructed by mainstream social scientists that the Blacks were responsible for the failures of the *Reconstruction Era*. This orthodox view was not challenged by any of key white founding fathers of American social theorists such as Albion Small or Talcott Parsons. Although they were conceptualizing social theory in the so-called universal terms but issues of race and ethnicities which were haunting the American society escaped their attention in a complete fashion. But this pivotal question did not go unattended by one of the key sociologists, i.e. W. E. B. Du Bois who realized that the main issue of American social theory is not the question of rationality but race. In other words, Du Bois challenged the myth of universality concocted by disciplinary social scientists, on the one hand, and he, on the other hand, demonstrated that social theory could not be a theory of all societies but particular society. This is to argue that we cannot talk about social theory without taking into consideration burning issues of particular society. To put it differently, in a racially conscious society of America the

dismissive strategy of Parsons on racial questions speaks about a malaise which needs to be conceptualized sociologically but this was not discussed until early years of 80s in the 20th century. But Du Bois was years ahead than other White Western Male sociologists who disregarded the question of race in the constitution of self and society in the context of America. The question of the *Reconstruction Era* is one of the key questions which one can discern the partisan interpretations of White social theorists against the Black People in USA. In 1935, he published his *Black Reconstruction in America* and there he challenged the prevailing orthodoxy that blacks were responsible for the failures of the Reconstruction era. (Du Bois, 1935) It seems that Du Bois believed that racism is an offshoot of capitalism and this conviction led him to choose Socialism as his ideological frame of analysis. In other words, it could be argued that Du Bois is more in line with Marxist theories of capitalism according to which colonialism and imperialism are high stages of capitalism. Racism, in this line of interpretation, provides the ideological justification for colonialism and imperialism. But what has Du Bois to do with Malcolm X? Why is Du Bois important in reimagining of Malcolm X? As I mentioned earlier there are few who have looked at Malcolm X in terms of sociological theory and social theory but even those few who have paid scant attention to his intellectual legacy seem to read him in a Du Boisian fashion. This is to argue that they attempt to interpret Malcolm X in a fashion that he will appear at the end as a Du Boisian critical theorist who views racism in a Marxist mode of analysis. By establishing this interpretative strategy, the American scholars have been able to read him in a Marxist fashion and also minimize the importance of Islamism or Political Islam in Malcolm X's frame of analysis. Although it is accepted that he has not developed very extensively on Islamism in his critical theory but there are ample references that he has not taken Islam solely as a *form of devotion* but a way of political strategy in rectifying the ills of society. For instance, in his speech entitled *The Ballot or the Bullet* he states that although "*I'm still a Muslim, I'm not here to discuss my religion but [find a solution] for a common problem [which we suffer from] in this country; political oppression at the hands of the white man ...*" (1966. 24). This is to argue that he interprets religion as a frame of political action and in so doing he comes very close to the position of advocates of Islamism within the parameters of liberation theology or social theology. In other words, his position on social issues is not of theological nature but sociological one and this would assist us to differentiate between his inclusive Islamist position and those of extremist Salafism of today, on the one hand, and highlight the fundamental differences between the socialist position of Du Bois and Islamist

position of Malcolm X, on the other hand. These are issues which need to be discussed by anyone who is interested in the politics of social theory in the American context as well as in regard to the global context of Islamism and social theory.

Now let us go back to the question of race and its relation to the American society in Malcolm X's view which seems to differ from the position of Du Bois who was also critical of racial politics in USA but believed that racism is an offshoot of capitalism. There are certain passages in Malcolm X's works where one can find references to racism as a product of society rather than an inherent biological tendency. For instance, in Haryou-Act Forum, December 12, 1964, he explained his position to the American ambassador in Africa by arguing that

I told him, 'What you're telling me, whether you realize it or not, is that it is not basic in you to be a racist, but that society there in America, which you all have created, makes you a racist.' This is true; this is the *worst* racist society on this earth. There is no country on earth which you can live and racism be brought out in you-whether you're white or black-more so than this country that poses as a democracy. This is a country where the social, economic, political atmosphere creates a sort of psychological atmosphere that makes it almost impossible, if you're in your right mind, to walk down the street with a *white* person and not be self-conscious, or he or she not be self-conscious. It almost can't be done, and it makes you *feel* this racist tendency that pops up. But it's the society itself (1966. 214).

Here we can see that racism is a complex result of various socio-politico-economic factors along with psychological features but there are other instances where Malcolm X seems to suggest a contradictory view on racism. For instance, by arguing that in the West,

There has been much talk about a population explosion. Whenever [the Whites] are speaking of the population explosion, in my opinion they are referring primarily to the people in Asia or in Africa – the Black, Brown, Red, and Yellow people. It is seen by people of the West that, as soon as the standard of living is raised in Africa and Asia, automatically the people begin to reproduce abundantly. And there has been a great deal of fear engendered by this in the minds of the people of the West, who happen to be, on this earth, a very small minority. In fact, in most of the thinking and

planning of Whites in the West today, it's easy to see the fear ... [which] ... governs their political views and ... it governs their economic views and it governs most of their attitudes toward present society. ... the social structure [of the modern world system] ... [is like a] ... racial powder keg ... [which lies beneath the capitalist social structures] (1966. 45-6).

In other words, it looks like Malcolm X oscillates between two different positions; in the first position he is suggesting that racism is a product of social organization while in the second position it seems he considers capitalist social organization as a product of racism. However, I think there may be a third possibility here too, namely I don't think he is claiming causality of capitalism. Rather, he is arguing that white racism causes underdevelopment of blacks. To put it differently, the question is about the relationship between white racism and capitalism. It seems he attaches a specific accent on the socio-cultural organization of the White culture within the parameters of capitalism which has no equal in other forms of racism. In other words, the black people cannot redeem and emancipate themselves from their oppressed position if they take the *Negrofragae* in Marxist or Du Boisian frame of references. Here it seems the question of religion plays a significant role as Christianity has played a pivotal role in domesticating the Black people by not only justifying slavery but enslaving their minds too. In other words, for the Black community (and all the oppressed nations around the globe) it is necessary to alienate themselves from the symbolic universe of the White and this strategy will enable them to actualize their authentic self anew. Seen in this fashion, then one could understand why Malcolm chose Islam as a religion for his struggle against racism in America and not Christianity. In addition, this could explain that in what sense he followed Du Bois and where he differed from the Du Boisian frame of envisioning the future of the Black People in America. (Du Bois, 1935) In sum, it could be emphasized that Malcolm X sees a close link between the structures of America and the world capitalist social organization and at its heart he discerns the problem of 'race' rather than 'Das Kapital', 'Rationality', or 'Anomie'. This is a question which is better understood and conceptualized in post-racial discourses than in mainstream/eurocentric paradigms of disciplinary social sciences.

Historiography of Revolt/Revolution in Sociology

Turning-points are the keys for understanding the underlying frames of references in the constitution of self and society. It could be argued that a turning-point is a

time at which a decisive change in a situation occurs, especially one with crucial results. Although it is a temporal event but it has spatial consequences and its corollaries would transform the ways through which one perceives reality as such. In other words, a turning-point is a type of perspectival *feng shui*, i.e. a conceptual system of arranging one's location in the configuration of things in the myriad forms of realities. To put it differently, as the feng shui practice discusses architecture in metaphoric terms of *invisible forces* that bind the universe, earth, and man together, a turning-point makes sense of unknown accidents which surround one at some point of time in a specific context. Said differently, by attaching a significant importance to a particular turning-point we prefer one interpretation of an event (or series of events) over against the other interpretations. In other words, talking about turning-points is always tantamount to choosing an interpretative system over its competing forms of analyses. This is to argue that a turning-point is not simply a historical event which has occurred and observable by everyone regardless of their points of departures. On the contrary, a turning-point is a point which is more of philosophical significance than merely a historical accident which has taken place in a particular place at a specific time. In other words, each society, each group, each epoch and each tradition may have their own particular turning-points which may not be upheld as significant by those who do not share the meaning-blocks of society A versus society B or tradition C versus tradition D. If one could distinguish between history and historiography then it would be readily accepted that 'universal turning-points' are not easy to define as defining moments may differ in each context depending on one's vector. But why is it important to be wary about turning-points in humanities, social sciences and, in particular, in the context of social theory? In sum, a turning point could be defined as a fundamental change in one's perception of the past that occurs in a historical time and has a far-reaching influence in the later period. Such turning points should lead to the rise of new ruptures in history, hence contributing to a new form of living that (re)shapes one's vision of the past, the present, and the future. This new mode can exert its influence within its own culture, or without, having a global, cross-cultural impact. In other words, a turning point involves deeply the question of legitimacy in its most fundamental fashion, i.e. who has the final verdict upon defining the complex patterns of reality as a whole. For instance, the year 1968 plays a vital position in the context of disciplinary social theory for anybody who considers it as a turning-point. The future of humanity in a global sense is, for example, defined in terms of the 1968 revolt in France by Rojas who argues that the

Post-1968 Europe has ceased to be the radiating center of the dominating culture of the Western World, at the same time in which music, sculpture, painting and the arts of all the regions of the world become universal and are disseminated everywhere, asserting themselves as so many other cultural, alternative and possible Cosmo visions have within the new situation of cultural and social polycentrism. These are movements where centers decline. And where the role itself of centrality as a global mechanism of social functioning is delegitimized in its own foundations, which may basically express the opening of a new and radically different situation of world capitalism, that after 1968 – 73 began entering into a clear situation of historical ‘bifurcation’. This situation of divergence in which the mechanisms of stabilization and reproduction of the world capitalist system as a whole ceased to function, announcing its inevitable end as well as the pressing need for its deep mutation and transformation. Following Immanuel Wallerstein’s incisive hypothesis, we could ask ourselves if 1968 did not then have, in addition to its profound character as a global reaching cultural revolution with civilizing consequences, a new and additional supplementary significance: that of having inaugurated with its irruption, this clearly terminal phase of the life of modern capitalism that was initiated more or less five centuries ago. However, as we have well been reminded by the ‘soixante-huitard’ generation the world over, history is not an automatic process with is inevitably one way, but rather it is a process carried out by men themselves, who with our collective action and our reflections help to decide their possible destinies, in accordance with the conditions of possibility of each specific historic moment. Therefore, it depends precisely on those collective actions and that work of intellectual comprehension, that 1968 can be recalled, perhaps in the year 2068 – one hundred years after its healthy and beneficial irruption – as that threshold moment that with its development inaugurated, the final stage of the world capitalist historic system, and the clear transition towards a non-capitalist world in which economic exploitation, political repression and all forms of social discrimination have all passed to become bad memories of a finally overcome past. And possibly it may not even be necessary to wait until that year 2068, in order that

this last and most profound significance of 1968 may be recognized by all. In any case, 1968 remains there with its main lessons and effects, to continue encouraging us day by day, to actively work so that this may be the case (Rojas, 2004. 213-4).

Said differently, 1968 is considered as the symbolic sign by which every aspect of meaningfulness should be weighed by and this has become like a bizarre mantra where eurocentric sociologists conceptualize the history of modern world in terms which are deeply parochial rather than universal. This is to restate that 1968 is one of those dates which have been conceptualized as a 'turning-point' in the context of social theory. This cliché has been internalized by the Iranian intellectuals and social theorists who view *1968 Event* as the turning-point without realizing that this year may be of significance for eurocentric social sciences and societies. In other words, we tend to forget that every society may have its own turning-points and it is wrong to assume that '1968' is the criterion for all global changes. This mode of viewing global issues is what one could term as 'House Negro-Mentality' in the sense Malcolm X conceptualized it, i.e. one who associates himself with the 'master-narrative' in a way that he denies his own subjectivity by becoming one with the eurocentric vision of the world. Malcolm X presents another turning-point in historiographical sense and for him the year 1964 is when the worldwide revolution of the oppressed people took place. (1966. 49) Malcolm X argues that

1964 will see the Negro revolt evolve and merge into the world-wide black revolution that has been taking place on this earth The so-called revolt will become a real black revolution. Now the black revolution has been taking place in Africa and Asia and Latin America; when I say black, I mean non-white- black, brown, red or yellow. Our brothers and sisters in Asia, who were colonized by the Europeans, our brothers and sisters in Asia, who were colonized by the Europeans, and in Latin America, the peasants, who were colonized by the Europeans, have been involved in a struggle ... to get the colonialists ... off their land And there is no system on this earth which has proven itself more corrupt, more criminal, than this system that in 1964 still colonizes 22 million African-American, still enslaves 22 million Afro-Americans (1966. 49-50).

To put it bluntly, for Rojas the symbolic year is 1968 when "that great 'rupturing – event – occurred'" (Rojas, 2004. 197) but for Malcolm X the rupturing event is 1964 when the black people shook off their yoke in America and looked for

“freedom, justice, equality” (1966. 51) and refused to be considered as a colonized community (1966. 50) within America. In other words, the turning-point for Malcolm X differs surely from Rojas’ perspective and this would clearly have fundamental bearings upon their respective frames of their social theory. In the eurocentric historiography

It is clear that the fundamental dividing circumstance of 1968 has spread on a worldwide scale. And it is now also clear that – way and beyond its multiple and diverse forms of expression at the different geographic spots, obviously associated with the historic features of each respective region, nation or space –, the 1968 movement is deep-down (basically) a true cultural revolution. Consequently, at its most representative and characteristic epicenters as well as at the entire group of places and spaces of its multiple appearances, the historical 1968 rupture always emerges with a double scenario: one, as a process in which the explanation is never entirely complete stemming only from the data of the corresponding local situation –forwarding us therefore to its universal dimension – and the other, also as a transformation in which, whatever might be the political fate or the mediate or immediate destiny of its direct actors, as individuals or collectively, it always ends up by radically upsetting, without any possibility of turning back, the forms of functioning and of reproduction of the main cultural structures that it refutes and questions (Rojas, 2004. 197-8).

For Malcolm X seems the history is conceived in a different fashion as instead of 1968, it is the significance of 1964 which is symbolized in his narrative, i.e. it has the possibility of having a “world-wide [consequences] ... on this earth” (Malcolm X, 1966. 49-50). This creates a different mindset and based on this symbolic difference the subjectivity which is developed within the parameters of Malcolm X’s point of departure would surely generate other sets of turning-points. Although it is undeniable that we may be able to find common grounds as the objective is freedom, justice and equality in all truly humanistic traditions which are neither integrationist nor separationist but recognitionist, i.e. “fighting for the right to live as free humans in ... society” (Malcolm X, 1966. 51). These are the ideals which Rojas discerns in the 1968 revolt by arguing that

History is not an automatic process with is inevitably one way, but rather it is a process carried out by men themselves, who with our collective action and our reflections help to decide their possible destinies, in accordance with the conditions of possibility of each specific historic moment. Therefore, it depends precisely on those collective actions and that work of intellectual comprehension, that 1968 can be recalled, perhaps in the year 2068 – one hundred years after its healthy and beneficial irruption – as that threshold moment that with its development inaugurated, the final stage of the world capitalist historic system, and the clear transition towards a non-capitalist world in which economic exploitation, political repression and all forms of social discrimination have all passed to become bad memories of a finally overcome past. And possibly it may not even be necessary to wait until that year 2068, in order that this last and most profound significance of 1968 may be recognized by all. In any case, 1968 remains there with its main lessons and effects, to continue encouraging us day by day, to actively work so that this may be the case (2004. 214).

Revolution and Radical Means of Political Transformation

No doubt that Malcolm X is a revolutionary thinker and it is wrong to define his body of knowledge within the narrow boundaries of disciplinary academia. In other words, his mode of sociological imagination bears no resemblance to what Allama Jafari terms as *clerkish mentalité in human sciences*. (Miri, 2014. 58) This is to argue that he symbolizes a type of thinker which I would like to conceptualize as a *street thinker*. What does this concept mean? I can explain this by a brief reference to sport terminology which would enable us to comprehend the concept of the ‘street thinker’ in a better fashion. I am sure all of you are familiar with boxing more or less. In boxing field, the experts talk about two kinds of boxing styles, i.e. the professional boxing and the street fight boxing. The skills which a boxer may learn in the boxing clubs are very useful but when one steps outside the ring the techniques which have been adopted inside the ring they should be modified to fit the new environment. Otherwise one may get beaten by harsh realities of fighting which are ongoing in violent streets of our cities. If this comparison is permitted then I would draw your attention to the fact that academic social thinkers look similar to professional boxers who are trained within specific parameters of

academia and their particular styles do obstruct the transmissions of realities which they intend to study and understand. In other words, the type of encounter which Malcolm X portrays in his lifework demonstrates a profound affinity to the models of *street fighting* where the fighters do not use gloves and come in touch with harsh realities in bare forms. To put it differently, the position through which Malcolm X approached social problems were the violent streets of Bronx and Manhattan which were fundamentally in contradiction to ivory towers of Harvard or Princeton. Isn't perspective everything? How does our perspective emerge? Isn't biography pivotal in the constitution of our perspective? Some may argue that everything we see is a perspective, not the truth, i.e. the way we gain insight about life is not separated from where we are positioned in society and the world. Said differently, in the matrix of Malcolm X's social theory, I discern a model of intellectual engagement which is more suited to realities of the 21st century where academia as a symbolic world of learning has lost its integrity as well as sovereignty due to its marriage with corporate knights. Malcolm X presents the concerns of streets and embodies the spirit of streets in a world which have lost the spirit of *caring engagement* with the other.

Now let me get back to the question of revolution and how Malcolm X understood the 'real revolution' as it seems he believed that we could orchestrate certain political changes and sell it as revolution to oppressed groups or people in any society. In other words, Malcolm X argued that a real revolution involves systemic transformation which would create a *free, just, and equal* social context for all citizens who happen to live in a particular political order. (1966. 50) The core of revolution in Malcolm X's discourse is interconnected to the question of 'Land'. Because the model he has in mind is related to the experiences of non-whites around the globe who has lost their lands and have been turned into refugees in their own homelands such as Palestinians and South Africans respectively under the governments of Zionist regime or ex-Apartheid regime of South Africa. In other words, displacement brought about by Colonialism lied at the heart of Malcolm X's notion of revolution which could not be dissociated from the question of 'Land'. Once you lose your land you turn into a tenant and being a tenant could have grave consequences for the patterns of group mentality in strict political sense of the term. In addition, we should add the racial dimension into Malcolm X's perception of the 'other' which was deeply interwoven with the historical trauma of slavery as far as the Afro-Americans are concerned. To put it differently, Malcolm X was not looking for a simple regime-change in America. On the contrary, he was looking for colossal changes which would not only liberate blacks from their historical

negritude traumas but also emancipate white people from their alienating inhumanity. But these changes are not possible through merely political decrees which do not touch the hearts of people in truly existential sense of the term. At any rate, the concept of revolution is “always based on land” (1966. 50). But it is wrong to assume that one can get back the land through negotiation because the land is where the identity is constructed upon and once you lose your land you lose your sense of being someone or losing your sense of belonging – and the one who has robbed your land surely has robbed your sense of identity before that he has taken the physical territories where you used to reside. In other words, Malcolm X’s insistence upon land was an attempt to carve a sense of identity in the symbolic universe in America and when he realized that this is not possible then he struggled for separation. Of course, he oscillated between various positions depending on different scenarios which appeared before him during turbulent years of the Cold War in US.

However, Malcolm believed that what has been taken cannot be returned peacefully and a revolution “is never based on begging somebody for an integrated cup of coffee” (1966. 50). Maybe it is useful to mention that he was the master of figurative form of speech as he was deeply well-versed in the Holy Scriptures in an unprecedented fashion which is rarely seen in other social theorists of his caliber. What does he mean by an integrated cup of coffee in relation to the revolutionary sentiment? In order to understand Malcolm X’s symbolic language we need to get a picture of the American society during the racial revolution which led to the assassination of Malcolm X in Harlem on February 21, 1965. There are different narratives about the racial question in America but the one which Malcolm X relates seems to be different than the mainstream accounts. In his view, the black movement was derailed from its primary objectives by a complex plot which was designed by influential power elites who brought John F. Kennedy into the White House. Malcolm X relates the story in the following fashion, i.e.

Roy Wilkins attacked King; ... they accused King and Congress of Racial Equality of raising all the money and not paying it back. This happened; I’ve got it in documented evidence Roy started attacking King, and King started attacking Roy, and Farmer started attacking both of them. And as these Negroes of national stature began to attack each other, they began to lose their control of the Negro masses. The Negroes were out there in the streets. They were talking about how they were going to march on Washington. Right at that time Birmingham had exploded and the Negroes in Birmingham

– remember, they also exploded. They began to stab the crackers in the back and bust them up That’s when Kennedy sent in the troops, down in Birmingham. After that, Kennedy got on the television and said ‘this is a moral issue.’ That’s when he said he was going to put out a civil-rights bill. And when he mentioned civil-rights bill and the Southern crackers started talking about how they were going to boycott or filibuster it, then the Negroes started talking-about what? That they were going to march on Washington, march on the Senate, march on the White House, march on the Congress, and tie it up, bring it to a halt, not let the government proceed. They even said they were going out to the airport and lay down on the runway and not let any airplanes land. That was revolution. That was the black revolution. It was the grass roots out there in the street. It scared the white man to death, scared the white power structure in Washington, D. C., to death; I was there. When they found out that this black steamroller was going to come down on the capital, they called Wilkins, they called in Randolph, they called in these national Negro leaders that you respect and told them, ‘Call it off.’ Kennedy said, ‘Look, you all are letting this thing go too far.’ And Old Tom said, ‘Boss, I can’t stop it, because I did not start it.’ They said, ‘I’m not even in it, much less at the head of it.’ They said, ‘These Negroes are doing things on their own. They’re running ahead of us.’ And that old shrewd fox, he said, ‘If you all aren’t in it, I’ll put you in it. I’ll put you at the head of it. I’ll endorse it. ... I’ll join it.’ A matter of hours went by. They had a meeting at the Carlyle Hotel in New York City. The Carlyle Hotel is owned by the Kennedy Family; that’s the hotel Kennedy spent the night at, two nights ago; it belongs to his family. A philanthropic society headed by a white man named Stephen Currier called all the top civil-rights leaders to gather at the Carlyle Hotel. And he told them, ‘By you all fighting each other, you are destroying the civil-rights movement. And since you’re fighting over money from white liberals, let us set what is known as the Council for the United Civil Rights Leadership. Let’s form this council, and all the civil-rights organizations will belong to it, and we’ll use it for fund-raising purposes.’ Let me show you how tricky the white man is. As soon as they got it formed, they elected Whitney Young as its chairman, and who do you think became the co-

chairman? Stephen Currier, the white man, a millionaire. Powell was talking about it down at Cobo Hall today. This is what ... happened ... Powell knows ... Randolph knows ... Wilkins knows ... King knows it happened. Every one of that Big Six – they know it happened. Once they formed it, with the white man over it, he promised them and gave them \$800,000 to split up among the Big Six; and told them that after the march was over they'd give them \$700,000 more. A million and a half dollars – split up between leaders that you have been following, going to jail for, crying crocodile tears for. And they're nothing but Frank James and Jesse James and the what-do-you-call-'em brothers. As soon as they got the setup organized, the white man made available to them top public-relations experts; opened the new media across the country at their disposal, which then began to project these Big Six as the leaders of the march. Originally they weren't even in the march. You were talking this march talk on Hastings Street, you were talking march talk on Lenox Avenue, and on Fillmore Street, and on Central Avenue, and 32nd Street and 63rd Street. That's where the march talk was being talked. But the white man put the Big Six at the head of it; made them the march. They became the march. They took it over. And the first move they made after they took it over, they invited Walter Reuther, a white man; they invited a priest, a rabbi, and old white preacher, yes, an old white preacher. The same white element that put Kennedy into power – labor, the Catholics, the Jews, and liberal Protestants; the same clique that put Kennedy in power, joined the march on Washington (1966. 14-16).

This is the narrative which Malcolm X depicts about the background contours of the Black Movement which evolved into the Black Revolution but gradually was infiltrated and finally hijacked by powerful elements of the *White Ancien Régime*. It is in this context that Malcolm X uses a figurative language to explain how authentic social movements lose their political objectives and turn, instead, into reactionary hooliganistic gangs without any progressive political objectives. To highlight this point, Malcolm X argues that the *White Ancien Régime* uses the coffee and cream policy to derail authentic oppositions to the capitalist world system both within and without America. What is the coffee and cream policy? It's just

Like when you've got some coffee that's too black, which means it's too strong. What do you do? You integrate it with cream, you make it weak. But if you pour too much cream in it, you won't even know you ever had coffee. It used to be hot, it becomes cool. It used to be strong, it becomes weak. It used to wake you up, now it puts you to sleep. This is what they did with the march on Washington. They joined it. They did not integrate it, they infiltrated it. They joined it, became a part of it, took it over. And as they took it over, it lost its militancy. It ceased to be angry, it ceased to be hot, it ceased to be uncompromising. Why, it ceased to be a march. It became a picnic, a circus. Nothing but a circus, with clowns and all (1966. 16).

In other words, Malcolm X seems to believe that within the context of capitalism authentic revolutions are not possible unless revolutionary groups breed a sense of militancy within their body of praxis. If not then the power elites in the capitalist system would take over and change the course of emancipative movements by the policy of integrating coffee and cream. His model of revolution could be employed in contexts such as the one between Israel and Palestine where the latter has lost her land and the other using the policy of integrating coffee and cream. If Malcolm X was alive he would surely have argued against those who encourage Palestinians to turn "the other cheek" (1966. 50). In other words, he would have argued that revolution is

Never based on begging somebody for an integrated cup of coffee. Revolutions are never fought turning the other cheek. Revolutions are never based upon love-your-enemy and pray-for-those-who-spitefully-use-you. And revolutions are never waged singing 'We Shall Overcome. (1966. 50)

On the contrary, Malcolm X believed that revolutions

Are based upon bloodshed. Revolutions are never compromising. Revolutions are never based upon negotiations. Revolutions are never based upon any kind of tokenism whatsoever. Revolutions are never even based upon that which is begging a corrupt system to accept us into it. Revolutions overturn systems (1966. 50).

Conclusions

It could be argued in a Malcolmian fashion that structural changes should occur but these transformations should not be only confined to external structures. On the contrary, the structures which make up the contours of human mindsets should be transformed too. Otherwise, the corrupt system would reform itself upon the patterns of the old Ancien Régime which deprives people from their inalienable rights as human beings. Although Malcolm X left few written works but his legacy is worth to be dwelled upon within the frame of critical social theory. (Miri, 2016. 5) Many academics assume that his political activism is what is of importance but I think his sociological imagination is what we need today most as far as questions of religion, violence and extremism are concerned. This is to argue that if we strive to overcome eurocentrism in social theory (Azmat, 2013. 27) we should take suppressed voices seriously and the seriousness of our decision could not be realized if we do not step outside the frames of disciplinary rationalité. (Miri, 2010)

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Filming Iran: *Argo* and the 1979 Revolution in Hollywood Film

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Abstract

This article examines the 2012 film *Argo*, which caused considerable consternation and debate among film critics, scholars, government officials, and political activists from both the United States and Iran. *Argo* is one of several films to portray Iranians and although problematic, represents a radical shift in the way they are shown in Hollywood films. It also offers a critique of American empire that, although soft, is rare in movies on Islamic subjects. Despite the film's overt use of the white rescue narrative, *Argo* departs from the overly simplistic presentations of chauvinism, racism, and misogyny found in the majority of American films about Islam. In the end, *Argo* says much more about American hubris than it does about Iran or the 1979 Iranian Revolution, standing as a rare example of cinematic resistance to imperial hegemony.

Keywords: Iran, Khomeini, postcolonial, imperial, Islam, Hollywood.

***Argo* and Iran**

Before *Argo*, the film most commonly associated with the 1979 Iranian revolution was *Not Without My Daughter*, based on the 1987 book by Betty Mahmoudy about her imprisonment and escape from Iran with her daughter. *Not Without My Daughter* is the best known of a genre of stories about white women marrying Muslim men who abuse, rape, and imprison the (usually Christian) women who love them (de Hart 2001: 51).¹ These intermarriage-nightmare tales typically

present a free and liberated woman and a fanatical and cruel man, adopting the Orientalist trope of the victimized female who must be rescued, or rescue herself, from the grips of the harem or other Eastern prison. They are much like medieval and early modern tales of the tragedy resulting from racial mixing that typically created a monstrous birth. In the modern version of East-West romances, the monstrous birth is replaced with violence, rape, or the death of a Christian or white woman. The story is typical of the discourse about Islam and other cultures. Under the Orientalist gaze, which demands a racially divided world, racial mixing often results in tragedy. “The love of a white woman and oriental man upsets ‘natural’ gender roles and traditional hierarchies and their transgression is catastrophic” (de Hart 2001: 54).²

Argo is not focused on this narrative, although it does employ other stereotypes of the East, including portrayals of Muslims as fanatical. It also contains a soft critique of American imperialism in Iran. Due to these oppositional presentations, the film caused consternation and debate among critics, scholars, and politicians from both the United States and Iran when it was released.³ Despite its use of the white rescue narrative, *Argo* is radically different from the overly simplistic presentations of chauvinism, racism, and misogyny seen in most films about Iran—most notably, *Not Without My Daughter* (1991). In the end, *Argo* is focused more on American hubris than on the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Like George Clooney’s other films about Islam and politics, *Three Kings* and *Syriana* (Clooney did not start in *Argo*, but served as a producer), *Argo* offers more complex portrayals of Muslims. In addition, its critique of American empire is rare in Hollywood films focused on Muslim subjects.

Argo is a multi-layered film and merits attention for the complex issues it raises surrounding power, representation, and identity. The disparate reactions to the movie ranged from far-right-wing media bloggers like Debbie Schlussel to scholars like Hamid Dabashi and Joseph Massad and political figures including ex-President Jimmy Carter and members of the current government in Tehran. The divergence of reactions to the film suggests that *Argo* presents competing narratives about the United States and Iran. *Argo* is not just about the mythologized past; it is about the ways in which Americans and Iranians continue to construct themselves and each other through dominant and resistant fields of cultural production.

Iran and the United States have a complicated history. In 1953, the United States supported a coup that reinstated the Shah of Iran, ousting the popular and progressive Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh and facilitating the

establishment of American and European petroleum companies in the country. In 1979, the people of Iran, frustrated with Shah Reza Pahlavi's dictatorial and inept leadership, rebelled and deposed him. Following the Iranian Revolution, Imam Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who had served as one of the Revolution's leading spiritual figures while exiled in Paris, became the leader of Iran. The movie *Argo* is set during the 1979 revolution. At that time, the Iranians, partly because of their anger at the role America had played in the 1953 revolution and hoping, in part, to forestall the re-reinstatement of the Shah, occupied and held hostages in the American Embassy in Tehran for over one year. *Argo* tells a story of the group of Americans who left the Embassy through a back door while it was being taken over and were sheltered by the Canadian Ambassador until they flew out of Tehran while posing as a Canadian film crew, ostensibly in Iran to scope out locations for a film that never existed—a science fiction-fantasy movie called *Argo*.

Hamid Dabashi argues that films like *Argo* and *Zero Dark Thirty* create “drama out of non-existent traumas—traumas that meant very little for history at the time that these two films were made [2012]” (Dabashi 2013). While Dabashi's point is spot on, both the hostage crisis and bin Laden's terror network have generated a great deal of anxiety among Americans, an anxiety that was in part created by Hollywood. The events and underlying factors that generated this cross-anxiety—of Americans about Iran and Iranians about the United States—are important parts of the *Argo* story and help explain why it is an important political film.

The trauma that the hostage crisis inflicted on the American psyche is partially explained by the prominence of the captivity narrative in U.S. mythology. Beginning with the Puritans, stories about Native Americans, Africans, and other non-whites kidnapping and terrorizing innocent Americans formed a large part of the American social imaginary. The Iranian hostage crisis is a twentieth-century version of these earlier narratives, complete with innocent victims (public servants in the service of the common good), a prolonged captivity (444 days), villains (fanatical Muslim revolutionaries), and a victorious return home (through the payment of ransom money). As with other foreign spaces likened to the purported savagery of colonial and frontier Indian country, the U.S. embassy was referred to as Fort Apache by the *charge d'affaires* (Laingen 1992: 5, Scott 2000: 182). As Siemenski has pointed out, captivity narratives have often functioned politically—against Native Americans, French “papists,” and the heroes of the American Revolution held “captive” by British tyranny (Rosenthal 1981: 178). The twentieth-century Gulf version replaced “wild eyed Indians” with “wild-eyed Iranians”

(Rosenthal 1981: 35, Scott 2000: 177). In addition to the numerous stories of Native American kidnapping, rape, torture, and murder of “early Americans,” there is another precedent—the Muslim pirates of the Barbary Coast in the early 1800s, also known as the “monsters of Africa,” around which numerous kidnapping stories circulated (Baeppler 2004).

Like earlier stories about American “civilization” and foreign/non-white “savagery” that were situated in the American West and in regions subject to the shifting frontiers of American imperialism, the media’s framing of the Iranian hostage crisis is rooted in the themes of settlement, survival, and expansion (Scott 2000: 179). The villain in the 1979 version of the story was an elderly cleric who was described as a “79-year-old fanatic” with “hooded eyes” and a “baleful glare” (Scott 2000: 182).⁴ The hero was President Jimmy Carter, whose image as “Mr. Nice Guy” was transformed into “frontier hero” in the early days of the crisis as he maintained authority and rejected the hostage-takers’ requests for the Shah’s return to Iran to stand trial for his crimes (Scott 2000: 184). Carter’s status precipitously dropped after a botched rescue attempt in April 1980, but he was still viewed as heroic, defending American interests in the face of a fanatical revolution.⁵ Carter’s opponent for the presidency, Ronald Reagan had an identity as a cowboy thanks to his earlier movie career and took the Wild West heroism that is such an integral part of the rescue narrative to an even higher level, providing the basis for an entire mythology that saw Reagan as the rescuer of the American hostages. In fact, they were released on his inauguration day, as he was being sworn in.⁶ Historical mythology is subsumed in the narrative about the crisis; foremost is the myth that Khomeini orchestrated the storming of the embassy and taking of the hostages. In fact, Khomeini was not involved in the hostage-taking and was apprehensive about the effect it would have on the Iranian Revolution. As one observer put it, the Ayatollah was “very angry” about the incident and asked, “Who are these gangs?” fearing that it might bring on an American intervention that would reinstate the Shah (Houghton 2006: 266).

Iran also has trust issues with the United States, situated in a history Iranians know well. A powerful memory in the Iranian consciousness is the 1953 coup that overthrew Mohammad Mossadegh, the Iranian leader who threatened British and American oil interests in the country when he promised to nationalize the oil industry. In addition to the political implications 1953 has for Iranian–U.S. relations, it is also important because 1953 and 1979 are intimately related, at least in the minds of many Iranians (Houghton 2006: 267). Even though Carter (and all

but one of his advisers) had no interest in staging a coup in Iran, the similarities between 1953 and 1979 were of great concern to Iranians.⁷ The charge that the embassy was a “den of spies” may have been exaggerated, (although there were CIA operatives embedded inside its walls) but given the past, it is no wonder that many Iranians, and certainly the hostage-takers, viewed all Americans with some suspicion, for “Iranians during this period were constantly looking for signs of U.S. intentions to repeat the coup of 1953” (Daugherty 1998: 13). The Shah himself believed that he would be reinstated as he had been in 1953, so why wouldn’t other Iranians hold similar views? The former hostage Moorhead Kennedy admitted that the suspicion about American activity in the Embassy in fact “contained a kernel of truth” (Kennedy 1986: 118, Scott 2004: 52).

The coup reinstating the Shah in 1953 set in motion a series of events that culminated in the revolution of 1979. For many Iranians, Mossadegh remains “a figure of almost mythic proportions” (Scullion 2006: 2). Although he was not tortured or executed, Mossadegh did not live an easy life; after the coup, he was sentenced to three years of prison followed by house arrest. He died in 1967 at the age of 84. Some of Mossadegh’s political allies were not so lucky. Dr. Hussein Fatimi, the Foreign Minister under Mossadegh, was taken into custody by the reinstated Shah’s government “under the nose of American and British military advisors,” and “thrown in front of a well-prepared criminal gang armed with knives, clubs, and sticks. But for the bravery of his sister, Saltenate Banoo, who in desperation threw herself over her brother’s body and was knifed in more than thirty places, Dr. Fatemi would have been killed a few hours after his capture” (Taghipour 2006: 168). He died a few days later from his wounds, and before expiring, said that he had defended his nation’s sovereignty with his own blood and his countrymen should do the same (Taghipour 2006: 169). Fatemi was not alone, and it is apparent why the coup is such a seminal point in Iranian history, for it signaled the beginning of the Shah’s decades-long rule, a period that led to the revolution in 1979.

While the majority Americans are unaware of CIA involvement in pre-Revolution Iranian affairs, the U.S. government has publicly acknowledged the role it played in the 1953 coup. In March 2000, then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright not only admitted U.S. involvement in the episode, but suggested how the overthrow of Mossadegh impacted the future of the country. In her statement before the Conference on American-Iranian Relations, Albright said, “the United States played a significant role in orchestrating the overthrow of Iran’s popular Prime Minister, Mohammad Mossadegh,” and went on to say, “The coup was clearly a

setback for Iran's political development," and the Shah's regime "brutally repressed political dissent" (Etges 2011: 495). It is well established that the Shah's inept leadership, which would have not existed without American support, foretold economic and political crises as early as the mid-1960s (Sale 1981/2: 37). These crises precipitated the revolution.

Hollywood's Iranian Imagination

Regis Debray famously said, "Images rule dreams; dreams rule actions" (Gardels 2006: 24). In the case of the American *imaginaire* about Iran, these images include massive crowds of Iranians welcoming Imam Khomeini home in 1979, the burning of American flags, and the parading of blindfolded American hostages in front of international news crews. These images communicated a new political reality—the loss of one of America's strongest allies in the Gulf region and an unwillingness by the U.S. to accept the legitimacy of the revolution's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and the anti-imperialist political narrative he espoused. The real trauma, however, was created by the hostage crisis of 1979, an event that has been represented and re-imagined in Hollywood over the past several decades. The events of 1953 and 1979 played a large role in these constructions. In addition to the involvement in the coup, the CIA also played a hand in the Shah's repression of Iranians through SAVAK, his clandestine police force.⁸ This history is well known to Iranians, and there is a sense, even among more conservative American pundits, that the coup and subsequent repression led to the revolution of 1979 that deposed the Shah, and to the storming of the U.S. Embassy on November 4 and the taking of American hostages.⁹

Movies do not exist in a vacuum. They often operate as political narratives, expressing colonial and imperial ambitions, or, in the case of Third World cinema, challenging hierarchies of power.¹⁰ *Argo* reflects an imperialist lens through its adoption of the rescue narrative, but also maintains a critique of American empire, hubris, and stupidity. The relegation of *Argo* to a suspenseful comedy, in a sense, may prove the point that the producers and director are trying to make (expressed in the film on numerous occasions), that Americans simply do not know, or understand, the complicated nature of their nation's role in Iranian history.¹¹

Hollywood's relationship with the American government is an important part of how we understand a film like *Argo*, a movie that simultaneously expresses the imperial gaze and gives it the proverbial middle finger. The late Akbar Ahmed

described the power of visual media as “the ‘Stormtroopers’ of the West”—an expression of how media such as Hollywood films and outlets like CNN and MTV function as powerful carriers of information, particularly encoding the way the world *should* be, according to those in encoding the messages (Gardels 2006: 26). Even when movies do not push a colonial or imperial agenda, they may function as pedagogical texts; in Mark Lacy’s words, “The cinema becomes a space where ‘commonsense’ ideas about global politics and history are (re)-produced and where stories about what is acceptable behavior from states and individuals are naturalized and legitimized.” (Lacy 2003: 611, Dodds 2008: 1621). American domination of media, including film, is one way in which neo-liberalist capitalism is imposed globally and justified internally. *Argo* complicates this problem because it interrogates the wisdom of American empire through a big-budget film.

Since the First World War, Hollywood has functioned as a tool of power, promoting colonialism, racism, sexism, and white supremacy.¹² As documented by scholars, the studio system has had both public and clandestine relationships with the U.S. government, particularly during times of war. During the 1940s, Hollywood became directly involved in the war effort, producing and creating numerous patriotically themed movies. The Office of War Information (OWI), which was the chief government propaganda agency during the war years, generated pro-American information at home and abroad through a wide field of media including newspapers, radio, and the movies (Koppes and Black 1977: 87-8). The OWI could stop a project or push it ahead. For instance, *Trans-Sahara*, a film proposed by Columbia Pictures, was dropped because “American policy in Africa was not yet clear” (Koppes and Black 1977: 93).

Several arms of the federal government have long had a presence in Hollywood. The FBI established an entertainment office in the 1930s and used their influence to promote a number of television and film projects, including *G-Men* (1935), *The Untouchables* (1959-63), *The FBI Story* (1959), and *The F.B.I.* (1965-79) (Jenkins 2009: 229). The CIA appears to have entered the entertainment industry rather late, which makes sense given its later inception (1947) and clandestine mission, which was largely focused on overseas activities. It did not hire its first official liaison with the entertainment industry until 1995, and as the agency’s current liaison Paul Barry put it, it was only recently that the CIA began to see the merits of having input on movies. “Our philosophy seemed to dictate that we focus overseas and not pay much attention to the public perception of the Agency, which was being shaped by the entertainment industry in the United States. We eventually realized that the

industry's interest in the CIA would continue whether we participated [in the creative process] or not. As a result, we determined it would be in our best interest to attempt to work with the industry to improve understanding and increase accuracy in storylines." (Jenkins 2009: 241-2).¹³ A number of television and film productions followed the formalization of this relationship, including *JAG* (1995–2005), *Bad Company* (2002), and *The Sum of All Fears* (2002) (Jenkins 2009: 242). As Jenkins has pointed out, the agency's Office of Public Affairs, which deals primarily with news media, has a staff of only twenty-five, and Barry, the sole person working with the entertainment industry, flies to Los Angeles twice a month because the agency doesn't have a West Coast office (Jenkins 2009: 232).

Of course, the question of CIA involvement in movie-making is a different issue than the CIA wanting their agency to "look good," a point that came up with *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012), a film that was unpopular with much of the agency because of its unflattering portrait of the CIA's treatment of enemy combatants (Kendall 2013). There is only one documented case in which moviemakers participated with the CIA in a covert operation—and this is the operation detailed in *Argo*. While *Argo* may play loose with the facts, a point raised by numerous critics, this is a different problem than what the Iranian government claimed in their lawsuit—that Ben Affleck, the star and director of *Argo*, is a CIA agent.¹⁴

Argo does succeed in making the CIA look like an effective organization, which may point to something else. Studio support of the military industrial establishment and its military engagements is well documented in the book *The Hollywood War Machine* (2008), co-authored by Carl Boggs and Tom Pollard. One of the more interesting approaches to understanding this relationship is found in Aida Hozic's examination of the shift of personnel, money, and property from military to entertainment sectors. As she points out, there has been "a series of incentives for the conversion of military technology to civilian use," which has included "simulation technologies intended for military use and technologies used in computer design, interactive entertainment and special effects" (Hozic 1999: 297). Post-9/11 action movies have often focused on themes related to war, and especially the "War on Terror," including films like *The Kingdom* and *The Last Sentinel*, both released in 2007 (Boggs and Pollard 2008: 566). The degree to which major Hollywood studios have participated in the War on Terror is unknown, but there are numerous indications that the relationship between Washington and Hollywood has resulted in numerous pro-war films. After the attacks that took place on September 11, 2001, Karl Rove "held a summit at Beverly Hills where representatives of the

entertainment industry joined him to consider how they might contribute to the war on terror (Dodds 2008: 1621).” But *Argo* is not a film that one presumes Karl Rove would like. It doesn’t present imagery from 9/11, terrorists, torture scenes, or moral arguments about the U.S.’s current military engagements; instead, it argues that U.S. intelligence failed to predict the 1979 revolution, that the American government chooses thugs as allies, and that Americans too often fail to see the predicaments that they help to create because they are so blinded by American “exceptionalism.”

On Islamic subjects—Egypt, Iran, Arabs, Turks, the harem, terrorism—Hollywood has an especially bleak record of presenting Muslims as barbaric, cruel, violent, and lustful, a record that goes back to the early silent films of Rudolph Valentino in the 1920s (Shohat 1997: 54, Arjana 2005: 141). Jack Shaheen characterizes the history of these representations with this summation: “I am not saying an Arab should never be portrayed as a villain. What I am saying is that almost *all* Hollywood depictions of Arabs are *bad* ones” (Shaheen 2001: 11). Non-Arabs don’t fare much better than Arabs, a point scholars have made in other studies of representations of Islam. Even with the few positive representations of Hollywood films featuring Muslim characters, it seems that there is always another movie like *The Siege* or television show like *Homeland* on the horizon, star vehicles that depict Muslims as killing machines. It is no surprise that scholars studying zombies argue that the Muslim terrorist is described in the same way. As Warren St. John argues, “It does not take much of a stretch to see the parallel between zombies and anonymous terrorists who seek to convert others within society to their deadly cause” (St. John 2010: 29).

Although movies often enforce Islamophobic depictions and narratives, cinema also challenges the framing of the world by dominant cultural institutions, including the big studio system in Hollywood. Perhaps one of the best examples is found in the changing attitudes towards LGBTQ Americans. The documentary film *The Celluloid Closet* (1995) details the numerous ways in which movies have been queered sites, places where artists express counter-hegemonic narratives about the world as it is, not as the dominant culture may want it to be.¹⁵ *Ed Wood*, Tim Burton’s 1994 film about a cross-dressing director, is one of many critically popular films that address queer identity, and like Ellen DeGeneres’s coming out on her television show (and in real life) in 1997, and the television series *Will and Grace* (1998–2006), these interruptions to heterosexual hegemony have played a role in

the social revolution that has encouraged acceptance of LGBTQ individuals by a majority of Americans.

It is possible that *Argo* is a cog in the machine of resistance, an alteration of the discourse surrounding American empire. It is not an avant-garde film, but it is a far more nuanced than some critics have given it credit for. While the filmmakers utilize the white rescue narrative, numerous interruptions to this narrative are presented. In fact, the group of Americans around whose predicament the story revolves is at times sympathetic to the revolutionaries. In other moments, American complicity in the Shah's crimes is noted, perhaps most powerfully in the scene at the bazaar in which an Iranian man accuses the U.S. of being responsible for his son's death at the hands of the Shah's regime. In these ways, *Argo* is very much an example of art as resistance, where, "the work of art cannot but address a commonality among humans," and where "the subject of resistance is scattered in a plurality of foyers, moments, compositions, and openings" (Brighenti 2011: 73-74).

The relationship of resistance to power is a point of contention for contemporary counter-hegemony critical theorists like Hardt and Negri (2001), who argue that there are different ways to define resistance. One question that emerges from this scholarship is: What work does resistance do? According to several of these theorists, "resistance is represented as the negative term in the dialectic struggle for power: what resistance can do, as an organic part of the power chain, is at best to oppose the stream of global power in order to prepare the terrain for action by the multitude" (Brighenti 2011: 64). Like Ellen's coming out and Johnny Depp's portrayal of Ed Wood in drag, *Argo* represents a minor shift in the way, a group, Iranians, are represented by Hollywood, which has been, with one or two exceptions, negative.

Unflattering depictions of Iranians have been featured in American media for several decades. In his study of media representations of Islam, Edward Said dedicates an entire chapter to what he calls "The Iran Story" (Said 1997: 102-3).¹⁶ Hamid Naficy and other scholars describe this style of media reporting as "crisis journalism," which, as anyone who watches cable news can observe, has completely taken over the field of American news reporting. Even before the advent of cable television, American news outlets produced an endless series of crisis specials that focused on the Iran hostage crisis and the 1979 revolution, which struck a chord with the secularity Americans associate with government (Michelmore 2000: 42). These specials include *Iran: The Desperate Dilemma* (CBS, 1979), *America Held*

Hostage (ABC, 1981), *Crisis in Iran: The Turmoil Spreads* (NBC, 1979), and *Day of Crisis* (CBS, 1979) (Naficy 1995: 78).

In addition to establishing the dominant media narrative, news journalism also influences the way in which other modes of popular communication write about and presented Iranians. In film, this results in depictions of Iranians as terrorists, domestic abusers, sleazy criminals, etc., images that are situated in the portrayal of Khomeini shown in newscasts, cartoons, and other fields of media as “the intolerant and intolerable agent of the devil, the grim reaper, a satanic force at work in the world.” (Michelmore 2000: 42).¹⁷ A stock set of images created in 1979–1980 became iconic, used in magazine covers, political cartoons, and movies: “Iran is converted to a sign system, consisting of a limited repertoire of discrete and disembodied signs often repeated ad nauseam: bearded and turbaned mullahs; thick frown of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini; veiled women; raised fists; unruly and frantic mobs shouting, ‘Death to America, ‘Death to Carter,; and finally, the image of the blindfolded American hostage that opened ABC’s *Nightline* (1980) program throughout the so-called hostage crisis” (Naficy 1995: 79).

Books like *Not Without My Daughter* reify the idea that Muslim men are tricksters, often appearing kind and gracious but ultimately revealed to be monsters. In the words of one scholar writing on this genre, “His beautiful dark eyes become dangerously sparkling” (de Hart 2008: 55). The specter of the seductive and dangerous Oriental man is a theme not restricted to popular literature and film. Betty Mahmoody parlayed her status as a media star into a career as an “expert,” working as a lecturer, a consultant for the Department of State, and an expert on international child abductions (Naficy 1995: 84). Beyond the Oriental male, however, these tales of interracial marriage gone awry are full of stereotypes of Muslims, often described as “filthy, or even monstrous, human beings” (de Hart 2008: 56).¹⁸

The film adaptation (1991) of Betty Mahmoody’s story dramatizes the events recorded in her book, leaving viewers with a negative impression of Iran that was well established in earlier films from the 1980s. John Landis’s 1984 film *Into the Night* garnered this review: “Into the Night spews its own kind of nastiness. Not only does it seek laughs from the murder of women and animals but it uses racist stereotypes as the tactic. One gets sick of watching Iranians wear stupid expressions, cop feels from their female victims, slaughter everything that moves, and have four-man pile-ups from running into closed doors” (Powers 1985: 39). In 2003, the film *House of Sand and Fog* offered yet another negative portrayal of

Iranian men in the character of Massoud Amir Behrani, who threatens, hits, and ultimately kills his wife in a murder-suicide brought about by his belligerence and shame. However, *Not Without My Daughter* is the American movie that established Iran in the minds of Americans in recent decades, and no other major American film offers a depiction of the 1979 revolution from the viewpoint of an American until *Argo*.

Outside of cinema, Iran has remained a constant focus of American news media. One interesting development in these representations is the framing of Iranians as either good or bad, as seen in the ways that Mohammad Khatami (President of Iran from 1997 to 2005, who was viewed rather positively) and Supreme Leader Khamenei (most always viewed as nefarious and extreme) are considered.¹⁹ Through a taxonomy that relies on words like “modern, mullah, youth, resistance, Islam and Muslim,” Western journalists have offered a vision of Iran that relies heavily on Orientalist binaries like religious/modern, old/young, regime/revolution (Fayyaz and Shirazi 2013: 54). In much of the coverage of the Iranian Green Movement of 2009, Orientalist visions of the East are drawn, with oppressed Muslim woman juxtaposed against fanatical man in significations where “the female body is an active site of political resistance”; and in the creations of a perfect storm of Western parodies of Islamic zealotry,” through “the veiled woman who averts her eyes, the passionate believer drawn to tears and the bearded fanatic” (Fayyaz and Shirazi 2013: 54).

During the 444 days the hostage crisis lasted, the news cycle was focused squarely on Iran, its charismatic new leader, and the blindfolded Americans who were caught in a complex political situation. News coverage reflected a modern version of the captivity narrative first established by the Puritans. In nightly news, network specials, and newspaper and magazine reports, the plight of innocent Americans and “devilish savages” was retold over and over, on a continuous loop of news coverage (Scott 2000: 178). Instead of a serious conversation about American complicity in the crimes of the Shah’s regime, the crisis was framed in terms of the captivity narrative. “Media coverage of the 444 days of captivity echoed Puritan captivity stories of confrontation with the ‘other,’ fears of innocents being violated, and the call upon heroic leadership to rescue both the hostages and the nation from threats to American identity” (Scott 2000: 178).²⁰ The imagery of the hostage crisis was cast in the language of these earlier narratives, which have always functioned as declarations of “what constitutes, or should constitute, the American character,”

formulated in a story that posed bravery and heroism against exoticism and evil (Denn 1980: 575, Scott 2000: 26).

Argo

Argo is more complicated than the films described above, for it has its colonial and post-colonial moments, which in some part explain the range of critiques it has garnered, from characterizations of the film as both anti-American (Debbie Schluskel) and pro-U.S. (Dabashi). Right-wing commentator Schluskel described it as an “America-hating” movie, a “politically correct fantasy,” that should have focused more on Iranians as the “brutal, evil people” they are (Schluskel 2012). In his excellent article, Hamid Dabashi’s *Al Jazeera* piece focused on the idea that *Argo* is a rescue narrative, an imperialist farce about a white hero saving other good white folks from bad, brown people. As Dabashi suggests, several scenes—the attack on the embassy, the man hanging from the gallows, the embassy hostages being put through a mock execution, the fabricated airport-chase sequence—call into question the merits of the film as a historical drama. A prolonged and suspenseful embassy segment follows the intertitle and perhaps the most damning evidence of the film’s role as an imperialistic vehicle came at the Academy Awards, when First Lady Michelle Obama, accompanied by U.S. military personnel, presented the Oscar for Best Picture to *Argo*. For those who viewed *Argo* as an imperialistic film, this added fuel to the conspiracy theories surrounding the film’s popularity and success.

Argo begins with an intertitle that provides a history lesson on twentieth-century Iranian political affairs, including an explanation of the American government’s complicity in the coup that highlights the suffering of the Iranian people under the Shah. This brief but powerful segment is immediately followed by a scene detailing the takeover of the embassy—making a causal link between the two. Throughout the film, references to American complicity in the Shah’s crimes are made, both in scenes that take place in the corridors of power in Washington and among the Americans stranded in Tehran. At one point, the refugees from the Embassy suggest the American government should return the Shah to Iran to stand trial for crimes against his people.

Argo presents a complex picture of Iran, the American rescuers, and U.S. power. The revolutionaries are featured at length in the opening scene and then rather infrequently throughout the film—in a street protest, at the gates of the Canadian

consul's home, and at the airport. The opening scene was recreated using news footage from the era. While some critics complained that the chants by protestors should have been translated, the inclusion of Farsi in the film can also be looked at as a positive element that is meant to acknowledge the Iranian point of view. As Shohat and Stam have argued, the use of English at the expense of the Other's language, which in many films is simply replaced by "jibberish" or "babbling," has a clear motive—the identification of English with civilization and humanity (Shohat and Stam 1994: 192). Language is an important site of resistance, as evidenced by the numerous language, dialects, and sub-dialects used in social resistance (Shohat and Stam 1994: 267). "Linguicide," the linguistic version of genocide, is not a part of this film (Brighenti 2011: 68). Farsi is the lingua franca of Iran, and in *Argo* it is featured in numerous scenes (Asgharzadeh 2007: 91-92).

The protest scenes in front of the U.S. Embassy have been criticized for the portrayal of Iranians as an angry mob, as if revolution should resemble a meditation session.²¹ Revolutions are, after all, about the quest for freedom. This scene brings to mind Žižek's description of divine violence, act that is nothing less than human freedom: "Divine violence should thus be conceived as divine in the precise sense of the old Latin motto *vox populi, vox dei*: not in the perverse sense of 'we are doing it as mere instruments of People's Will,' but as the heroic assumption of the solitude of sovereign decision. It is a decision (to kill, to risk one's own life) made in absolute solitude, with no cover in the big Other" (Žižek 2008: 202). In the context of anti-hegemonic critical theory, the crowd is extremely important, a social formation that represents agency and metamorphosis. The crowd is, in other words, one of the few places where resistance actually occurs. As one theorist puts it, "The 'talent for transformation' is possessed by everyone" (Brighenti 2011: 75). One of the revelations of the Iranian Revolution for those watching from the outside was the sense that people were exercising freedom—what social theorists like Žižek hope for. The revolutionary crowd represents, among other things, "the unstable state of undifferentiated differences, the unrestrained thriving of differences"—the possibility of change if atrophy doesn't take over (Brighenti 2011: 75).

The refugees, while in an unfortunate predicament, are not portrayed as victimized. In their escape from the embassy, they walk out a back door. Never once in the film do Iranians physically or verbally abuse them. When Ben Affleck's character, Tony Mendez, shows up to rescue them, the refugees show displeasure and criticism at the escape plan, complaining and even refusing to go along with the operation. Unlike many Hollywood movies, particularly those with a rescue theme,

the hero is an unsavory character—an acerbic alcoholic who has abandoned his wife and son and who hardly cracks a smile throughout the entire film. It is only in the final scene that he seems to have redeemed himself, but he is, like most of the Americans in the film, an ambiguously sympathetic figure.

As director, Affleck also downplays some of the more unpleasant aspects of the lives of the embassy hostages. In one scene, a group of hostages are shown blindfolded in a dark basement, being put through a mock execution. It appears that Affleck toned this episode down from actual events. According to the accounts of former hostages, mock executions happened on multiple occasions and individually, instilling the idea that each hostage was about to die alone. The mock execution scene offers the worst depiction of Iranians in the film. Although it is uncomfortable to watch, the series of period newscasts showing Americans harassing and even beating Iranians in the streets is perhaps worse—an indictment of American ignorance.

Several of the fabricated scenes in the film do not communicate a negative impression of Iran, but rather of the United States. The scene in the bazaar provided a perfect opportunity for Affleck to fashion an exotic Oriental space. Instead, the scene was used as an opportunity to comment on American complicity in the Shah's crimes. An incident between a shop owner and the refugees is invented in which one of the Americans posing as a Canadian is accused of being American and blamed for the death of the Iranian's son, who was murdered by SAVAK. In another fabricated part of the film, Affleck replaces an Iranian guard (who was a real concern for the refugees) with a housekeeper. Sahar, the housekeeper, does not betray her Canadian employers, nor is she an abused Muslim woman, also a familiar trope in Hollywood films featuring Muslims. Instead, Sahar has a battle of the wits with a member of the *komiteh*, (the police) and wins.

Theories proposed about *Argo* range from it being a plot by closeted Muslims to take over the country to director Ben Affleck being a CIA agent. It is more plausible that the film-makers attempted to make a thoughtful film about U.S.-Iranian relations. However, the opening sequence of the film, which shows the decadence of the Shah; the takeover scene in which embassy staff are shown shredding and burning documents; the scene in the halls of the CIA where American policies in Iran are ridiculed; and the bazaar sequence where American power is linked to a brutal regime; may have gone unnoticed by many viewers. Evidence from two earlier movies focused on the Middle East that star *Argo's* producer George Clooney—*Three Kings* (1999) and *Syriana* (2005)—suggests that Hollywood can

produce thoughtful critiques of American empire. Despite the American-centered plots (*Three Kings* deviates, with the inclusion of an African-American on the team of heroes), *Argo* and these earlier films acknowledge CIA complicity in crimes against foreigners. In *Three Kings*, this is displayed in the Mark Wahlberg character being tortured by Iraqis, “according to techniques originally taught to his Iraqi captors by the CIA, culminating in oil being poured down his throat as his mouth is held open with a CD case” (Davies 2005: 407). While these three films do not make a clear pro-colonial or anticolonial statement, they disrupt the narrative of white heroic rescue in complex ways, “*Three Kings* decries the economic motivation of a war fought solely to protect oil supplies, while making a strong plea that military intervention should have included helping Iraqi rebels overthrow Saddam Hussein” (Davies 2005: 397). *Syriana* offers an even more biting critique of American empire and its effect on the lives of Arabs. Unlike *Three Kings*, which has a rescue narrative similar to that seen in *Argo*, *Syriana* focuses on several interwoven stories that are based on the experiences of Robert Baer, the ex-CIA agent on whose career George Clooney’s character is based. In contrast to *Argo*’s more subtle jabs at the folly of American power, *Syriana* illustrates the ways in which this plays out on the lives of people in the torture or murder of several key characters. In addition to Clooney’s role as a CIA operative, the film includes other characters inspired by real actors in the politics surrounding petroleum, including a lengthy reference to Mossadegh:

Syriana’s complex, connect-the-dots narrative illuminates a history of our geopolitical present that is not only uncommonly lucid, but surprisingly candid for the star-studded Hollywood production it is. In one of the film’s pivotal scenes, energy analyst Bryan Woodman, a lead character played by Matt Damon, imagines that the petroleum regime that has bound East and West for the last century might undergo a dramatic paradigm shift. Woodman serves as a financial consultant to one Prince Nasir, a forward-looking royal who occupies a critical position in the line of succession that will determine the future of his country, a Middle Eastern kingdom that goes unnamed in the film. In the scene in question, Woodman excitedly explains to his wife that Prince Nasir’s likely ascension to the throne presents great possibilities for deploying his country’s considerable, but now declining, oil reserves in the service of enlightened political and economic reform akin to that envisioned by

Mohammad Mossadegh. “Who?” mainstream viewers are likely to ask (Scullion 2006: 1).

Syriana, like *Argo*, makes repeated references to American empire and complicity in nefarious activities. Like *Argo*, it presents a story of American heroism and the rescue of either Iranians (the Iranians being granted visas to America in the opening scene at the U.S. Embassy, and later, the housekeeper who is spirited away to the Iraqi border) or Iraqis (who are escorted to the Iranian border by their American rescuers). In both cases, a fantasy of American heroism is created out of real historical events, reifying the fantasy of American altruistic behavior through rescue fantasies. In *Three Kings*, there is an acknowledgement that the U.S. military will never rescue those fighting the enemy. Still, “Audiences could scarcely forget the fact that President George Bush had called on the Iraqi people to rise up and overthrow Saddam Hussein, only to turn neutral once some Iraqis actually tried to carry this out, leaving them open to imprisonment and execution. This abrupt about-face, which proved disastrous for so many, is deftly conveyed in Russell’s [David O. Russell, the director] film” (Pollard 2002: 135).

The white hero remains the center of these stories. Much like *Three Kings*’ retelling of the Iraq War as an American rescue story, *Argo* refashions the Iranian Revolution into an event about the heroism of white America instead of the triumph of Iranian agency. The “cycle of self-casting as the wronged innocent” defines the moments in the film that critique American empire, making the 1979 revolution about America and not Iran (Combs 1993: 53, Scott 2004: 36). For all the efforts of the film-makers to make a movie that is thoughtful, they stumble, resulting in a film that is more about us than them, fulfilling Said’s critique of Orientalism: that it is more about the West than the East. The most serious problem with all three of these films is that they are not vociferous enough in their indictment of American empire and its effect on human lives. They are thoughtful films, but shy away from the avant-garde work of someone like Costa-Gavras, whose 1982 film *Missing*, a chilling thriller focused on the murder of American journalist Charles Horman during the coup in Chile that installed Pinochet.²² *Missing* is a movie that shatters American perceptions about democracy and nationhood, for it makes the claim that Horman was not simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, but that he was murdered at the hands of both Chilean police and U.S. intelligence officers. This is a radically different claim than *Argo* makes, which is that American power is so foolish that it requires its victims to be rescued from it.

Note

1. Thirteen such stories of the victims of intermarriage with Muslims and their subsequent escape with a child or children were published between 1987 and 1998.
2. Also, see Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family and Nation in Pre-Colonial Germany (1770-1870)* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).
3. *Argo* starred and was directed by Ben Affleck, who stated publicly that he thinks America should stop meddling in the Middle East. Significantly, the film was produced by George Clooney, who has used his Hollywood success and access in part to support his activism in areas such as promoting peace in Darfur, bringing aid to Haiti after its devastating 2010 earthquake, and speaking out against many U.S. policies concerning international affairs.
4. See Time magazine's story, "The Mystic Who Lit the Fires of Hatred," January 7, 1980, p. 5, quoted in Scott, 182.
5. President Carter had his hands tied, for even if he returned the Shah, American complicity in his regime was well known among Iranians and American intelligence officials. [Article here on Carter and manhood] The botched rescue attempt was tantamount to the cavalry riding in to fix the crisis and getting massacred en route.
6. For a study on the mythology created around Reagan's cowboy mystique and its use in popular culture, see Mike S. Dubose, "Holding Out for a Hero: Reaganism, Comic Book Vigilantes, and Captain America," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 40, no. 6 (2007): 915-935.
7. As several studies have noted, Carter was resistant to admit the Shah in the first place. The drama surrounding the placement of the Shah and his immediate family is documented in the 2008 documentary *The Queen and I*, by Narhid Sharvestani.
8. SAVAK is the acronym for Sazeman-e Ettela'at va Amniyat-e Keshvar. In Christopher de Bellaigue's biography of Mossadegh, he describes how shortly after the inception of SAVAK, "soon it would be dangerous for intellectuals and writers even to meet in the cafes of central Tehran." See Christopher de Bellaigue, *Patriot of Persia: Muhammad Mossadegh and a Tragic Anglo-American Coup* (New York: Harper Collins, 2012), 255.
9. As I detail in this article, the storming of the U.S. Embassy was likely encouraged by the sense that another coup might take place, as it had in 1953.
10. On the subject of the rewriting of colonial narratives through film, see chapter seven and eight, "The Third Worldist Film" and "Esthetics of Resistance" in Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 248-336.

11. One of the most glaring instances of this sentiment takes place in the halls of the CIA early in the film, when the fact that U.S. intelligence missed the impending Iranian Revolution is described.
12. As Shohat and Stam write, “As an early instance of erotic violence, *The Birth of a Nation* obsessively links sexual and racial phobias in what seems a guilt-ridden denegation of White man’s history of raping Black women... It is Blacks’ putative hypersexuality that foils and provokes (White) masculinist patriotism; the attempted rape of Flora catalyzes the grand act of White ‘liberation.’ The film’s opening intertitle blames the African presence in America for having planted ‘the first seed of disunion,’ and the portrayal of idealized harmony between north and south (masters and slaves) before abolition scapegoats libidinous Blacks for destroying the nation.” See *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 159. This is but one example of the ways in which cinema has instructed the audience about matters of race.
13. From Tricia Jenkins’s interview with Paul Barry at CIA headquarters from March 3, 2008.
14. Early press reports on the impending lawsuit quote Iranian sources that claim director Ben Affleck is a CIA covert agent and that *Argo* was made to discredit the Iranian regime.
15. The foundational work on this subject is Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987). Also, see Judith “Jack” Halberstam’s work on the queering of Gothic literary and film characters in *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).
16. As Said notes, the Iranian Revolution was reported on by “experts” who knew nothing of Iran, indicated by the 12 interpreters needed for 23 CBS journalists, and also by the lack of analysis in news reporting.
17. Also, see the June 7, 1989 cartoon by Tom Meyer that is included in Michelmore’s article, which shows the grim reaper with his arm around Khomeini, whom he tells, “I’ve really enjoyed your work.”
18. Betty Mahmoody’s description of her sister-in-law in *Not Without My Daughter* includes these lines, “Her nose was so large, I could hardly believe it was real,” and “Her mouth was a collection of friable stained teeth.” See Betty Mahmoody and William Hoffer, *Not Without My Daughter* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987).
19. For an Iranian-American opinion on Khomeini’s credentials, see Hooman Majd, *Ayatollah’s Democracy: An Iranian Challenge*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010.

20. For an illustration of how the rescue narrative was used in the Gulf War, see Douglas Kellner, *The Persian Gulf TV War* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992).
21. This scene, like many others in *Argo*, is adapted from stock footage from the revolution.
22. Costa-Gavras was sued by three U.S. officials portrayed in the film, a suit that was later dropped.

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The Washington Institute for Near East Policy and Islam: A Constructivist Framing Analysis

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Abstract

Using constructivism as theoretical framework and framing analysis as methodology, the present article analyzes the Washington Institute for Near East Policy's (WINEP) works on U.S. policy toward political Islam. The Washington Institute is one of the most influential American think tanks focusing on U.S. foreign policy and is considered an important part of the Israel lobby. WINEP's framing rests on the two pillars of fighting Islamism, to use the think tank's terminology for all political manifestations of Islam, and promoting moderate Islam. Promotion of moderate Islam is recommended only under localized conditions to avoid any transnational or pan-Islamic identity formation. Nonetheless, WINEP puts the emphasis on fighting the ideology of Islamism. WINEP experts are highly critical of the framing of moderate vs. radical Islamists and argue that Islamism of both violent and non-violent forms is antithetical to U.S. values, interests, and policies. Therefore, the moderate Islamist concept is rejected altogether. WINEP asks the U.S. government to adopt a focal strategy of embarking an all-out ideological battle against Islamism. Finding an apolitical, pacified Islam the only acceptable interpretation of the religion, WINEP rejects the

authenticity of all other interpretations of the faith. In essence, this mentality results in reverse-excommunication (reverse-*Takfir*) of large segments of Muslims around the world.

Keywords: United States, foreign policy, Islam, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, WINEP, constructivism, framing analysis

Introduction

Debates about the reemergence of Islam to the political scene have increasingly become part of the fabric of U.S. foreign policy considerations. Satloff is of the opinion that “Islamism fuels one of the few remaining substantive and intellectual debates in U.S. foreign policy,” a debate that has transpired ever since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran (Satloff 2000, 2). Satloff continues, “The Islam debate – summed up in the question “who lost Iran?” – is very much alive because in many ways the events of the 1978-1979 still haunt America in its dealings with governments and political movements throughout the Muslim world” (Satloff 2000, 2-3). Such debates gained renewed energy first after the end of the Cold War and subsequently after the September 11, 2001, attacks.

Major American think tanks with substantial political influence are a major scene of these debates. With different ideological leanings, these think tanks construct competing frames regarding issues related to Islam as it relates to U.S. foreign policy and U.S. interests in the Muslim world and about the best course of action for the United States’ government to take.

The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (hereby also called the Washington Institute or WINEP), which operates as the ideological wing of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), is among American think tanks whose mission includes countering Islamism. The organization twice expanded its research agenda from its original focus on “Arab-Israeli relations, political and security issues, and overall U.S. Middle East policy” (Mission & History, n.d.). First, in the 1990s, following the demise of the Soviet Union and the first Gulf War, WINEP expanded its research agenda “to include a special focus on Turkey and the rise of Islamic politics as the dominant leitmotif for understanding political trends across the ‘expanded’ post-Soviet Middle East” (Mission & History). Following September 11, 2001, WINEP’s research agenda expanded once again “dedicating new resources to assist the U.S. government in understanding and countering the destructive elixir of Islamist extremism, terrorism, and the

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction – particularly nuclear weapons,” to use WINEP’s words (Mission & History).

Conceptual Framework and Methodology

The present article uses constructivism as its conceptual framework and framing analysis as its methodology. Constructivist theory suggests that the ways in which political actors understand the world around them is “a critically important variable in understanding the policies they pursue” (Schonberg 2007, 6). It is argued here that a constructivist perspective that gives credence to the role of ideology and identity in shaping of policy is necessary for a full understanding of the processes that shape the American response to Islam and Islamism and how that process shapes and is shaped by a construction of identities and interests.

At the ontological level, constructivism is based on three basic assumptions. First, “normative or ideational structures” are seen to be as important as material structures and to have a powerful effect on social and political action (Reus-Smit 2005, 197). These structures include socially constituted values, beliefs, and ideas that shape the identities of political actors. Wendt, for example, argues that “material resources only acquire meaning for human action through the structure of shared knowledge in which they are embedded” (Wendt 1995, 73). Secondly, these socially constructed identities in turn shape the conceptualization of interests and political actions. This assumption is in conflict with the neo-realist and neo-liberal assumption that interests are exogenously determined, which in turn limits the conceptualization of society to a strategic domain for the pursuit of preexisting interests. For constructivists, instead, society is where identities and interests are formed. The third constructivist assumption is the interdependence and mutually constituted nature of structures and agents (Reus-Smit 2005, 197).

Constructivism brings the study of think tank influence to a new playing field paying attention to both the constraints that material and symbolic structures of power exert on think tank agency and the ways think tanks affect these structures through the production of knowledge and ideas. The emphasis on the significance of normative and ideational structures affecting international relations adds to the importance of think tanks’ work in politics (Adler 1992). Adler emphasizes the importance of examining the role of national epistemic communities (which include think tanks) in this regard (Adler 1992, 106).

Adler and Haas postulate that epistemic communities play an instrumental role in the first two steps of what they call “policy evolution,” namely “policy innovation” and “policy diffusion.” The next two steps of the policy process are “selection” and “persistence” (Adler and Haas 1992, 373). The first step in the policy evolution process, namely policy innovation, is of particular interest to the present study. According to Adler and Haas, exerting influence on policy innovation involves three processes: “(1) framing the range of political controversy surrounding an issue, (2) defining state interests, and (3) setting standards” (Adler and Haas 1992, 375). In other words, the identification of national interests is a derivative of how issues are framed.

The concept of framing has been used in other disciplines as well, including policy studies (Payne 2001; Schon and Rein 1995), sociology (Benford and Snow 2000; Goffman 1974), and media studies (Entman 1993, 2004). Using framing analysis, constructivists aim to examine the production of meaning as a means of influence. Klotz and Cecelia use the sociological term “frame” “to denote a template that identifies a problem and offers a solution (within the context of broader theoretical and ideological assumptions)” (Klotz and Lynch 2007, 52-53). A substantial amount of work on epistemic communities from a constructivist viewpoint has used the concept of framing to trace discourses of knowledge in areas such as the environment, human rights, security, and economic governance, and the impact of these research activities on policies (Klotz and Lynch 2007).

Frame analysis as a constructivist methodology first gained currency and was employed extensively as means of going beyond the materialist and rationalist assumptions prevalent in studies of social movements. The method is used to “disentangle the complex relationship between actors, goals, and behavior by concentrating on the production of meaning as a type of influence” (Klotz and Lynch 2007, 52). Gitlin defines frames as “principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters” (Gitlin 2003, 6). According to Watson and Hill, framing is the process by which reality is placed into frame (Watson and Hill 1997, 86). As Entman says, “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman 1993, 22).

Through their selection practices, the government, other elites, and the media attempt to influence our perception of the most meaningful depiction of reality,

what is termed salience. Entman suggests that framing is meant to perform all or some of four functions: "defining problematic effects/conditions, identifying causes/agents, endorsing remedy, and conveying moral judgment" (Entman 2004, 24). Taking Entman's conceptualization of framing, the study asks how RAND and Brookings define foreign policy issues, effects, or conditions in relation to Islam, what causes and agents do they identify for the problem thus defined, what remedies do they endorse, and what moral judgments do they make.

1. The Washington Institutes' Ideological Background

WINEP was created in 1985 as an offshoot of AIPAC. To give a seemingly objective and credible voice to pro-Israel advocacy, several prominent AIPAC officials including AIPAC president Larry Weinberg, his wife Barbi Weinberg, and AIPAC deputy director for research Martin Indyk founded the Washington Institute (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007, 175). Indyk said in this regard, "The image I would like to convey is that we are friendly to Israel but doing credible research on the Middle East in a realistic and balanced way" (As quoted in Milstein 1991)." Indyk has since moved to the Brookings Institution.

While the think tank's mission statement claims that the organization's goal is "to advance a balanced and realistic understanding of American interests in the Middle East and to promote the policies that secure them" (Mission & History), WINEP is popularly known as an important element of the Israel Lobby. Mearsheimer and Walt identify WINEP as part of the core of the Israel Lobby in America (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007, 113). The think tank is "funded and run by individuals who are deeply committed to advancing Israel's agenda," they write in their seminal book *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007, 175-176). "Its board of advisors includes prominent pro-Israel figures such as Edmund Luttwak, Martin Peretz, Richard Perle, James Woolsey, and Mortimer Zuckerman, but includes no one who might be thought of as favoring the perspective of any other country or group in the 'Near East'" (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007, 176).

Individuals who are members at WINEP also have affiliations with "an overlapping set of Washington-based think tanks, committees, and publications whose agenda includes promoting the special relationship between the United States and Israel" (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007, 130). These include the prominent neoconservative Richard Perle who serves on WINEP's board of advisors and is

also a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). He is “also affiliated with the right-wing CSP [Center for Security Planning¹], the Hudson Institute, JINSA [Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs], PNAC [Project for the New American Century], MEF [Middle East Forum], and FDD [Foundation for Defense of Democracies].” Paul Wolfowitz is another neoconservative figure who networks with WINEP experts. His works are featured on WINEP Website, the most recent of which was a joint address with Dennis Ross, fellow and counselor at the Washington Institute, and Jessica Tuchman Mathews, president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Wolfowitz, Mathews, and Ross 2014). Daniel Pipes’ works also frequently appear on the Washington Institute’s Website. WINEP past fellow Martin Kramer is a past member of the journal *Middle East Quarterly*, a publication of the anti-Islam Middle East Forum; WINEP’s current executive director is a current member of the journal’s editorial board.

WINEP has been influential in shaping the foreign policy of both Republican and Democratic administrations, namely those of George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama. Martin Indyk, the former deputy director of research at AIPAC and cofounder of WINEP served on Clinton’s National Security Council, as ambassador of Israel (1995-97, 2000-2001), and as assistant secretary of state (1997-2000). Indyk now serves as the vice president and director of foreign policy at Brookings. According to the Institute for Policy Studies’ RightWeb project, WINEP had close ties with influential figures in George W. Bush’s policy circle as well. “The institute provided significant intellectual backing for the policies of leading Bush administration hawks and their supporters outside government” (Washington Institute for Near East Policy 2015). Dennis Ross, who joined WINEP after leaving government in 2001, served as both George H. W. Bush and Clinton’s special envoy to the Middle East, served for two years as special assistant to President Obama and National Security Council senior director for the Central Region, and a year as special advisor to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

While both Ross and Indyk favored a negotiated settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and were among the closest advisors to President Clinton at the Camp David summit in July 2000, their clear pro-Israel sentiment caused protest among the Palestinians. “Palestinian representatives protested that they were

¹ Frank Gaffney founded CSP in 1988 to counter what he called a “Global Jihad Movement” set to destroy Western civilization and impose Shari‘ah law including in the United States.

‘negotiating with two Israeli teams – one displaying an Israeli flag, and one an American flag’” (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007, 166). Mearsheimer and Walt believe that Ross and Indyk’s “well-known sympathies for Israel made it more difficult for the administration to operate effectively during the negotiations and made it less inclined to bring U.S. leverage to bear on the Israeli government, thus reducing the chances of securing a peace deal” (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007).

WINEP’s presidential study group reports, published every four years, serve as one of the most influential venues for the dissemination of the think tank’s ideas on Middle East policy. Since 1988, the Washington Institute has convened presidential study groups comprising of governmental officials, congressional members, and experts producing comprehensive reports on U.S. strategy in the Middle East for the upcoming U.S. administration (Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism 2009, v). The reports have at times had such influence that they became in essence a blueprint for the next president’s Middle East policy. Such was the case with the 1988 WINEP report entitled “Building for Peace: An American Strategy for the Middle East” which became the backbone of George H.W. Bush’s policy toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and urged the senior Bush administration to focus on shaping the right environment for negotiations rather than rushing for a breakthrough on Palestinian-Israeli peace issues (The Washington Institute’s Presidential Study Group on U.S. Policy in the Middle East 1988; Beinín 2003). Six of the report’s signatories joined the senior Bush administration (Beinín 2003).

With the end of the Cold War, WINEP scholars began to reframe the strategic value of the U.S. –Israeli alliance by promoting Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin’s view that Israel was “a reliable U.S. ally against radical Islam, which was a new enemy in the post-cold war world order” (Beinín 2003). To fight the emergence of radical Islam in Israeli occupied territories, Robin had exiled in December 1992 more than 400 Palestinian Islamic activists from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip to Lebanon. WINEP scholars actively supported such moves on U.S. media. WINEP’s 1992 symposium entitled “Islam and the U.S.: Challenges for the Nineties” convened on April 27 and focused on the dangers of Islam for U.S. interests in the region (Beinín 2003).

Calls for imitating the Israeli approach to Islamism became more vocal after September 11, 2001. In an opinion piece that appeared on *New York Newsday*, for example, WINEP fellow Emily Hunt, for example, argued that Israel’s policies towards “Islamist terrorism” should serve as a model for the United States, as Israel

has demonstrated that such terrorism is “not caused wholly or even mostly by the target nation’s policies” (Hunt 2006).

Immediately following the events of September 11, in a special policy forum on the implications of the attacks for the United States, WINEP executive director Robert Satloff framed the terrorist attacks in terms of a clash of civilizations rather than a response to U.S. policies in the region. “The fact is that there is no connection between last week’s terror, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and U.S. policy in the Middle East,” Satloff said in response to remarks made by Secretary of State Collin Powell with implications that the terrorist attacks may have been motivated by U.S. policy in the region. The terrorists, according to Satloff, were rather acting against the “culture” and “way of life” of the United States: “Theirs is an animus born of envy at the country that defines global culture in the new millennium the way that the march of Islam defined the ‘new world order’ fourteen centuries ago” (Satloff 2001).

Thus, in searching for the question that occupied the American psyche “why do they hate us” Satloff argued that it was because of “who and what” America stood for (Satloff 2001). The enemy is clearly identified as Islamists backed by a large minority of Muslims especially religious leaders who acquiesce to their way of thinking and terrorist methods. No change of policy would redress their anger, Satloff suggests: “This is a dangerous canard; given that the terrorists hate who we are far more than what we do, there is no change in policy that could accommodate or appease them. In this respect, America has nothing to apologize for” (Satloff 2001).

Another excerpt from a 2014 speech delivered at WINEP by former Israeli Ambassador to Jordan and Egypt Shimon Shamir is to the same effect:

“Many still believe, as Muslim propagandists often contend, that Islamism is merely a reaction to Western military interventions and military presence in Muslim lands, to the unresolved Palestinian problem, to America’s backing of client regimes, or to its exploitation of Arab oil. Remove these impediments, they allege, and Islamism will lose its *raison d’être*. It seems that it is easier for people to accept such interpretations rather than recognize that the West is hated not simply because of what it does but because of what it is.” (Shamir 2014, 7)

While Islamism is the focus of the above-mentioned polarity with the West, elsewhere in the same speech the duality of Westerners vs. Muslims is introduced and defined in civilizational terms. The belief in an ontological and epistemological difference between Islam and the West are made plain in the following excerpt:

“Westerners and Muslims are rooted in different civilizations: their value-scales are ranked in different order, their messages are encoded differently; even words do not always mean the same thing” (Shamir 2014).

With this framing, Islam is found to be diametrically and essentially opposed to the West, and thus Islamists are judged by their goals not their tactics. In fact, it is argued, their existential philosophy is opposition to the West and imposition of sharia. As such, all anti-U.S., anti-Israeli Islamist movements are found to be equally evil as the terrorists that attacked the United States. According to this narrative, American support for the continued occupation of the Palestinian territories and Israeli atrocities, U.S. interference in the internal affairs of Middle Eastern states, support for authoritarian regimes, American military presence in the region, and other historical and current Muslim grievances against the United States are no legitimate reason for Islamists’ mistrust and animosity to the United States.

WINEP’s David Makovsky, director of the Project on the Middle East Peace Process, echoed Satloff and Shamir’s narrative in an interview with *the National Review*:

There is a fiery resentment among Islamic radicals of all that America represents as a military, cultural and economic power and its focus on American sanctioned double-standards and hypocrisy in enforcing the human rights regime — all of this is mere rhetorical justification for the enemy’s true agenda, which is to destroy the U.S., and the West in general, because of its wealth and freedom. (Kurtz 2001)

2. The Washington Institute on U.S. Policy toward Islam, a Framing Analysis

With a mission that includes countering “Islamist extremism,” WINEP dedicates a large part of its resources to producing reports and commentary on the issue and convening symposia, policy forums, and seminars in this regard. In the post-

September, 11-years, WINEP at times convenes multiple presidential study groups one of which is often directly related to countering “Islamist extremism.”

WINEP’s reaction to the September 11 attacks signify the think tank’s designation of Islamism as the main enemy of the United States in the post-Cold War era – an enemy that is against all that America stands for and is an obstacle to American interests in the region and to American foreign policies that aim to fulfill those interests. The next section will provide a framing analysis of WINEP’s work on Islamism. As was noted in the methods section, through framing, elites in a society aim to influence our perception of the most meaningful depiction of reality. Framing is meant to perform all or some of four functions: “defining problematic effects/conditions, identifying causes/agents, endorsing remedy, and conveying moral judgment” (Entman 2004, 24). Taking this conceptualization of framing, it is asked how does WINEP define Islam and Islamism as problematic foreign policy issues for the United States, what causes and agents do they identify for the problem thus defined, what remedies do they endorse, and what moral judgments do they make.

2.1 Defining Islamism as the Enemy

The first step in a framing analysis is identifying the definition explicated for the problematic issue, here U.S. policy toward Islam and Islamism. In defining Islamism, WINEP experts create a duality between Islam and Islamism. They stress that while Islam is a faith, Islamism is “an extremist, and at times violent, ahistorical ideology that seeks to ground its legitimacy in Islam” (Cagaptay 2010). Separating Islam from Islamism, the think tank in effect denounces all public, political manifestations of Islam as illegitimate. A second duality is created upon the first: Islamism vs. the West. Islamism is defined as the anti-thesis to Western civilization. Islamism is labeled as an “anti-ideology” which means that it is based on opposition to several things as follows. Islamism is anti-Semitic; therefore, it is anti-Israeli. It is also anti-American; therefore, it is anti-Christian, anti-Western, anti-democracy, anti-capitalism, and anti-secularism since these things originated in the West. Thus, Islamism is defined as an ideology that is opposed to everything Judeo-Christian (Cagaptay 2010). WINEP scholars prefer the term Muslim instead of Islam to make the distinction with Islamism manifest: “The future of many countries in the world, and the future of the West, will be determined by this battle between Muslims and Islamists,” writes Soner Cagaptay, senior fellow and director of the Turkish Research Program at The Washington Institute (Cagaptay 2010).

An important element of WINEP's definition of Islamism is the rejection of the violence criterion, a criterion used by others [such as the Brookings institution] for distinguishing moderate Islamists from Islamist extremists. Thus, it is Islamism as a whole that is rejected, not terrorism. In its 2004 presidential study group report, for example, WINEP fellows Ross and Satloff asserted, "... the enemy that revealed itself that September morning was not terrorism per se but the ideology of Islamist extremism; terrorism was a tool it employed to advance its agenda" (Ross and Satloff 2004).

As a result, WINEP scholars on numerous occasions reject the duality of moderate vs. radical Islamists. In his essay "Islam vs. Democracy" Martin Kramer, former WINEP fellow currently a senior fellow at the Shalem Center in Jerusalem, notes that all Islamists are anti-Western, anti-democratic fundamentalists disregarding whether they espouse peaceful or violent means to come to power:

Democracy, diversity, accommodation – the fundamentalists have repudiated them all. In appealing to the masses who fill their mosques, they promise, instead, to institute a regime of Islamic law, make common cause with like-minded "brethren" everywhere, and struggle against the hegemony of the West and the existence of Israel. Fundamentalists have held to these principles through long periods of oppression, and will not abandon them now, at the moment of their greatest popular resonance. (Kramer 1993).

Note in the above instance, how the title places "Islam" squarely against the West. Such lapses show the duality created between Islam and Islamism is not genuine. In a 2003 WINEP policy forum on "Combating the Ideology of Radical Islam," Daniel Pipes defines Islamism as "a terroristic version of Islam." In reply to the question "Who is the enemy?," Daniel Pipes writes that it is neither terrorists, as he finds the Bush administration rhetoric implying, nor is it Muslims, as evangelical Christians are said to believe:

A third and better reply is that the enemy is Islamism, a terroristic version of Islam. Islamism is the totalitarian root of the problem; terrorism is only a symptom, an instrument of war used by Islamists to achieve their objectives. Once these facts are understood, it becomes clear that the struggle is ultimately one of ideas and armies, not of law enforcement or religion. As in World War II or the Cold War, the ideological enemy has to be defeated, followed by a

rebuilding of the societies in which the ideology took hold. (Pipes and Fuller 2003)

Thus with this definition of Islamism the following theme becomes apparent: “the enemy is Islamism, a terroristic version of Islam.” This theme makes two policy approaches accessible: first both violent and non-violent forms of Islamism are problematic and adversarial to the United States; second, true victory lies in defeating the ideology not the practice of Islamism. Note that while it is said that Islamism is a version of Islam, it is Islam nonetheless. Thus, despite the apparent denials, the ideological battle that WINEP promotes is in essence a religious struggle that the United States is urged to wage. Also, nation-building is to follow the defeat of Islamism for the region to become safe for America. A second theme hints at what the nature of this nation-building would be: “If militant Islam is the problem; moderate Islam is the solution,” Pipes says. “There is no such thing as a moderate Islamist, for all Islamists share the same long-term goals; they differ only over means” (Pipes and Fuller 2003).

A concise definition of the Islamist characteristic is found in Robert Satloff’s report “The Battle of Ideas in the War on Terror”:

Islamist is defined here as a Muslim who seeks – either through peaceful or violent means—the imposition of Qur’anic law (Sharia) and a Qur’anic-based state, rejecting the legitimacy of the existing political structure in his/her country or region. Although organically antidemocratic (i.e., opposed to “rule of the people”), Islamists can equally reject democratic systems and monarchical ones, the principal point of departure for them being the imperative to impose “divine law” in place of human-made systems of governance. (Satloff 2004, 69)

The only defining characteristic of Islamism is thus its belief in the idea that governance belongs to God and legislation needs to be in accordance with divine law. All other differentiating factors, including resort to terrorism or acceptance of the democratic process, are found irrelevant. Thus, by definition all Islamist causes are found to be illegitimate. Both Shi’a and Sunni variants of Islamism are likewise rejected. The Islamic Republic of Iran is as much the enemy as the Islamic State (ISIS); Hizbollah is as much the enemy as Hamas; and al-Qaeda is as much the enemy as the Muslim Brotherhood. Such a conceptualization reverberates the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu’s words at UN General Assembly in 2014: “ISIS and

Hamas are branches of the same poisonous tree,” Netanyahu argued. “Hamas is ISIS and ISIS is Hamas” (Timm 2014).

WINEP’s depiction of the Islamic Republic of Iran as the enemy is similarly defined in terms of its adherence to Islam as a system of governance, but also because it supports a network of Islam-centered movements against the United States and Israel (Ross et al. 2001, 12). A number of WINEP works on countering Islamism concern the Islamic Republic of Iran, most notably the works of Mehdi Khalaji, who is introduced as a Qom-trained Shiite theologian and the Libitzky Family fellow at the Washington Institute. Khalaji argues that “the Middle East will face serious peril from Shiite extremist fundamentalism” as a result of the politicization of Shiite religious leadership in the post-Iranian revolution era (Khalaji 2006, v).

Khalaji’s main research agenda is explicating the threat of *velayate faghih* as the life-blood of Shiite Islamism and other Islamist groups affiliated with the Islamic Republic. He warns of a “post-marja era” in which the Shiite religious network loses its legitimacy and independence due to the effects due to politicization (Khalaji 2006). By politicization, he means increased ties between the office of the *velayate faghih* and other religious leaders (the *maraji*):

A post-*marja* era will be characterized by politicization of the Shiite religious network and reinforcement of the Iranian regime’s power and influence outside Iran; by contrast, the influence of the regime inside the country will diminish. (Khalaji 2006)

In Khalaji’s framing, the power of financial resources, not that of faith, drives the popularity of the Islamic Republic’s network of religious leaders. In this framework, independence is made synonymous with opposition to the supremacy of *velayate faghih*. Thus, all those *mujtahids* whose political view leads them to support the government of the *faqih* are defined as clients of the government. Those who oppose the rule of the *faqih*, in case or in principle, are deemed as independent figures. All the rest are simply apolitical.

It seems that an underlying theme here is that the Shiite faith has been transformed to a political ideology. This definition is in line with WINEP’s definition of Islamism. The theme of undermining the religious authenticity of the Islamic Republic of Iran runs parallel to a similar theme positing that Islamism is the politicization of Islam, transforming the religion into a political ideology. A

duality is created between political Shiism and moderate Shiism. The second is marked by “moderate organizations and independent political institutions” and is characterized as “tolerant, liberal, democratic, and moderate.” Political Shiism of course is marked by a lack of these characteristics. The duality in essence Orientalizes parts of Shiism and westernizes others. The same could be said of the duality made between Islamism and moderate Islam. What is ironic is that while Khalaji demonizes the “politicization” of *marjaiyah*, he wishes other centers of religious power to act as political balancing forces against the force of the Islamic Republic. In short, he creates the duality between “popular Islam” and “intellectual’s liberal democratic interpretation of Islam” on the one hand, and “official Islam” characterized as Islam believing in *velayate faghih* on the other (Khalaji 2006, 2008).

It seems best to label WINEP’s approach to Muslim politics as “reverse excommunication” (reverse-*Takfir*) in which case, similar to the approach of the Takfiri elements in Muslim countries such as Wahhabism, it denies all but a limited version of Islam as non-Muslim. In this context, any Muslim or Islamic movement that seeks to in any way implement Islam in the public and political affairs of Muslims is charged with blasphemy. The legitimacy of such individuals and entities’ Islam is undermined and their extermination made imperative. All elements who are in this way excommunicated are labeled as Islamist.

In a 2014 speech delivered at the Washington Institute entitled “Reflections on Islamism: From the Muslim Brotherhood to the Islamic State,” Shimon Shamir, professor emeritus of Middle East history at Tel Aviv University and former Israeli ambassador to Jordan and Egypt, sheds light on why Islamism is preferred over other competing terms. He argues that Mahdism, fundamentalism, and political Islam are not precise terms to define the many movements that aim to place Islam at their center and who are antagonistic to the West. “Political Islam ... is manifestly wrong, simply because all Islam is political,” Shamir says (Shamir 2014, 2). Jihadism only well describes the militant aspect of Islamism but is found to lack precision because it does not cover the “civil objectives” of state-building and imposition of Islamic law (Shamir 2014). Wahhabism is imprecise because it was not historically anti-Western; rather, it aimed to fight a local Muslim regime:

So we are left with Islamism (or if you wish, Islamic radicalism), a term that has been gaining ground in recent years. It is not rich with substance, but at least it is free of confusing connotations. Some complain that it sounds too similar to Islam in general, but of course

the -ism suffix creates a significant distance between the two.”
(Shamir 2014)

2.2 The Ideology of Islamism Assessed as the Root Cause of Terrorism

A second element of a framing analysis seeks to identify causes and agents central to the particular framing studied. In defining Islamism as the existential threat to the United States impeding the realization of U.S. interests in the region, it is argued that the root cause of terrorism is the ideology of Islamist extremism rather than terrorism per se. It is therefore reiterated on many occasions that to win the war of ideas, the United States has to first win the ideological battle against Islamism. The argument goes as follows: Islamist ideology causes extremism which in turn causes violence. WINEP’s Presidential Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Extremism wrote in 2009, “... countering the ideology that drives this extremism is a critical element in the overall effort to prevent and defeat the violence that emerges from it” (Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism 2009).

WINEP scholars criticize U.S. officials of both parties for failing to appreciate the severity of the ideological challenge of Islamism (Satloff 2004; Berger et al. 2015). Academic Middle East expert critics are partly blamed for this state of affairs. Martin Kramer’s *Ivory Towers on Sand* aims to put forward an expose of how Middle East experts have, in his mind, misguided the American elite. Kramer is highly critical of Edward Said, John Esposito, and their disciples for setting in motion decades of Middle Eastern studies that “engaged in the ritual of condemning the public, the media, and the government for ignorance of Islam,” “assured Americans that ‘political Islam’ was retreating from confrontation,” and were “preoccupied with ‘Muslim Martin Luthers:’” “Twenty years of denial had produced mostly banalities about American bias and ignorance, and fantasies about Islamists as democratizers and reformers” (Kramer 2001, 56-57).

He criticizes these scholars for bemoaning “orientalisms’ latest mutations” (Kramer 2001, 98) and for making hyped predictions about the coming waves of democratization in the Middle East in which Islamists would play a central role. It would take 10 years for Kramer’s following remarks to prove wrong:

But the “upheaval,” the “turmoil,” and the “crises” never materialized. The Gulf War did not accelerate the demise of any regime, even Saddam Husayn’s. The regimes parried the Islamist

thrust, and nothing fundamental changed in the domestic politics of countries at peace with Israel. Obviously the regimes had resources and strengths that were not visible from the veranda of the Villa Serbelloni. Rulers were allied to elites, groups, sects, families, and tribes whose members had a strong, vested interest in the status quo and who were determined to do whatever they deemed necessary to preserve it. (Kramer 2001, 68)

With so-called Islamist extremist ideology being identified as the cause of terrorism, a number of agents are identified. First, there are terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and its affiliated organizations who “play a key role in radicalizing Muslim youth and encouraging them to pursue a path of violence” (Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism 2009, 3). The next layer of agents, called “conveyor-belt groups,” is found guilty of promoting the Islamization of society and calling for the reestablishment of the Islamic Caliphate albeit without endorsing terrorism. They include Hizb al-Tahrir and Tabligh Jamaat whose way of thinking is said to be a “gateway” to radicalization (Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism 2009, 4). The next set of agents is Hamas and Hizballah. While it is acknowledged that these two groups are different from the first two in both goals and tactics, they are still categorized as extremist because they are judged to have instigated extremism among Palestinian and Lebanese populations (Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism 2009, 3). Devising strategies to counter Hamas and Hizballah is said to be harder because of their popularity:

Hamas and Hizballah’s greater domestic legitimacy complicates the development of strategies to reduce their appeal. Such legitimacy has been gained not only through the ballot (an approach rejected by al-Qaeda) but also through their extensive social services networks, services that the local governments have proved unable to provide. (Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism 2009, 6)

The 2004 WINEP Presidential Task Force had similarly characterized Hamas and Hizballah as posing a commensurate threat to U.S. interests as did al-Qaeda. The need for the U.S. government to focus on countering Hizballah and Hamas in its counter-terror efforts rested on the assumption that, according to the authors of the report, “both these groups share with each other – and with al-Qaeda – a corrosive and dangerous ideology, which views the United States as the Great

Satan” (Ross and Satloff 2004, 20). With such a conceptualization of Hizballah and Hamas, Iran becomes “the most egregious state sponsor of terrorism” (Ross and Satloff 2004, 21) despite the fact that Iran has itself been the victim of terrorism and is fighting terrorist groups inside and outside its borders. Also, Iran is in effect the leading force viewing the United States as the Great Satan.

“Non- and anti-Islamist” forces are viewed as the allies in the ideological battle against Islamists. Satloff says in this regard, “Without reservation or apology, America’s strategy should be to help non- and anti-Islamist Muslims beat back the Islamist challenge” (Satloff 2004, xv). In another instance, Ross and Satloff call for the creation and support of a coalition of “non- and anti-Islamist groups, individuals, and governments” in the fight against extremism (Ross and Satloff 2004, 20). The secular nature of these groups and individuals are stressed. WINEP fellow Cagaptay, for example, expressed the following opinion at a testimony before Congress: “... there are no Islamists in the Muslim world who are seculars ... So those who are secular, those who live in a secular lifestyle are clearly our allies because they form the backbone of this movement of anti-Islamism in the Muslim world” (Is there a clash of civilizations? Islam, democracy, and U.S.-Middle East and Central Asia policy 2006, 58). A similar approach is taken in fighting so-called Shiite extremism as is evident in Mehdi Khalaji’s call for “supporting liberal and democratic secular intellectuals” in the Shia world as a way to counter Iran’s religious supremacy there (Khalaji 2006, 36).

Given WINEP’s philosophy of being, namely the promotion of Israel’s interests, the main battleground of ideas is conceived to be the Arab world. Containing the ideological influence of Iran and its affiliated Islamist groups is a central concern. The institute’s Project Fikra (idea in Arabic) is dedicated to “defeating extremism” in the Arab world though amplifying the voices of “Arab democrats.” The project is “a multiyear program of research, publication, and network-building” and is led by Washington Institute Kaufman fellow David Pollock (Project Fikra: Defeating extremism through the power of ideas). Project Fikra is financially supported by Linda, Michael, and James Keston. Michael Keston is a real estate businessman and a Trustee of the Washington Institute (Michael Keston: Chairman and CEO, KFG Investment Company).

The Fikra Forum is one of the project’s important initiatives aiming to create a network of “Arab democrats” (Fikra Forum) in its fight against Islamism. The forum, in WINEP’s words, “is the first near real-time, fully translated Arabic-English blog to provide a two-way platform for those in the region seeking to shape

the future of their countries and U.S.-based decision makers and opinion leaders who are trying to understand and support those efforts” (Fikra Forum). Fikra Forum issues a weekly bulletin highlighting each week’s featured content.

2.3 Policy Recommendations and Conveying Moral Judgments

A third and fourth component of a framing analysis is conveying moral judgments about where the responsibility for the problem lies and uncovering the recommended remedies offered for the problems defined. Almost all WINEP scholarship on Islamism purvey the following moral judgment regarding Islamism: they condemn Islamism as evil and the archenemy of the United States (See for examples Berger et al. 2015; Cagaptay 2010; Carpenter et al. 2009; Kramer and Kepel 2004; Pipes and Fuller 2003; Ross and Satloff 2004; Satloff 2004, 2005; Shamir 2014; Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism 2009). Elements in the U.S. government are at times criticized for aiming to engage Islamists. The following appraisal of the policy recommendations put forth by WINEP scholars sheds more light on the moral judgment component as well.

2.3.1 Identify the Ideology of Islamism as Enemy Number One

The overarching policy recommendation that WINEP scholars put forth is elevating the war on terrorism to a battle to confront the ideology of “Islamist extremism” (Berger et al. 2015; Carpenter et al. 2009; Kramer and Kepel 2004; Satloff 2004, 2005; Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism 2009). “Fighting the Ideological Battle [is] The Missing Link in U.S. Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism,” as the title of a 2009 WINEP strategic report proclaims. The battleground for the ideological battle is both domestic and foreign (Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism 2009). To fight the domestic and foreign battle, the Obama administration is advised “to adopt a multifaceted and integrated approach” that operates at the “strategic, functional, and structural” levels (Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism 2009, vii). The Obama administration is criticized for failing to appreciate the strategic element in this battle which is going “beyond countering violent extremism (CVE) to prevent and deter the spread of the ideology that nurtures and supports said violent extremism – radical Islamist extremism” (Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism 2009). With this strategic reshuffle, policies and programs would be devised to defeat the narrative of extremism and empower anti-Islamist forces ideologically. Elsewhere, WINEP experts suggest that leaders of both parties

have had shortcomings in identifying Islamism as the enemy by overemphasizing the fight against terrorism (Satloff 2004).

WINEP experts avoid the clash of civilization framework and instead define the all-out fight against Islamism as an internal battle within Muslim societies in which the United States should play an active role as “a central player” (Ross and Satloff 2004, 46). Such recommendation is made with the assumption that American “values, policies, and interests are at stake” (Ross and Satloff 2004). Here the Cold War analogy is made to show the intensity of the threat: “Whether or not Islamist extremism finds fertile ground in Muslim societies today is as fateful as whether states chose to be communist or free during the Cold War” (Ross and Satloff 2004). A main task in this fight is for the U.S. government “to identify, nurture, and support Muslim allies in the war campaign against extremism, to advocate U.S. policy, and to promote American values” (Ross and Satloff 2004). To win the battle, the U.S. government is advised to go beyond its traditional public diplomacy efforts and to fight on multiple levels: “with arms, with intelligence, with diplomacy, with trade, with ideas, with policy, with culture, and with political will, all at the same time” (Ross and Satloff 2004, 2).

Having identified Islamism as the archenemy of the United States, an overall policy of non-engagement with Islamist groups of all stripes is recommended. It is argued that there should be no difference between violent and nonviolent Islamists in the eye of U.S. policy makers. This assessment is made on several grounds: renouncing violence is just a tactic not a strategy, renouncing violence has occurred as a result of pressure, and renouncing violence is not the best test of democratic commitment. “Instead of moderating the radicals,” Satloff argues, “let us commit ourselves to the project of empowering the moderates. We can do that only if we are more discriminate in how we promote democracy in the Middle East” (Satloff 2005). Islamist parties are likened to “neo-Nazi parties in Europe or Jean-Marie Le Pen’s National Front in France” who deserve no “attention” or “affection” from the United States and should be isolated (Satloff 2005). “The U.S. government should promote democrats, not just democracy” (Satloff 2005). Martin Kramer, a former fellow at WINEP, also argued that “Islamists cannot be the lever of democracy in the Middle East, and engaging them would court disaster” (Kramer and Kepel 2004).

Given the emphasis on countering Islamism as a whole, irrespective of the adherence to terrorism or lack thereof, the Islamist dilemma remains a cornerstone of WINEP’s approach to democratization in Muslim countries. The Islamist

dilemma is the fear that the spread of democracy to Muslim countries would give rise to Islamist powers that would then put an end to the democratic process: one-man, one-vote, one-time. It is argued that Islamism and democracy are, by their very definition, antithetical (Satloff 2005).

While it is understood that the time of Western-backed authoritarian regimes has expired, WINEP scholars advocate a gradualist approach to democratization: “to encourage democratic development, but in small, gradual steps” (Pipes and Fuller 2003). It is argued that “moving abruptly from rigid authoritarianism to national elections without first building civil society – runs the risk that elections will be hijacked by Islamist forces, as happened in Algeria” (Pipes and Fuller 2003). The use of the term democracy “development” is noteworthy. The gradualism inherent in “democracy development” in essence calls for the continuation of authoritarianism for a long time.

The following excerpt similarly makes plain such an approach. The United States government is advised to come up with “the precise formula of cajoling and cooperating with friendly governments for the long-term efforts to support political and economic reform” (Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism 2009, 10). In fact, the very authoritarian regimes that are urged to go through a gradual process of reform are viewed as important allies in the campaign against Islamism. In this context, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt whose military government crushed the Egyptian revolution of 2011 and rose to power through a bloody coup in June of 2014 is viewed in this context as the proponent of moderate Islam for having called “for reforming Islam and purging the religion of extremist ideas” (Dajani 2015).

Fostering friendly democracies in Palestine and Lebanon are found especially troublesome given the popularity of Hamas and Hizballah in the region. The following excerpt from the 2009 report of WINEP’s Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Extremism acknowledges that not only is the popularity of the two political groups based on electoral results but that it is based on a deeper social bond between the two groups and their respective communities:

Hamas and Hizballah’s greater domestic legitimacy complicates the development of strategies to reduce their appeal. Such legitimacy has been gained not only through the ballot (an approach rejected by al-Qaeda) but also through their extensive social services networks, services that the local

governments have proved unable to provide. (Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism 2009, 6)

It is further acknowledged that in countering Hamas and Hizbollah, the United States cannot rely on a solely military strategy and should instead focus on fostering anti-Islamist political forces that are at present “weak and fragmented” (Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism 2009, 6). The U.S. government is criticized for having given “too little” support to these alternative forces in terms of political and financial resources (Task Force on Confronting the Ideology of Radical Extremism 2009, 6). As will be discussed later, promoting so-called “moderate Islam” in the Palestinian territories through the works of the Washington Institute’s Weston Fellow Mohammed S. Dajani, the founder of “the Wasatia movement of moderate Islam” (Dajani 2012) is one venue through which WINEP aims to counter the forces of Islamism in the region. In other words, the Palestinian-Israeli crisis is defined in terms of the significance of Islamism:

The moment Islamists come to define the Palestinian identity is the moment this conflict becomes transformed from a national into a religious one—and the moment the conflict with Israel will no longer be resolvable. If nothing else, finding ways to reinforce and sustain the Palestinian Authority is more important than ever. The United States and Israel share this strategic objective and should focus in their discussions with each other and in quiet discussions with President Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayad on the most effective specific steps to shore up the Palestinian Authority. (Berger et al. 2015, 28)

It is further argued that the winning card in the Israeli-Palestinian crisis is to keep the Palestinian movement “nationalist and not Islamist” (Berger et al. 2015, 37). This is in stark contrast to how the Intifada aims to view the movement.

To alleviate the lack of “leadership, direction, and resources” in the United States’ ideological battle against Islamism, WINEP experts Ross and Satloff argue that the president should make the National Security Council in charge of such efforts, “devising strategy, and coordinating the contributions of relevant government agencies, including the State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Department of Defense, and the BBG [the Broadcasting Board of Governors]” (Ross and Satloff 2004, 46-47). This recommendation shows that WINEP approaches the issue of countering Islamism as

a national security issue, one that requires the United States to strengthen its “ability to wield nonlethal instruments of power, including public diplomacy, nation building, democracy promotion, and postconflict reconstruction” (Ross and Satloff 2004, 46-47). Elsewhere, this ideological battle is referred to as a “form of ideological door-to-door combat” and “a generational project” (Ross and Satloff 2004, 50).

Effective strategic communication is found to be “a national priority” which needs “adequate funds for its implementation.” Three goals are put forth in this regard: to support anti-Islamist political, social, and cultural forces; to help the right elements in Muslim societies work toward incremental political reform toward “the cause of freedom”; and “to promote understanding – and greater sympathy for – U.S. values, culture, and policy” (Ross and Satloff 2004, 48). Victory over Islamism in the region is evaluated as the prerequisite for achieving democracy in the region. Interestingly, the U.S. backed authoritarian regimes of the region that would later prove unable to withstand popular uprisings are judged in 2009 to be “strong enough to withstand whatever critique America is likely to make and savvy enough to deal with intense scrutiny on these issues while working cooperatively with Washington on other issues” (Ross and Satloff 2004, 49). The report mentions Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia in this regard and misjudges the vulnerability of authoritarian American allies. Iran and Syria are two major battlegrounds identified in which Washington is urged to “reach out to brave democrats, reformers, and liberals, providing political, moral, and – when possible – financial and material support” (Ross and Satloff 2004, 49-50).

2.3.2 Public Diplomacy

The issue of public diplomacy, or the battle of ideas in the Middle East, is one of the focal elements of WINEP scholarship on Islam and Islamism. There is a battle of ideas going on in the region among the many anti-American Islamist forces on the one hand and the non-Islamist and anti-Islamist forces on the other, argues Robert Satloff, executive director of the Washington Institute who has devoted a considerable portion of his research to the subject. Immediately after the September 11 attacks, Satloff moved to Rabat, Morocco, with his family and made extended trips throughout the Middle East and Europe “and wrote extensively on ways to inject urgency and ideas into the ideological campaign against radical Islamism” (Robert Satloff: Executive director). He compiled his writings in 2004 into a Washington Institute book entitled *The Battle of Ideas in the War on Terror: Essays*

on U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East. The book is in essence a blueprint for fighting Islamism in the region. Satloff is also the creator and host of Dakhil Washington (“Inside Washington”), a weekly news and interview program now in its seventh season on al-Hurra, the U.S. government-supported Arabic satellite television channel that beams throughout the Middle East. In that capacity, he is the only non-Arab to host a program on an Arab satellite channel” (Robert Satloff: Executive director).

According to Satloff’s narrative, the United States has a stake at winning the battle of ideas war not only for the sake of Muslims but also for security reasons. The strategy forward is as follows: “Without reservation or apology, America’s strategy should be to help non- and anti-Islamist Muslims beat back the Islamist challenge” (Satloff 2004, xv).

Similar to the overall framing with regard to Islamism, a main argument that runs through WINEP expertise on the subject of U.S. public diplomacy, or the battle of ideas, is non-engagement with Islamist groups and individuals. “Regarding the various stripes of Islamists, the United States can do nothing to soften their hearts or change their minds,” according to Satloff (2004, xiv). Thus, deradicalization of Islamist individuals is not a goal. This is in contrast to RAND’s approach to deradicalization as discussed previously. Rather it is the outright defeat of Islamists “through military means for those who use violence to gain power, and through political means for those whose tactics take a more circuitous path to the same objective” (Satloff 2004, xiv). As a result, the main target group for U.S. public diplomacy is those Muslims who do not espouse a public or political role for Islam. Changing of U.S. policies is said to be “self-defeating;” instead, a messaging approach (pro-American information dissemination) is advocated (Satloff 2004, xiv) As was mentioned earlier, Brookings scholars also advised the U.S. government to avoid trying to make post-Islamists out of Islamists due to ineffectiveness.

Another general policy recommendation regarding public diplomacy is to keep these endeavors state-specific rather than directed at the Arab or the Muslim world as a whole. Such policy would effectively avoid any help to pan-Arab and pan-Islamic transnational identity-formations. WINEP instead urges the U.S. government to opt for “evolutionary political and economic change within existing state structures and national borders” (Satloff 2004, 6). Keeping the identity of Muslims state-centric rather than one centered around the idea of the umma (the greater transnational Muslim community) is found to be key to fighting Islamism.

Therefore, it is argued “Anti-Islamist initiatives must be focused locally and on individual states, eschewing as much as possible the rhetoric of ‘regions’ to which Arabs or Muslims might owe allegiance separate and apart from their home country” (Satloff 2004, 72-73).

Satloff criticizes Edward Djerejian’s “Changing Minds, Winning Peace” (Djerejian 2003) report in part for failing to identify Islamism as “the core ‘hearts and minds’ challenge to U.S. interests” in the Middle East. With this assessment of the problem, the guiding principle of U.S. public diplomacy becomes alleviating anti-Americanism through anti-Islamism rather than through the promotion of U.S. policies or values alone.

It should be noted too that WINEP’s assessment of anti-Americanism is of course unique as well. A duality is created between popular anti-Americanism and Islamist anti-Americanism. WINEP scholars aim to show how gauging anti-Americanism based on polling data is misleading. They assert that “actions, not just attitudes” should be the measure of public antipathy to or liking of the United States (Pollock, Bunzel, and Cannon 2010). A report entitled “Assessing What Arabs Do, Not What They Say: A New Approach to Understanding Arab Anti-Americanism” by Satloff, Eunice Youmans, and Mark Nakhla argues that popular anti-Americanism is not as widespread and deep-rooted as it is often portrayed. The authors of the report argue “how regional animosity toward the United States and its policies is episodic and event-driven, with little evidence of a continually rising tide of popular hatred” (Satloff, Youmans, and Nakhla 2006). Contrary to all polling data, Pollock and colleagues write, “Measured by objective behavioral criteria, relations with almost all Arab governments—and almost all Arab publics—improved steadily and strongly after the Iraq war’s first year” (Pollock, Bunzel, and Cannon 2010, xi). Unlike popular anti-Americanism which is downplayed, Islamist anti-Americanism is hyped and is framed as antipathy toward what America is and not what America does as was explained in earlier sections (See for examples Kurtz 2001; Satloff 2001; Shamir 2014). As a result, two camps are identified: first are Islamists and a large minority of Muslims supporting them; second are the large majority of Muslims who are found potential allies in the fight against Islamism. Satloff’s *Battle of Ideas* report was aimed to serve as “a practical guide to tapping America’s underappreciated, underutilized anti-Islamist allies” (Satloff 2004, 60).

According to Satloff, “the most serious challenge to U.S. interests in many Arab and Muslim societies” is thus “the spread of radical Islamism, not U.S. unpopularity” (Satloff 2004, 90). Any engagement with Islamists is rejected for

marring the U.S. relationship with anti-Islamists. The solution, according to Satloff is as follows:

An important, and rarely pursued, step toward minimizing recruits to Islamism is to identify the potential allies among these non-Islamist Muslims, build networks of common purpose among them, and show that the United States supports them in the currency that matters in local society—that is, visibility and money. (Satloff 2004, 61-62)

The bulk of the work is placed on U.S. embassies and the effort is likened to “building a popular front against Nazism in World War II or against Communism in the Cold War” (Satloff 2004, 62). It is acknowledged that anti- and non-Islamists comprise of people who may have very different worldviews but who should be brought together for the larger cause of fighting the spread of Islamism.

While making a Cold War analogy, Satloff makes an important distinction between the fight against Communism and that against Islamism:

In contrast [to the Cold War], in the Middle East the objective is (with a few exceptions) reform, not regime change. However autocratic, stifling, illiberal, and, therefore, jihadist producing the Egyptian, Tunisian, or Saudi regimes may be, the strategy to defeat Islamism must be rooted in promoting the sort of political, social, and economic change within existing regimes that denies Islamists opportunities for growth, not in creating a reign of political chaos from which Islamists, often a country's most powerful and best-organized political force, stand to benefit most. (Satloff 2004, 74)

As a result, he proposes the idea of “incremental liberalization,” which “requires policies and programs that are designed to promote revolutionary change in an evolutionary fashion ... a strategy of ‘making haste, slowly’” (Satloff 2004, 75). To achieve this incremental liberalization, two steps are recommended. Firstly, the link between people and Islamists should be severed partly through discrediting Islamist NGOs who provide social services to local populations through information campaigns. The goal is to undercut Islamists’ popular appeal (Satloff 2004, 65).

Secondly, education and women’s role in public life are identified as two key battlegrounds to foster pro-Americanism in Muslim/Arab societies. Children’s education, curriculum reform, English language education, American-style educational institutions, and distribution of over-stock U.S. textbooks and

educational materials are given as some of the best means to achieve that end. The wording used for children's education is noteworthy: "nurturing future allies," "a central battleground" where "the United States is not even putting up a fight" (Satloff 2004, 66).

The reasoning for identifying the promotion of the English language in the Middle East through such efforts as "English for all" after school programs at minimal or no cost to parents is as follows:

Washington needs to develop alternative opportunities for anti-Islamist excellence and highly visible models of it. Promoting English-language education should be a central focus of this effort. Knowing English does not necessarily translate into liberal thought or pro-Americanism, as the legacy of Islamist radicals from Sayyid Qutb to the September 11 bombers underscores. But English is both a portal to Anglo-American culture as well as the access route to the Internet-based information revolution. Knowing English at least gives a resident in a Muslim-majority country the opportunity to learn about America and make judgments about its policies and values without the filter of translation or reliance on biased sources of information. (Satloff 2004, 66)

The over 180 American schools, a fourth of which are said to be operating in Muslim-majority countries and about a tenth in Arab countries, are identified as "readymade incubators of pro-Americanism" (Satloff 2004, 67). The United States is asked to increase its financial support of such schools in the Middle East to make them accessible to more individuals. The United States government is also advised to financially support the development of U.S.-style universities in the Muslim world. "The long-term goal should be the creation of at least one fully accredited English-language university in every country" (Satloff 2004, 67). Using the services of the private sector in English-language promotion is also advised. Of course, in carrying out these educational initiatives, the United States is advised to at times carry out covert initiatives:

It is also useful for identifying individuals who could play lead roles in specific public policy issues. Curriculum reform, for example, is a critical battleground of the culture wars in many Muslim societies. ... A more effective and longer-lasting change—and one with fewer fingerprints of U.S. intervention—would result from

behind-the-scenes U.S. endorsement of key reform-minded people from within the bureaucracy and civil society to positions of authority on the local and national review boards often formed to review curricula. Trying to influence the composition of various government bodies both removes the United States from direct interference in the actual process of curriculum reform and ensures that right-thinking people will be in important positions when the current battle is over and the next one is ready to be joined. This can only be achieved if U.S. embassies have already done the vital work of identifying local allies and building a communications infrastructure for networking among them. (Satloff 2004, 63)

While these initiatives look benign, they are proposed with a clear militaristic outlook. These steps are identified as tactics in a fight that is, according to Satloff's assessment, commensurate in gravity with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the global battle against al-Qaeda, and homeland security (Satloff 2004, 99). The tone of Satloff's treatise on the battle of ideas as "a potentially cataclysmic life-and-death struggle" rather than a "public relations challenge" and "a form of totalitarian threat" and "a challenge to values, policies, and interests, all at once" shows the clash of civilization thinking that serves as the bedrock of WINEP's construction of the battle of ideas (Satloff 2004, 100). In short, WINEP senior fellow bemoans the state of affairs in United States' fight in the battle of ideas summarized in the following concluding excerpts:

The basic problem is threefold: a lack of clarity, a lack of priorities, and a lack of urgency (Satloff 2004, 101).

To fix these problems, Satloff suggests the following:

1. "Battle of ideas should be viewed more like a military front ... less like one of many diplomatic initiatives ... The goal, admittedly over the long term, should be victory not just progress." (Satloff 2004, 104)
2. Concentrate on a few strategically chosen fields of public diplomacy most notably education: "For example, Washington should consider making educational reform—curricular reform, teacher training, schoolbook provision, new scholarships, English-language initiatives—the central focus of U.S.

development efforts in Muslim societies, leaving the lead role in many traditional development areas (health, clean water, etc.) to other international aid donors.” (Satloff 2004, 105)

3.U.S. public diplomacy efforts must become more local, entrepreneurial, and aggressive. (Satloff 2004)

2.3.3 Promotion of Moderate Islam

To overcome the cultural and religious appeal of Islamism in the region, the Washington Institute experts make suggestions to alternatives to Islamism. In addition to nationalism on the political scene as was the case with the bolstering of the Palestinian authority, Sufism is presented as a cultural/religious alternative: “In the search for alternatives to Islamist extremist ideologies and violence, the traditional and historic Islamic practices of Sufism may offer part of the antidote,” according to Sarah Feuer of the Washington Institute (Feuer 2015).

However, WINEP’s central battleground, to use the think tank’s terminology, in promoting so-called moderate Islam is the Palestinian territories. Mohammed S. Dajani, the Weston Fellow at The Washington Institute, previously professor of political science at al-Quds University in Jerusalem, founded the Wasatia movement of moderate Islam. Through this movement, he sought to break three taboos in Palestinian society: “attitudes toward the United States, toward Islamic education, and toward Holocaust education” (Dajani 2015). Through his activism, Dajani aims to change Palestinian culture in three ways: creating a favorable image of the United States, a pluralistic vision of religion with Islam being one among other acceptable faiths, and a change of narrative regarding the Holocaust. This was carried out through the initiation of a master’s program in American studies at al-Quds University, starting the al-Wasatia (moderate) movement in Palestine in 2007, and doing student tours of Auschwitz and a Palestinian refugee camp.

The Wasatia movement is especially noteworthy for this study. While Dajani calls the movement non-political, its ultimate goal is to create a favorable environment for “a negotiated peace with Israel that would help to bring peaceful solutions to the acute religious, economic, social, and political crises plaguing Palestinian society” (Dajani 2012). In what he calls Islamic education, Dajani aims to further specific interpretations of selective verses of the Qur’an and Hadith to show how Islam is compatible with liberal values. Citing his own experience, Dajani says that at a point in his life he “began to think of [his] enemy as a partner”

(Dajani 2012). In line with WINEP's other expert productions on Islamism, he views the competing interpretations of Islam put forth by the several Palestinian Islamist parties as the obstacle to peace and reconciliation with Israel.

3. Conclusion

The current study of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy's production of expertise on U.S. policy toward political Islam showed the centrality of the duality of moderation vs. radicalism as the foundation for excommunicating a large portion of the Muslim population as practicing pseudo-religion. The political subjectivity of Islam is found to be the one ingredient that makes it a pseudo-religion, a threatening anti-Western ideology. WINEP constructs Islamism as the main ideological foe of the West, in general, and the United States, in particular. Such a monolithic construction of Islamism as the enemy makes the fulfillment of American interests dependent on a wholesale defeating of the Islamist ideology. The think tank's framing rests on the two pillars of fighting Islamism, the think tank's terminology for the public and political manifestation of Islam, and promoting moderate Islam – a politically pacified version of the religion. Nevertheless, WINEP's framing puts the emphasis on fighting the ideology of Islamism. Promotion of moderate Islam is recommended only under localized conditions to avoid any transnational or pan-Islamic identity formation. The focus is placed on fostering moderation in the Palestinian territories.

WINEP is highly critical of the framing of moderate vs. radical Islamists and argues that Islamism of both violent and non-violent forms is antithetical to U.S. values, interests, and policies. Therefore, the moderate Islamist concept is rejected altogether. WINEP asks the U.S. government to adopt a focal strategy of embarking on an all-out ideological battle against Islamism.

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**A device of communication:
The *Third Divan* of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent
(1520-1566) and its political context**

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Abstract

Features that appear to have a religious meaning today may be better understood as a pre-modern form of political pragmatism. Research on pre-modern literature and history indicates that poetry was frequently used for political purposes. A predominant strategy in this regard was the manifestation of polyvalent meanings in a single image. Ottoman poetry of the sixteenth century meets this paradigm of identifying the spiritual and the worldly in its ambiguous incorporation of earthly and divine love, in its appealing to the court and the subjects with a common language and imagery, and by establishing a political setting that propagates the ruler as longing for love. Thus the ruler-poet created a bridge to his subjects, many of whom were in the process of revolting against him ¹

Key Words: Love, Rbellion, Ambiguity, Emotion, Medieval Rule.

¹ I owe a lot to the discussions with Hatice Aynur and Erika Glassen and I would like to express my warm gratitude to both of them.

Introduction

One of the best examples of the use of religious images for political purposes can be found in pre-modern Ottoman imperial poetry. During the 16th century the Ottoman Empire was plagued by severe conflicts that threatened social cohesion. Large parts of the Anatolian rural population were inclined to the Safavids, rejecting even military service for the Ottoman army, and great uprisings in Anatolia point to the fragility of the Ottoman society. The Ottoman-Safavid struggle for power led to wars between these two states throughout the whole 16th century. Moreover, the aging sultan Süleyman was unable to emulate his earlier successes, and military stagnation and dynastic fratricide provoked malcontent among the Ottoman elite after 1550. Fresh stratagems were needed to bolster his power.

In this paper I will demonstrate how poetry was interwoven in social and political life and how it was utilised in an attempt to quell social strife in the Ottoman Empire of the 16th century.

The pre-modern role of religion and politics

The cultural, social and political life of pre-modern Islam has often been misunderstood. Therefore, it might be appropriate to take a short look at some prominent features. It is widely held that in medieval thought the distinction between religion and politics did not yet exist and that both were deeply fused with each other. (Crone 2014: 11) The ruler found his legitimacy in religion, or as Patricia Crone puts it, “Ecclesiastical hierarchy and political agency belonged together in this perception and were displayed in one single institution, the *ummā*” (Crone 2014: 15f) Crone claims that divine and human intervention were socially relevant and that Islam was displayed by God’s intervention through the law sent by the prophet. This law shaped society and it distinguished Islam from other social orders. (Crone 2014: 267) In reality, however, this unity of religion and politics was incomplete. While the *ummā* was asserted as one institution for all believers, this coherence was repeatedly challenged in the course of various power struggles that incorporated pragmatic actions. (Crone 2014: 27) Although the *ummā* provided a common identity for all believers, regional leaders kept their political superiority. (Crone 2014: 31)

Thus, in contrast to Crone’s claims, religion and politics were not wholly fused. Islam played neither a consistent role over time, nor did the fusion between religion and politics go that deep. Heath Lowry and Cemal Kafadar’s research on Ottoman

ideology supports both of these points. The term Gazi (warrior, or warrior of Islam) has played a central role in this context. At the beginning of the 20th century, the religious impetus integral to the Gazi-concept was highlighted. However, as Lowry and Kafadar have shown, Gazi was not always used in the 13th and 14th centuries. Although it became a common denomination for Ottoman rulers in the 15th century, an explicit reference to Islam did not exist. In the 16th century under Sultan Süleyman, looting and enslavement were superseded by a religious mission, and the term Gazi was retrospectively attributed to all former Ottoman rulers.¹

With reference to the 15th century narrative of Sari Saltuk, Kafadar asserts that religious boundaries were fluid and that an exclusive Islamic order seems not to have existed yet. Sari Saltuk's emphatic recitation of the Bible before an orthodox congregation implies, for example, open religious borders. (Kafadar 1995: 71) This flexibility was not completely given up during the reign of Sultan Süleyman; however, tighter boundaries were enforced by the Sunni Islamic polity favoured under him. Nevertheless, even if the shift towards a rhetorical practice more in line with Sunni-Islam occurred, it was not consistent either in Süleyman's early or later reign. Moreover, according to John Szapolyai, (Şahin 2013: 205) the denomination of Habsburg rulers shifted between infidels and friends of the holy warriors (*mücâhid*). A similar rhetoric was used for foes or friends alike.

The fact that pre-modern Ottoman Islam was interwoven with pagan elements is also indicated by the notion *şāhib-ķırān* (Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction), which has been attributed to Sultan Süleyman, as well as to other Ottoman rulers. (Pakalın 1964: 93)² With reference to the heavens, *şāhib-ķırān* combines cosmic elements with political ones. It points to a leadership by an individual born under the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn. (Şahin 2013: 61f) Controversy in research exists concerning whether it was related to world rule or not. (Hagen 2013: 437; Şahin 2013: 190f) Nevertheless, *şāhib-ķırān* certainly refers to a pagan cosmology in which spiritual power is combined with natural phenomena. (Crone 2014: 163) It is revealing that *şāhib-ķırān* was dropped in Sultan Süleyman's later reign. This fact supports the idea that pagan perspectives were superseded in the second phase of Sultan Süleyman's reign by Sunni Islam. Although the two phases are not clearly marked, the second phase may be dated after 1540, when Sultan Süleyman began to portray himself as a deeply pious man. This was ideologically, as well as practically, supported by Süleyman's chief adviser at this time, Ebu-s-Su'ud.

A topography of power

The Classical Age between 1450 and 1600 is generally seen as the peak of Ottoman power, and Sultan Süleyman's long reign (1520-1566) shaped this period. In 1520 Sultan Süleyman inherited from his father, Selim I, a territory that stretched from Trabzon in the East to the shores of the Red Sea, while in the West important cities like Sofia and Ragusa were incorporated. (Kreiser and Neumann: 2009: 108-113) The victory over the Mamluks in 1517 and the capture of the holy cities of Mekka and Medina provided the Ottomans with a new status within the Islamic world. Under Sultan Süleyman's reign the empire was enlarged through further conquests.(Czygan: 2015: 77) However, this did not represent steady progress, but was characterized rather by a series of gains and losses, which paralleled conflicts in inner Anatolia. Specifically, the Shia-related Alevis rebelled against the official Sunni religious line. Conversely, there are also arguments that the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry first served to foster the Sunni Islamic identity promoted by Sultan Süleyman.(Şahin: 2013: 207) Under Süleyman the Ottomans were at war with the strong Safavids during 1535-39, 1548-50, 1553-55. These wars attest the bitter Ottoman-Safavid rivalry. This intra-Islamic strife seems to have been politically, rather than religiously motivated, for the Ottoman Shia-Alevi population is said to have been more inclined to the Safavids than to the Ottomans.(Şahin: 2013: 135) This inclination seems to have been the main motivation for the Anatolian revolts and the resulting suppression against them. Sultan Süleyman responded violently to the Kalender uprising in 1527, in which 30,000 rebels are said to have been involved. The uprising constituted one of the bloodiest encounters between state and society in the Ottoman realm in the era of Süleyman, and it may have been perceived by Sultan Süleyman as a form of Safavid interference in the attainment of religious and political hegemony. What is relatively clear is that this conflict represented a struggle for *social* cohesion. These conflicts are not perceived as unique phenomena, but, as Kaya Şahin puts it, they may be considered “the Ottoman response to cultural, political and religious upheavals that affected large parts of Eurasia.” (Şahin: 2013: 6)

The popularity of Ottoman poetry

In the sixteenth century, the popularity of ghazels went so far that Walter Andrews considered them a mode of communication. More importantly, by presenting evidence for a broad urban poetry culture, he demonstrated the error in the theory

that ghazels and divan poetry were purely courtly creations.³ Therefore, it is appropriate to differentiate between court poetry and urban poetry, even though the two dovetailed to some extent. Poets moved between the two environments because positions as court poets did not exist and poets had to seek compensations for their creations. In very singular cases a position in the government was offered to a poet to keep him at the court. The poet Baki reached the rank of a Kadiasker of Anatolia, one of the highest ranks of the Empire. (Pellat 1960. 956-957)

Urban poems often had a homoerotic character. However, as Walther Andrews notes, there were poets who explicitly sang of female beloveds. One such poet is 'Azizi about whom the biographer Mustafa Ali stated, "He was a lover of women, but then only God is without fault." (Andrews / Kalpaklı 2005: 44) However, poetesses such as Mihri Hatun seem to have also been held in high esteem and therefore, female exclusion from public life cannot explain the whole story, as Walter Andrews suggests. (Andrews / Kalpaklı 2005: 17, 43)

Often poems were composed for both women and men. This is the case in much of the poet Zati's work. He was highly regarded during the reign of Bayezid II, but under Süleyman, and perhaps even his father Selim I, Zati lost his status and was forced to make his living with all kinds of commissioned poems. (İz, Fahir 1965. 220-221; Andrews / Kalpaklı 2005: 35) Ladies of the upper class are said to have been among his customers. A piece of silver, gold or helvah was the currency for these commissioned poems. (Andrews / Kalpaklı 2005: 36, 39) Public gardens and coffeehouses, as well as bath houses and taverns, were places for inspiration and performance. (İnalçık 2015. 251-269) Poets often played with gender ambiguity since most tropes could be understood as either male or female. (Andrews / Kalpaklı 2005: 21) Moreover, the ambiguity went much further since the Turkish language has neither a genus of articles nor of possessive pronouns.

Poetry was linked with wine, as an image for a spiritual state or real drunkenness. In the course of Sultan Süleyman's reign, as he embraced a more ascetic lifestyle, he not only renounced drunkenness for himself, but seems to have disapproved of it for his subjects as well. (Andrews / Kalpaklı 2005: 81) In contrast, great drinking parties were thrown in Süleyman's early reign. The successful battle of Mohács in 1526 was, for example, celebrated with such a drinking party. (İnalçık 2015: 74) These drinking parties had a long tradition in Iranian culture. They served an important socio-political function by strengthening the bond between the court and the military. (İnalçık 2015: 267) During these drinking parties, which were called *'işret meclisler*, gifts and positions were

distributed by the ruler, and musical and poetic performances were given. We can assume that during these drinking parties the consumption of wine was not only allowed, but also demanded. In this regard wine had a multilayer function and was connected with lyrical performance.

In urban poetry metaphorical and physical love were connected. On the political level, Cemal Kafadar, Virginia Aksan and Daniel Goffman explore the fusion of different religions when discussing medieval Ottoman socio-religious phenomena. (Kafadar 1995: 82; Aksan 2007: 4) Although some lyrical features seem familiar to us and remind us of other forms of communication, research emphasizes the distinctively medieval features of this poetry. (Meisami 2003:5) European and the Middle Eastern medieval and pre-modern poems were often allegorical. They functioned on the basis of a certain ambiguity -denoted in Ottoman rhetoric as *ihām* (Bombaci 1965: XXXVI-VII) -, and they envisaged a cohesion between humans and objects, the world and God, the erotic and the mystic. (Meisami 2003:9) The cohesion of the different realities evokes a cosmology in which all parts belong together. As Erika Glassen puts it, (Glassen. et al, 2014: 49) the iridescent nature of these poems sets them apart from modernity.

How can we understand poetry's high popularity in the Ottoman Empire during the 16th century? I will give a tentative reply at the end. For the moment let us note that the voice of poetry was interwoven in the daily life of the society. It was used as a kind of communication that crossed both gender and social strata. (Andrews 2006: 496; Neuwirth, 2006: 23) Ottoman rulers would not have been the pragmatists they have been revealed to be by leading theorists if they had not used and refined this trend. (Kafadar 1995: 6)

Sultan Süleyman` s Third Divan:

Sultan Süleyman shared a predilection for poetry with his subjects and produced thousands of poems under the pseudonym Muhibbi, the lover, or God lover.

Although Muhibbi is perceived as a poet with a good command of lyrical craft, he was not unanimously perceived as brilliant from a Turkish perspective. (Ak, 2001: 171-172)⁴ German Orientalists who translated some of his poems, and those of other Ottoman imperial poets at the beginning of the 20th century, saw him in a better light. (Jacob 1904: 12) Contemporary Ottomans probably would not have dared to evaluate his poems. The famous court poet Baki, however, lauded Muhibbi's original use of imagery. (Kuru 2013: 758) Indeed, Muhibbi used specific

images in a distinct way. Light was related to the divine and I would suggest that the cypress points to the Prophet Muhammed. It could be said that this is simply common sense. (Bausani, 1965: 1035) However, urban poetry suggests a more worldly meaning, as Walter Andrews has argued. (Andrews: 2005: 41, 56, 104, 148, 154)

A magnificently illuminated divan of Sultan Süleyman, the *Third Divan*, was discovered by Petra Kappert in the Museum of Art and Manufacture of Hamburg in the 1980`s. (MKG 1886.168, Dīvān-ı Muḥibbī 18) The incipit states:

“Hazā dīvān es-ṣāliṣ min-ḳalām sułtān as-salāṭīn az-zamān [min] al-Ġāzī Sułtān Süleymān Ḥān ḥallada salṭanatahu ilā yevm ed-dīn“. (MKG 1886.168. folio_001b_002a) “This is the Third Divan from the speech of the sultan of sultans of the time, from Gazi Sultan Süleyman Han, may his rule last until Judgement Day.”

What is striking in the incipit is that the orality is emphasized as well as the outstanding position of the poet at the top of the Islamic world.

The colophon states:

„Ḥāccı Muḥammad al-muṣṭaḡalu bi-du`ā` al-fatḥi wa`z- zafari `alā`d-davām fī awāḥir ṣahri rabī` at-ṭānī sanata iḥdā wa sittīn wa [tis`a mi`a].“ (MKG 1886.168. folio_213)

“Ḥāccı Meḥmed has finished it whilst praying whole heartedly for lasting conquests and victories at the end of the month rabī` at-ṭānī in the year 961.“

Thus we are in the fortunate position of knowing the divan`s date of composition, which is 961/1554. What is striking here, however, is the time. A divan was a collection of poems produced during the poet`s whole life. All creations were collected and compiled according to the alphabet when a poet seemed to be reaching the end of his life. In 1550 at the age of fifty-six, Süleyman is reported to have been seriously ill, and this might have been the reason for commissioning the production of this divan, which is the oldest divan hitherto known. Further divans were commissioned, but not all seem to have been dated or numbered, and not all were produced as magnificent illuminated manuscripts. Moreover, it is not clear whether all were produced in the famous palace atelier, the *nakkaṣhane*. However, it is clear that some of the divans were designed by the calligrapher Mehmed Şerif, as indicated in the above mentioned colophon and that some were illuminated by Kara Memi, who is also mentioned in the colophon. The divans produced by these artists might be called sister manuscripts. According to this classification there are three

sister manuscripts in total. The two other sister manuscripts were completed in 1566,⁵ the year in which Sultan Süleyman passed away. The classification of the *divan*-manuscripts is highly complex and has never been investigated in detail. There are a number of inconsistencies that have yet to be taken into consideration. For example, it is striking that the *Third Divan* appeared first and that we have a *First*, a *Third* and a *Fifth Divan* only. There is evidence that 21 *divans* exist in total.⁶

In the 17th century the exporting of products of the *nakkāshane* was forbidden, but in the sixteenth century, this was not yet the case. Other *divans* of Sultan Süleyman are located outside Turkey, in Vienna, Cairo and perhaps in Warsaw. Unfortunately, we do not have any historical records regarding the route the *Third Divan* travelled before it was bought by the Museum of Art and Manufacture in Hamburg in 1886.

The beauty of words and prosody certainly pleased the ruler. However, it seems that not only aesthetic reasons encouraged their production. Therefore, let us turn to the content. In the poems of the *Third Divan*, Muslims and Christians are alluded to, and an acknowledgement of non-Muslims or their inclusion is favoured, as the following *ghazel* in the meter *remel* illustrates:

Akdı yaşum şu gibi ol serv-i bālādan yaña /
Kıldı dil-i murğ heves kūy-ı dil-ārādan yaña

Tır-i āh qaddūñı bük eyle bercācı kemān /
Kim güzeller mā‘il olur oğ ile yādan yaña

‘Arz kılsañ görseler bir kez senüñ taşvırüñi /
Varmaz idi ehl-i şirk her giz kiliseden yaña.

Bezm-i ğamda bilmek isterseñ eger nāluşlarum /
Döstum bir laḫza bir dem dut kulağ nādān yaña.

Nağd-ı cāña büseñi re‘y eyledüm dīdem didi /
Ey Muḫibbī ki şaқın uğrama buradan yaña.⁷

My tears flowed like water because of this gracious cypress /
The bird`s heart was longing to fly to the place of the beloved.
Arrow of sorrow bend yourself instead of the bow /
For the beauties are inclined to arrow and bow.

If you should wish, if they just once shall see your likeness /
[Then] never again Christians would go to the church.

If you want to hear in the gathering of grief my sounds of sorrow /
My friend, hold on for one moment and listen to me.

My eye said: I have seen how you kissed the soul /
Oh, Muḥibbī, do not dissociate from this place.⁸

Although the beloved is conventionally not explicitly outlined, the allusions evoke the divine beloved for whom the lyrical I longs for. As it is not easy to interpret Christianity in this poem as a trope, I would suggest taking the reference to Christians literally. According to this statement Christians were ignorant; they did not know the Prophet. If they did, of course, they would leave their religion and join the path of Islam. The poem thus promotes the superiority of Islam without attacking non-believers too harshly. By doing so, the poet-Sultan set himself up as an example to follow and appealed to his subjects to join his version of Islam.

A personal voice is difficult to discern in Muhibbi`s poems due to the fact that the personal script is so closely interwoven with a highly conventional arrangement of imagery.

With this in mind, allow me to present a poem of Muhibbi that offers a glimpse of the personality or the image of himself that the poet wanted to have transmitted. The following poem is about the dichotomy of power and powerlessness and the essence of life in the meter *remel*:

Şol deñlü urdı cevri-i oqın ol bī-vefā baña /⁹

Rahm ider oldı hālime bay ve gedā baña.
Sevdā-yı zülf başa getürdi belāları/
Her ne getürse başuma oldı sezā baña.

Ferhād u Keys eylese reşk hālime ne tan/
İklim derdi virdi bugün cün Hudā baña.

‘İşkuyla ‘adem mülkine gıtdıkde ey perī/
Olur ğamuyla miñnet u derdüñ ğıdā baña.

Cānuma bedel bula meĝer derd-i dilberi/
Etdikce kaçan dest-i ecel merħaba baña.

Bu nazm durur Bār-i Muħibbīniñ işidüb /
Taħsīnler ede cān ile ehl-i şafā baña.

The tyrannical arrow of the faithless hit me such /
That lords and beggars had sympathy for me.

The desire for the lock brought much misfortune to me /
Whatever it brought to me, I merited it.

No wonder if Ferhād and Keys envy me /¹⁰
Because today God submitted the suffering of the earth’s surface to me.

O peri, when with your love, I enter this weak dominion /
The sorrow and affliction for you become my fare.

When the hand of death greets me /

It will find instead of my heart the pain of one captivated.

This jewel-like composition of Muhibbi is heard /

By men of pure affection who laud me with a whole-heart.

A peri could be male or female. However, this poem evokes Hurrem Sultan, the great love and wife of Sultan Süleyman, who passed away in 1558. (Peirce 1993: 58-63) The self-praise sounds unfamiliar to us today, but it was very common at that time. Great poets such as Hafiz or Baki expressed it frequently. Ultimately, what this poem suggests is that the essence of life is the pain of love.

Conclusion

When we think about these poems and the history of the bloody campaigns against the Alevis, we are reminded of the polity of *al-tarcīb wa`l-al tarhīb*, the carrot and the stick, a prominent feature of medieval rule. (Crone 2014: 265) In the Ottoman 16th century, poetry provided a safe medium through which large segments of the society expressed and enjoyed mundane pleasures and spiritual exaltations. At the same time, the ambiguity of the poetry provided protection from moral or judicial persecution, even as it produced a certain intellectual pleasure. The ruler Süleyman used poetry for political purposes. Through his poems he appealed to the positive emotions of his subjects, such as devotion, admiration and love – emotions badly needed in a time where negative emotions abounded. In addition, he propagated a pious image of himself through his poems. He also used poetry to create verbal memorials, which may have served a unifying function.

A lot of research still has to be done concerning ruler poetry. As this paper suggests, Ottoman ruler poetry was not a mere aesthetic device. Ultimately, poetry did little to subdue conflicts, and Ottoman pragmatism reminds us not to overestimate the political impact of poetry. However, the brilliance of words amplified through melody put a sheen on reality and poetry became a source of great delight.

Note

1. Lowry, Heath W., *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*. New York 2003. 20, 43. H. Lowry even argues that in the 14th and 15th centuries, the term *gazi* denoted *akıncıs* (raiders). 46-52.
2. I owe this hint to Hedda Reindl-Kiel, who indicated that it was not exclusively used for Sultan Süleyman.
3. We owe Walter Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı a variety of translated poems and distiches. Andrews, Walter G., Kalpaklı, Mehmet, *The Age of Beloveds. Love and the beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society*. London 2005.
4. Even Coşkun Ak underlined a variety of Sultan Süleyman`'s skills; however he does not highlight Muhibbi`'s poetic brilliance in general.
5. Czygan, Christiane, "Power and Poetry. Kanuni Sultan Süleyan`'s Third Divan". Forthcoming.
6. According to other delineations there should be thirty three in number. As the criteria relevant for divans are not indicated, doubts arise about their divan-nature and as a first step we might assume them to be manuscripts only. www.yazmalar.gov.tr viewed 17.07.2014. Ak quotes 19 divans. Ak, Coşkun. *Muhibbî Divanı. İzahlı Metin Kanuni Sultan Süleyman*. Vol. 1. 2nd edition. Trabzon 2006. 31-39, with the Hamburg manuscript and the Konya manuscript (No. 3718) these are 21 in total. *Muhibbî Divânı. Bölge Yazma Eserler Nüshası*. (eds) Orhan Yavuz, Bekir Direkci et al. Konya 2014. 11-15.
7. MKG 1886.168. folio_3b_4a.
8. Translated by the author.
9. MKG 1886.168. folio_5b_6a.
10. Kurnaz, Cemal, "Ferhad". *İslam Ansiklopedisi*. Vol. 12. Istanbul 1995. 383. Flemming, Barbara?, "Madjnün Laylâ". *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Vol. 5. 2nd edition. Leiden 1986. 1105-1106.

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Mirrors for Princes

The Historical and Theoretical Heritage of a Genre and its Significant

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Abstract

The advice to rulers--which has been variously called "Mirrors for Rulers," or "The Mirrors for Princes" (*Mir at al-Muluk*)-- has been written by learned men, statesmen, men of affairs and secretaries. These authors has been familiar with the mechanisms of government and have often held influential administrative positions. They write in Islamic languages and attempt to advise rulers on various aspects of government. These writings reflect the dominate political, social, intellectual, cultural, and religious trends as well as norms of any given period. Consequently, these treaties provide valuable information about social, political and ethical code of the time. Moreover, the authors educate the population on their duties to king and country and implement political socialization of the masses based on the dominant political culture. The purpose of this paper is to focus on the significant role of Mirrors in legitimizing the political leaders at any given time as well as delegitimizing any form of resurgence or rebellion (*Fitna*).

Keywords: Mirrors for Princes, Political theory, Muslims Political Thought, Nasihat-nameh, Legitimacy, King and Kingship

Introduction

The advice to rulers--which has been variously called "Manuals of State craft," "Mirrors for Rulers," "the Treatise of Advice" (*Pandnamah*), "Advice on the Art of Governance," "the Covenant" (*Ahdnamah*), Admonition (*Mauizah*), "Books of Counsel for Rulers," "The Rules and Ordinance of Government" (*Rusum and Ahkam in Padshahi*), "The Book of Kings" (*Shah Nameh*), "The Rules of Kingship" (*Adab al-Muluk*), "The Virtue of Kings" (*Tuhfat al-Muluk*) or "The Mirrors for Princes" (*Mir at al-Muluk*)-- has been written by learned men (*Ulama Pl. for Alim*), statesmen (*Amirs*), men of affairs and secretaries (*Wuzara Pl. for Wazir*) . These authors through out history has been familiar with the mechanisms of government and have often held influential administrative positions. They write in Islamic languages and attempt to advise rulers on various aspects of government. These writings reflect the dominate political, social, intellectual, cultural, and religious trends as well as norms of any given period. Consequently, these treaties provide valuable information about social, political and ethical code of the time. Moreover, the authors educate the population on their duties to king and country and implement political socialization of the masses based on the dominant political culture. The Mirrors for Princes have been simulated, imitated over centuries by authors, statesmen and governments. These texts have been read by government officials as well as by the ordinary people, having influenced the thoughts, decisions, behavior and actions of both political leadership and the masses.

Unfortunately, authors and scholars in Islamic political thought have not given enough credit to the Mirrors and have not analyzed nor thoroughly examined the contents of this literature. This shortcoming is also evident in the writings of the new scholars on Islamic Political Thought. For example, in the History of the Persian Literature, the authors provide only a descriptive information about the Mirrors and their authors.¹ Danish Pazhuh provides only an annotated bibliography of related texts owned by Tehran University's library (Danish Pazhuh, 1988,P.213). In Arabic, the most erudict Shia scholar, Allamah Shikh Aqa Buzurg-i Tehrani also had compiled an annotated bibliography of all books in Persian and Arabic written by Muslims; included in his volumes is an annotated bibliography on "The Mirrors for Princes" as well. In English, there are four major texts on Islamic political thought: Political Thought in Medieval Islam by E. I. J. Rosenthal²; Studies in Muslim Political Thought and Administration by Haroon Khan Sherwani; State and Government in Medieval Islam by Ann K. S. Lambton; Modern Islamic Political Thought by Hamid Inayat. Rosenthal summarizes of this literature, Sherwani

describes *Siyasat Namah* of Nizam al Muluk and *Qabus Namah* of Kaikaus, and Lambton refers to *Nasihah al-Muluk* of Ghazzali in her discussion of this author. Inayat, on the other hand, includes no discussion of this literature at all.

Some of the many books on the Mirrors have been translated into English. In their introductions, translators of these texts have provided short reviews on this genre of literature. For examples, Darke in his translation of *The Siyasat-namah* (or *Siyar al-Muluk*) of Nizam al-Muluk translated from Persian; Bagley in his translation of Ghazzali's *Counsel of Kings* (*Nasihah al-Muluk*) from Persian and Arabic texts; Wickens in his translation of *Nasiri Ethics* (*Akhlaq-i Nasiri*) of Khaja Nasir al-Din Tusi from Persian; and finally Alvi in her translation of Mohammed Baqir Najm-i Sani's *Advice on the Art of Government* (*Mauizah Jahangiri*) from Persian. All of these translators discuss the importance of this genre and explain the authors' contribution to the literary field.

I see the Mirrors for Princes as comprehensive literary texts that offer a unique view on various aspects of Islamic administrations and kingship. Indeed, the Mirrors are the most decisive tool in political socialization of Islamic nations. In contrast to Alvi's views I believe that the Mirrors provide a systematic treatment of problems government and state-civil society relations. Certainly, the literary aspects of these texts should not overpower the socio-political aspects of these writings; however, translators and commentators on the Mirrors have repeatedly ignored the significance of these texts; that the Mirrors have legitimized the tyranny of governments and dictators throughout history (Sajida Sultana Alive, 1989, pp.1-2).

The purpose of this paper is to focus specifically on overcoming the aforementioned shortcoming in the literature. In other words, I will not review all aspects of this literature or present a comparative analysis of the numerous and varied interpretations of the Mirrors. Using an analytical approach, I will discuss the Mirrors for their significant role throughout history in legitimizing the political leaders at any given time as well as delegitimizing any form of resurgence or rebellion (*Fitna*).³

To accomplish this task, I will organize this paper in the following way. First, I will discuss the historical and theoretical heritage of the Mirrors, focusing on the authors' knowledge and information on other nations. This broad, multicultural approach is more effective in countries such as the Persian empires, the Ottoman empires or the Arab empires where people practice different religions or follow various nationality origins. The Mirrors do not limit themselves to only one generation, culture or religion but rather subject all populace to the same rules and

norms. Then I will elaborate on the Islamic education and on the beliefs authors' that appear in the introductory sections of the Mirrors. The shared Islamic faith provides a strong link between authors and readers.

Next, I will illuminate the authors' purpose in writing the Mirrors: that a general sense of Islamic responsibility has led them to write about the mutual responsibility between kings and subjects. This sense of duty is the major incentive for their writing and they expected no kind of reward from their kings. To these authors, their Islamic beliefs are the most important incentive to accomplish this task, and they have been extremely lucid on this point.⁴ Having elaborated on this purpose, then I will discuss the position of these authors, as strong believers highly educated in the importance of leadership and obedience to leadership. In the other words, these authors manipulate verses of the Quran, Tradition and history to justify the established norms and rules of the court in the following ways: 1) the presence of hierarchy in the system; 2) the distance between ruler and ruled; 3) the number of servants in the court for different purposes, even sexual affairs; 4) the military build up and its high expenditure to safeguard the king's regime; and 6) the parties and night life, as well as the behavior of king, which condones such as drinking and homosexuality on court.

Finally, I will discuss the attributes of a qualified king/leader based on the Mirrors and how the Mirrors support the idea that the king at any given time is entitled to these attributes. The, King should be the most qualified and most spiritual person for the position of leadership. In this light, the Mirror advises people to be good citizens, that is, obedient and submissive. Thus, people should be loyal to their leader even though he may be a tyrant and dictator.⁵

Sources

For this analysis, I have relied upon primary sources in both Persian and Arabic languages. I have also used scholarly commentaries on this particular genre, along with several English translations of the Mirrors. To what extent, if any, these English texts reflect both the explicit and implicit meaning of the original texts remains to be seen, obstacle including my translations.

Methodology and Scope

Using an analytical approach, I will examine the role that the Mirrors have played historically in legitimizing the leadership of a shah, King, Amir, Caliph or Sultan. I support my thesis with direct citations from the authors; however, I will not attempt to compare numerous approaches in writing or limit my research to any specific time period or author.

Authors of the Mirrors for Princes and Their Works

The writing of the Mirrors have been expanded during the reigns of dynasties in Islamic countries, especially in Arabia, Persia, India, Turkey, and Spain. Danish Pazhoh has classified the major of works on this topic as follows: 1) the manuals and advice of the Prophet and Imams to their disciples or representatives in different areas; 2) books on the characteristics and qualifications of Islamic leaders/caliphs; 3) texts on principles, norms, rules, and ordinances (*Rusum*) of government; 4) books on city government, mayors and police (*Shahrdari va Shahr bani* and *Hisba*); 5) books on Jihad (the Holy War), which mostly relate to jurisprudence (*fiqh*), but there are also separately written treatises.⁶ Probably due to the fear of foreign influence in their country, a number of religious scholars deliberately aligned themselves with the courts in order to better encourage the government in deporting foreigners. These scholars have also written numerous books on the Holy War (*Jahadiyyah*) in an attempt to support and protect the country from the invasion of outsiders. For example, in the midst of Iranian conflicts with the Russians and the British in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the demand for this type of work became great (Amin, Sayed Hassan., 1990, p 16-17).

The Mirrors for Princes

Historical Heritage

Most scholars in Islamic political thought identify Abdollah ibn-al-Muqaffa⁷ (Abdollah, the son of Muqaffa) as the founder of the Mirror genre, especially because he translated a famous book-- a collection of fables entitled *Kalilah wa Dimnah*--from Pahlavi (Middle Persian) into Arabic in the eighth century.⁸ However, this idea that Abdollah ibn-al-Muqaffa is the founder of this genre reflects the ignorance of authors in this area of study. I believe that this style of writing was not new at that time nor did Ibn Muqaffa solely represent this style of writing. There

are many concepts and principles in the Holy Books in general and the Quran in particular for rulers, advice to rulers, and commands to good manners and interdiction to bad manners (*Amr bi Maruf wa Nahy an al-Munkar*). For instance, Prophet Ibrahim's (*Ibrahim*) advice to Namrud (the empire of his time); Prophet Moses, (*Mosa*) advice to the Pharaoh; the Prophet Mohammed's letters to Amirs, kings, and Empires; and Imam Ali advice to his disciples--especially his famous will to his elder son, Imam Hasan, and Ali's letter to his disciples, Malik-i Ashtar, Amir of Kufa, and his representative in Sham, Uthman ibn Hanif—all indicate that this style of writing can be traced back to ancient times. In fact, this form of literature had its foundations in religions, and by extension in Islam, and has been a powerful argument to advise kings and rulers.⁹

Theoretical Heritage

There are many sources attributed to the development of the Mirrors including 1) Persian political culture and Zoroastrian beliefs; meaning that state and religion are twin brothers; 2) mysticism and Indian saints; 3) Greek philosophy; 4) theology and kalam; 5) the Jewish kingdom and other histories of ancient empires and dynasties, such as Assyrian; and 6) jurisprudence in religions, especially Islamic jurisprudence.¹⁰

Persian Political Culture and Zoroastrianism

The Persian political culture and Zoroastrian theology such as the Persian kingship and the "metaphysical entity of the king," i.e. the owner of the "Farr-i Izidi" have been influential in the theoretical foundation of the Mirrors for Princes.¹¹ As a matter of fact, there has been a close relationship between the dominate religion during the Maddees dynasty in Iran and the Zoroastrians. The rise of Ziroistar took place in northeast Iran about, 1000 years before the birth of Christ (Abdollahi, Firishtah, 1990, P 14-15). Some evidence supports the idea that not only Zoroastrian teachings and beliefs existed in that period, but also that the clergies (Muqha) were an extremely influential group in the political system. For example, the word "Dia-iku"--the name of the founder of Maddees dynasty-- is a Zoroastrian term meaning to confess and to swear ((Abdollahi, Firishtah, 1990, P 20-28).

Moreover, clergies (Muqha) retained this influence during the Hakhamanishian, and after the fall of this dynasty they established an independent government around Pers-i Police. During the reign of the Ashkans, these religious groups revolted and established the Sasaneeds Dynasty((Abdollahi, Firishtah, 1990, p.33). The oldest

table recovered in Hamadan from the Persian king says: "I am Ariya minah, the great king, king of kings, king of Persia. I am king based on the will of the great God who gave this kingship to me" (Abdollahi, Firishtah, 1990, P 38).

In another table from a Persian King (Arsham's son) he calls himself the great king, the king of kings, king of Persia, son of king Aria man. The king said that "the great God made me king...the great God gave throne and crown to me, based on will of God I have this country. Ariya mina asked God to give king, his family and country a long life(Abdollahi, Firishtah, 1990, P.38)."

We have more information from the Sasaneeds dynasty in several tables discovered in Fars (the capital of Persian Empire), showing the picture of a Sasaneeds king during his crowning. In one picture, the king receives the crown from God, and in another table the king gets the sign of kingship from God. Both God and king are on horses as their enemies are smashed under the feet of the horses (Abdollahi, Firishtah, 1990, P 91-93).

Based on information from these tables the king is at the top of the hierarchy in both secular and spiritual ways. Clergies all around the country are his representatives who indoctrinate others to the concept that King is the center of the world and the representative of God. The happiness of the king leads to better administration and management thus making all people happy. Moreover, the king has many attributes from God, such as justice and wisdom, and as long as he is alive and in power he has these attributes" (Abdollahi, Firishtah, 1990, P 172-173).

Indian Mysticism

Based on Indian culture animals' lives and their conversation resemble the real lives of human beings. The stories and fables in Kalilah and Dimnah are based on Brahmanism and Buddhism. Based on their metempsychosis, animals in different stages of transmigration reflect human attributes. This belief was transmitted to various countries and expanded into the Islamic empire as well. As Abu al-Maali writes, a Persian went to India to find a medicine that would give life to a dead person. Accordingly, he asked an Indian Brahman to help him find this medicine. The Brahman responded to him that what he was asking was actually a proverb in Indian popular culture in which the dead man refers to the ignorant person who can be revived by medicine as the admonishment of a wise man(Nasrollah Monshi, 1356, p.18). The Brahman tells him that he can find this advice in two major books: Kililah and Dimnah and Sand Bad. The envoy then found these books in India and brought them back to Iran for the king.¹²

Greek philosophy

Greek philosophy also has influenced the Mirror for Princes in theological and philosophical arguments. According to Danish Pazhuh, the letter of advice (pandnama) of Aristotle to Alexander and their letters plus the Greek Covenants have been translated into Persian and Arabic (Danish Pazhuh p. 214,1988). Danish Pazhu argues that Ghazali dedicated a Persian translation of the Letter of Alexander to Aristotle to Sultan Hossein in the fourteenth century. Most of the philosophical discussions of al-Farabi in his books *Civil Politics (Syasat-I Madaniya)* and *Civic Virtue (Madina Fazila)*, or Dawani's book; Jalali Ethics (*Akhlaq-i Jalali*) and Nasir al din Tusi, *Akhlaq-i Nasiri (Nasiri Ethics)* have been influenced by Plato and Aristotle's discussion.

Theology (Kalam)

The Mirrors raises similar arguments with jurists about the indispensability of kings, caliphs, and imams. Authors refer to the verses of the Quran that says: "Obey God, prophet and owners of authority (*Ulul al-Amr*). To Mirrors for Princes, the owners of authority are kings, amirs and caliphs and submission to leaders is a must for every Muslim.

For example, the opening section of Sabzwari's *Dastur al-Wozara* is very close to theological texts when he discusses about leadership. After praising God and the Prophet Mohammad, he describes all the attributes of leaders and Imams as supported in Shia, believes that his present ruler, possesses all of these qualifications, and that in theological books he could learn about the twelve Imams. To Sabzwari, the king is a just, caring leader of the military and army; the perfect man of the time (*Insan-i Kamil*); the candle of prophet family; the best of the Prophet Muhammad's family; the most knowledgeable person in both theology and jurisprudence; and the leader from God based on the rule whom is leader he is also leader (Sabzwari, 1345, 17-21).

Jewish Kingdom

The king who is the symbol of central authority over the population exemplifies the property, fertility, and security of a country. The terms "mlk," "melek," and "maliku" are Hebrew words similarly used in Arabic and Persian. This term has had a significant influence in the history of the Jewish community, even though the kingship in Jewish history has been shorter than its neighbors. According to Freeman, *mlk* means owner, or head of the institution of state that controls or provides economy, taxation, and security. He also notes that these three terms are

used for king, kingship/reign, and counselor respectively, in the Hebrew Bible. Another term from the Bible "*sa,r*" which means official and prince, and "*sarru*" means king. In the Persian language, the words *malik* and *malik* are used as king and owner as well, and *sar* is used as head, referring to the top of the hierarchy, especially a military position. Another term, *nagib*, means a person designated by God for leadership, and *melek* means designated by the people.

Israel has been described as a theocracy ruled by the heavenly king, who endowed various earthly judges with charismatic power to deliver the community from foreign oppression.¹³ Some important factors in Hebrew beliefs have influenced the Mirrors writings tremendously. First, the justification and legitimization of the king's rule was of paramount importance, and their ideologies and attitudes reflect this belief. Second, regardless of the original beliefs about the kingship of Yahweh, this concept has had significant implication for power and authority in Israeli states. Third, many believe that the authority and power of kings corresponds to the Yahowa kingship. According to author, finally, many verses in the Bible show that kings use religious beliefs and attitudes to legitimate their authority.¹⁴

Jurisdiction

In Islam, individuals and society are not studied isolated from each other; rather, the individual responsibility is discussed his relation to the society. Due to this epistemology, enforcement of Islamic law (both individual and collective actions) heavily depends on such factors as 1) the socialization of people, 2) the sense of responsibility to laws among masses, and 3) the exhortation to good and restraint from evil. The Muslim jurists leave responsibility to Islamic governments to enforce these tasks.

The authors in Mirrors developed a guidelines that attempted to cover all three aforementioned factors; however, the major the practical principle in Islam--in *furu-I Din* (i.e., the exhortation to good and restraint from evil) was what persuade them to write those books. Some preconditions make an individual feel obligated to enforce the exhortation to good and restraint from evil. The person who wants to accomplish this task needs 1) intellect, 2) maturity, 3) power, 4) capability, and 5) knowledge. Due to these required qualifications, then all authors of the Mirrors assert that they are knowledgeable and familiar with the Quran, the tradition and history of Islam, and the rule of the administration.

In addition, jurists have developed three different steps in the implementation of the exhortation to good and restraint from evil. The first level is advice and acceptance in/by heart; love of obedience to God, and hate of disobedience. The next is talking about these ideas and putting them in words. The final step is to bring these ideas into action and practice. Again, the advice and admonishment of rulers is a response by these authors to their responsibility as strong Muslims and believers.

This raises important questions about the extent of the responsibility of believers to stop wrong doing in the community, to practice good manners and, more importantly, who has the power to impose penalties. In order to prevent anarchy in societies, jurists leave this duty to leaders, caliphs, and Imams. In this discussion, what is the responsibility of leadership and justification of power for imposing penalties. Authors of the Mirrors have applied these arguments to kings, transmitting the duties and responsibilities of Imams and caliphs to kings and Amirs.

Methodology

Authors of the Mirrors have used three different methods in their writings: 1) the philosophical discussion, 2) objective social arguments, and 3) religious and theological arguments. In the first approach, depending on philosophy and logic, the authors have supported their arguments. Results of this approach do not necessarily fit the reality of life. Moreover, there may be some contradictions among authors in their conclusions as interpreted by wise men, experienced persons, and spiritual or preceptor elders.

The second approach is based on the observation of activities in social life. Depending upon the aphorisms of wise men, experienced persons, and spiritual or preceptor elders, as found in testaments, announcements, famous sermons and letters, they describe the social and behavioral code of the nation. In this approach, historiography as well as legend, tales or fables are the major format of the writings.

In the third method, the authors have used theological arguments based on verses of the holy books, sermons, and advice of prophets and religious leaders, as well as their social behavior and manners. To advocates of this approach, the holy books and the message of the messengers are the final word, valid and eternal throughout the life of mankind.

I find it difficult to classify authors into specific categories. Authors of Mirrors have used all three different methods of writing in their books, but to what

extent they use each method is a matter of degree. For example, Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, Sultan al-Ulama Amili, Khatun-i Amili, and Davani mostly preferred the first approach, whereas al-Jahiz, Ibn Muqaffah, and Raqib chose the second approach, with Nasir al-din Tusi following the third.

Style of Writing

The Mirrors have not followed any specific format in their writing. These texts have used various sources, including fables, colloquial proverbs, anecdotes, apologies, historical events, social experiences, philosophical discussions, theological arguments, and narrative traditions. The principal characters are portrayed as animals, birds, fish, or human beings. The authors use different formats in writing, such as verse and poetry, prose, rhymes, paronomasia, abridgment, brevity, succinctness, metaphor, irony, and metonymy; however, they do not limit themselves to a specific format or to a specific source. This flexibility has given them the advantage of going back and forth from one subject to another to make their writings stronger and more interesting. In addition, this flexibility has helped them to develop discussions without having to consider the chronological sequence of events. There are, however, some major problems in their writings. First, the Mirrors have rarely been documented with sources of their information. Second, the authors' interpretations of Quranic verses may be questionable. Third, their sources about historical events may not be reliable. Finally, the writers may not be sufficiently educated to recognize weak traditions from strong ones.¹⁵

Their Importance

In contrast with philosophical or jurisdictional writings, the Mirrors are pragmatic texts that have an important role in legitimizing governments.¹⁶ To the Mirrors, the state is Islamic and the ruler a Muslim. Kings are seen as shadows of God, whose letters are the most important written documents after the word of God and the prophets. The authors of the Mirrors have endorsed the character of the state as Islamic and have advised people to obey the rules, therefore, these writings are useful during times of crisis in the state, a change of dynasty, an outside threat, or inside resurgence.

They do not however, address any form of resistance, uprising, or revolt even though the ruler may be tyrannical. The Mirrors have been based on the writers' first-hand knowledge of the workings of administrative apparatus, expressing their

opinion on how a ruler might be successful during crises. Indeed, governments have faced different problems in terms of nature and magnitude at different times and places. The Mirrors have not only offered solutions to these problems but have elaborated ideas on statecraft based on the conditions. Yet, to what extent, if any, their solutions are ethical is questionable.

Purpose of Writing

The Mirror may use different approaches, but they have only one goal; to justify the theory of kingship and legitimate the authority of kings. In his introduction, Nizami Arudi grasped the main idea of all Mirrors authors:

I, Nizami, as an honest and special person have supported this government for a long time. Consequently, I would like to show my loyalty and trustworthiness to this dynasty. I have been asked to write about rulership, with incentive reasons, what is kingship, what is its sources, why we need to honor it, and why we need to accept it and how these positions from the beginning have been together: God, Prophecy, and king who must be obeyed (Nizami Arudi, 1348, p. 5-6).

Another idea behind this writing, used by some authors such as Ibn Muqaffa in his translation on Kallilah and Dimnah, explicitly mentions that “these stories are practical admonishment and moral codes (not idealistic) and used in training princes in their manner of leadership.” Other authors have sought the same goal and have mentioned this purpose in different languages. For example, Abu al-Maali Nasrullah Munshi, translates Kallilah and Dimnah from Persian into Arabic to elaborate and illuminate the attributes of the great king Bahram Shah, informing the public of his attributes. Later, he emphasizes that if the country had the power to speak, only the country was sufficient to tell of the grace of the present king (Nasrollah Monshi, 1964, p. 10-11).

Authors as Introduced by Themselves

The Mirrors become even more decisive when authors give more information about themselves, as strong Muslims and believers who are knowledgeable about the Quran and traditions of the Prophet, learned and educated persons who are familiar with the history of Islam and Islamic administration. They may also inform the people about moral codes and ethics. In the past, authors had attempted to demonstrate their familiarity with three major pillars of the Islamic state: 1) the community; 2) the state as protector of the community and Islam, and 3) the

enforcement of the Shari 'a. They have then advised rules to follow their guidelines for the well-being of both the ruled and the rulers. Al-Ghazali, in the prologue of his *Nasihah al-Muluk*, introduces himself as "The Shaykh, the Imam, the Ornament of the Religion, Glory of the Imams, Proof of the Faith" (Bagley, 1964, p.2-3; Ghazali, 1361,p.1).

Nizam al-Mulk Tusi mentions the reason for composing his book was that the fortunate Sultan Malik Shah, may God illuminate his proof, gave order to nobles, elders, and wise men to give thought to the condition of country and advise him about the principles that have been ignored by him to be considered based on Shari 'a. as he then mentions:

Each one wrote what occurred to him on this subject and presented it to the Sublime Judgment. The Sultan did not like any except of the Wazir Nizam al Mulk; Sultan Malik Shah said these chapters have been written exactly as I desired; there is nothing necessary to added to its chapters. (Nizam al-Mulk Tusi,2002, p.2-3).

Or Nizami Aruzi in his discussion about the qualification of the secretaries and poems implicitly addresses his knowledge where he notes:

[That] poet must be of tender temperament profound in thought, sound in genius, a powerful thinker, subtle of insight. He must be well versed in many diverse sciences, and eclectic amidst divergent customs; for as poetry is of advantage in every science, so is every science of advantage in poetry (Nizami Arudi, 2012, p.471).

Major themes and Premises

The major themes in the Mirrors regardless of differences in languages and degrees of emphases on the subjects, are identical; the authors attempt to legitimize the government and follow the rules.¹⁷

Generally speaking, we can classify major themes in the Mirror in the following ways. The first subject and the opening section of the Mirrors deals with theology, including knowledge about God, his sovereignty, and the creation of the world. The second theme focuses on affection for the family of the Prophet and his family, including the purpose of prophecy and the mutual relation between the people and the prophets. These two sections are considered the foundation because the major topic of these sections is leadership. The position of the Caliphate is more or less discussed within the broader issue of the leadership of rulers, kings, and Amirs. In this third section, authors elaborate on the organization of government and the

methods of statecraft, administration and behavioral code, companionship of kings, service of the king and the mutual duty of ruler and ruled upon. The fourth concerns justice, including the responsibilities of king and judges, pardon and punishment, rights of subjects, and results of injustice. The fifth issue in the Mirrors examines the social and natural sciences, such as medicine, astronomy, geometry, and literature. Other included the community and the rights of minorities and the economy; commerce, taxation, and financial affairs; social and political culture; ideology and education; family, marriage, and friendship within and between; anecdotes, historic narration, and traditions. The final section covers military affairs; including protection of the territorial integrity of the Muslim community and the Holy War (jihad) against enemies of Islamic countries.

Kings and kingdom

The praise of God, his omnipotence, his glory, and his powers of creativity is the major theme of the opening section of the Mirrors, after which the authors express great respect for the Prophet Muhammad. The introductory section contains a strong message to readers that the authors are strong believers.

The authors assert that the Creator (God) is rational and that the universal logic of cause and effect dominate the world. The domination of rationality in creation supports the indispensability of leadership. In the Mirrors, God is the first king, and the prophets are his agents. Then, the administration and governance of the people is left to a qualified believers that is, Caliphates and Kings. As Nizami Arudi writes:

Praise, thanks and gratitude to that King who, by the intervention of the Cherubic and Angelic Spirits, brought into being the world of Return and Restoration, and by means of that world, created and adorned the World of Growth and Decay, maintaining it by the commands and prohibitions of the Prophets and Saints, and restraining it by the swords and pens of Kings and Ministers. (Nizami Arudi, 1968, p.1).

The Mirrors argue that, after the Prophet, there ought to be a powerful ruler with exalted authority to maintain order and strengthen Islam, regulate activities, provide a good life for believers, and establish peace and security. To the writers, the temporal sovereign is necessary for the survival of the community and promulgation of Islam. As they write, rulers are successors to the Prophet Muhammad, and kings are the shadow of God on earth. A piece of advice from Ardishir is: "There is no king without men of distinction, and there are no men of distinction without

wealth, and there is no wealth without subjects and there are no subjects without justice." (Danish Pazuh, 1989, P. 220). We need to bear in mind that The qualities of kings as the heads of society are ambiguous, and the authors do not clarify this subject.

To the Mirrors authors, the presence of the king is crucial for the well-being of the community. Based on verses of the Quran, the purpose of prophecy is to enforce spirituality and justice through broad channels from teaching and education to military force. (Quran, Hadid, 24). They argue that the glory of Islam is accomplished with kingdom and that military force eases rebellion: therefore, the king is essential in both secular and spiritual ways.

Because, the kingship is a grace (Farr-i Izidi), God honors the person with certain qualifications as king.¹⁸ the relationship between God and king is very strong; thus, God helps kings overcome enemies in war and protects them from the conspiracies of hypocrites. No one, even the most hard working person, is entitled to the title of king without the will of God; and if a person earns this authority without the will of God, he will not stay in power for a long term. To Mirrors, author Sabi, the Caliphate is the continuation of prophecy, that is, the greatest and highest position in terms of worth and glory, which must be respected and honored by the people. As Sabi exhort the reader:

By reviewing the history I find out that our leader, our majesty, patron and master, al-Imam al-Qaim bi amrullah, whom God blesses his majesty is the sole leader and the great representative of God in the earth without any doubt or question. He is the greatest person who attain his will and pursues his goal. Everybody praises him and accepts his gratitude. His attribution is too much to number and unimaginable. God knows who is qualified to be his representative in the earth and be leader. He honors a person for kingship whom is the most powerful. God chooses the wise, religious and God-fearing persons as the king to make religion be safe and help people to have a faithful and spiritual life (Sabi, 1977, Pp.3-4).

In his introduction, Ibn Muqaffah argues about Anu Shirwan the Persian King :

The great God honored just, good fortune and knowledgeable king, Anu Shirwan whom God lighten his burden, with intellect and gave him great justice and wisdom in discipline and managing affairs, acknowledged his behavior and moral codes with approval, to have most courage to learn theology and jurisprudence to the extent that

nobody was comparable with him. In terms of kingship, he expands his authority over most of the countries and exterminates tyranny around the world, and whatever is necessary to magnify he does. (Nasrollah Monshi,1964,29)

To Ibn Muqaffah, religion (din) and kingship (mulk) are twins and kings shadow of God. He argues that justice, growth, wealth, unity, and welfare are due to his sovereignty. The position of people in the society is based on their qualifications; otherwise both secular and spiritual affairs would cease. (Nasrollah Monshi, 19,p.4; Danesh Pazhoh,1988,p.)

Thaqalibi asserts that God associates obedience of himself with obedience of his Prophet and kings. To support this idea, Thaqalibi refers to verses of the Quran where God says: "O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the prophet and those in authority from among you--Kings."¹⁹

In the introduction of Dastur al Wozara, the author writes about Abu'l-Hasan All ibn Mas'ud thusly:

Honor to our king, the learned, just, divinely-strengthened, heaven-aided and ever-victorious monarch, help of Islam and Muslims, exterminator of the infidels and polytheists, subdue of the heretical and the forward, chief of hosts in the worlds, Pride of Kings and Emperors, Protector of mankind, beauty of the Faith and Glory of the Nation, Controller of the, noblest of mankind. He is the most excellent of the kings of the age in nobility, pedigree, judgment, statesmanship, justice, equity, valor and generosity, as well as in the enriching of his territory, the raising of armies, the safe-guarding of the people, the securing of the roads, and the tranquilizing of the realms, by virtue of upright judgment, clear understanding, strong resolve and firm determination. (Tabaresi, 1977,Pp.17-18).

Justice is recognized as the most important aspect of leadership in the Islamic political thought, but the discussion in the Mirrors is very interesting. Based on sentences from Ardishir (the founder of the Sassiness dynasty), the kingship and enforcement of authority without discipline and justice is impossible; otherwise they would never have been in power. This becomes the most powerful argument for legitimacy of leadership used in the Mirrors. The implication of this belief is endorsement of their leader as the most qualified with the best attributes for leadership. As Nasrullah Munshi, the translator of the Kalilah wa Dimna to Arabic has written about Bahram Shah:

Praise to God who honored people with a most just, gracious, merciful, determined, smart, and the greatest king. He provides reputation and trust for society and righteousness for state. He is king of kings, most honored king in the world, the highest rank in secular and religion, conqueror of kings and rulers, agent of the order of God, acting based on the will of God, glory of Islam and Muslims, quelling of enemies and unbelievers, abolished the enemies of God, shadow of God all around the world. He is founder of justice and comfort, protector of country, resemble the word of God is the top whom God makes greater his helpers and expands his authority (Nasrollah Monshi, 1978, Pp. 8-9).

Ibn Khaldun in *Moqaddama* develops a similar argument about leaders, asserting that power and authority is natural and particular to human beings and enforced by group feeling (*asabya*). This characteristic of human beings separates men from other creations such as the animals, helping man to be rational and inclined toward good. To Ibn Khaldun, the group feeling and personal qualifications endorse political authority for the members of a group or tribe.

Politics and kingdom, Ibn Khaldun argues, administrate public affairs. The leader is the representative of God among people and implements God's rules and laws. Accordingly, whoever has group feeling and good qualities is qualified to be caliph and king on the earth. As Ibn Khaldun claims, teaches us that studying the life and qualifications of whoever has authority over people they are entitled to a number of praiseworthy qualities. To him, the king possesses group feeling and works to gain control over many lands and nations. He also has an eager desire for goodness. He says:

Generosity; the forgiveness; tolerance toward the weak; hospitality toward guests; patience in adverse circumstances, faithful fulfillment of obligations; respect for the religious law and jurists; great respect for old men, teachers, and sermons; acceptance of the truth in response to those who call to it, fairness to and care for those who are too weak to take care of themselves; humility toward the poor, attentiveness to the complaints of supplicants, fulfillment of the duties of the religious law; avoidance of fraud, cunning, deceit, and similar things. These are the qualities of leadership, which (persons qualified for royal authority) have obtained (Ibn Khaldun, 1967, P.272-276).

However, Ibn Khaldun is deterministic when he asserts that the well-being of Shah and the country depend on the will of God and that royal authority as a good thing is a gift from God. As he asserts:

We know that God granted people royal authority and gave it to them. In contrary, when God wants a nation to be deprived of royal authority, he causes [its members] to commit blameworthy deeds and to practice all sorts of vices. God creates whatever he wishes, and his is the choice (Ibn Khaldun, 1967, P.275) .

To Ferdawsi, kingship is patrimonial and inherited; the power transfers from father to son. The person who does not possess this qualification does not bring wealth, victory, and happiness to the country. The descent and origin of the king is a person of intelligence, who is well-known, just, wise, powerful, religious, fair, open-minded, and gracious (Moghadam, 1350, 87-110).

Ferdawsi asserts that there is a close relationship between king and the well-being of the country and people. The stability, security, happiness, of the people depend on the king. He protects the country; and any problem for him brings difficulty and riot to the people and the country. The people are body and king is the head, even as the army is the ship and the king is the captain. Due to this indispensability, the people must protect the king and sacrifice themselves for him. (Moghadam, 1350, 110-124).

Ferdawsi believes that faithful a king supports religion and his manner, action and behavior is based on Shari 'a. the king is considered a strong believer, an idea that has developed through kingly claims about religion to support believers and advise unbelievers. The king keeps the faith, follows the rules and orders of religion, and advises people to do so. In addition, the king supports the peoples' relationship with God, with or without mediator, as well as, their sole responsibility to God's court (Moghadam, 1350, 149).

The activities of kings in the Book of Kings (Shahnama), Ferdawsi claims, include the following: 1) war with Ahriman and the Devil, unbelievers, and hypocrites and 2) efforts for religious purposes, including constructing temples, supporting clergy and knowledgeable people, advising people about religion, teaching and educating people, creating a sense of religiosity among people, and following the right path, that is, God.

To the Mirrors authors, kings never forget God and are God fearing as well. They believe in the day of judgment. They ask God his forgiveness, gave thanks for his mercy, and recognized his support to over come the devil. They praise the

happiness of God, whose law and order is above every thing. They always pay homage to him and ask his help in any difficulty. They consider themselves strong believers and ask all people to obey God. Moreover, they seek the happiness of God and his righteousness, and to keep their promises and faith. They abstain from bloody shield conflict, and animosity, by they defeated enemies to righteousness. They are also harmless and self-sustaining. Above all, they believe in God and his Prophet and advise the next generation to obey God and keep the faith. In fact, they believe their power, kingdom, and success are all due to the help of God. (Moghadam, 1350, 150).

The victory of the king is due to his Farr-i Izidi and to the help of God. Before fighting in wars with enemies, kings asked God to help them on the battlefield. To them, the victory belonged to God, and any victory was because of the help of God and his grace. (Moghadam, 1350, 136-139).

The Mirrors for Princes Versus Islamic Code of Conducts

In spite of the presence of a strong Islamic spirit in the Mirrors, there are many implicit or explicit unethical and anti Islamic codes of conduct in the Mirrors. Sadi has narrated his difficult time when he wanted to leave his own lover, a beautiful boy alone whom he had sweet dreams. The advice of Qubus ibn Woshmgir to his son about purchasing slaves for any purpose, even for sexual desire is disgusting in Islam, but the author covers material about the qualifications of a good slave (especially male) based on different purposes such as; for cooking, cleaning,...and sexual affairs. Qubus ibn Woshmgir in Quabos Nama insisted on the beauty of slave for sexuality;

Now let me describe to the best of my ability what is essential in the purchasing of slaves, what their good and bad points are, so that they may be known to you. There are three essentials in the buying of slaves; first is the recognition of their good and bad qualities whether external or internal; second is the awareness of diseases, whether latent or apparent, by their symptoms; third is the knowledge of the various classes and the defects and merits of each. When you buy a slave, you may take and lay him down and inspect everything. When you see beauty in the eyes and eyebrows, delicacy in the nose, sweetness in the lips and teeth and freshness in the skin, then buy the slave possessing them without concerning yourself over the extremities of the body (Qabus Woshmgir, 1997,Pp.111-119).

The rules and manners of drinking is another subject covered in a section of the Mirrors whenever writers discuss the manners of drinking and night life based on rank and position in the party. Qabus ibn Woshmgir has written to his son that he could not tell him not to drink because he is young, and people around him will encourage him to drink. But he advised him accordingly that if a man has a poor head for wine, he should drink little (Qabus Woshmgir, 1997, Pp.67-70).

Interesting enough, the manner of drinking is also discussed in the writing of the great Shia theologian, Nasir al-din Tusi says that:

When wine is brought on at a gathering, one should sit next to the most virtuous of one's fellow-men, taking care not to sit beside anyone noted for inconsiderate behavior. The (atmosphere of the) party should be kept agreeable with witty anecdotes and attractive poems having some appropriateness to time and circumstance. Sourness of countenance and a mood of depression should be avoided. If a man be the junior member of the gathering, by age or in rank, he should occupy himself with listening. If a musician be present, one should not embark upon the using of stories. Let a man not interrupt the discourse of his boon companion (Tusi, 1978, p.234).

Tusi in the revised version of his books talks about the hostile environment that enforced him to accommodate with the dominate rules and norms. But, it is questionable why he did not edit this section of his book in revised edition.²⁰

Resurgence and Rebellion

The obedience of Kings is the major topic in the Mirrors, which discredit any form of rebellion. To the Mirrors authors whoever died as rebels against the king and created disunity among the people would die as an unbeliever. Whoever obeys the king, indeed, obeys God, and whoever ignores the kings' orders obeys evil and the demon.²¹

The Mirrors argue that the best believer in God is the most unconditionally obedient to the king, both in public and private, in heart and in words; any dishonesty to a king is dishonesty to all human beings, being damaging to religion and illegitimate in this world and at the day of judgment. (Nasrollah Monshi,,Pp. 5-7). This form of argument prevades many sections of the Mirrors. If kings oppose the way of righteousness and justice, people must pray for them to become right, or they must become spiritual enough that God may guide them. Indeed, the hearts of

kings and all creatures are in the hands of God. However, tyrannical and wrongdoing kings must also be obeyed unconditionally. Protecting themselves is essential for people, who should not make themselves objects of kings' wrath.²² For example Ibn Khaldun in the chapter, "Cases of Revolutionaries from among the Common People and of Jurists who Undertake to Reform Evil," observes:

Many religious people who follow the ways of religion come to revolt against unjust Amirs. They call for a change in, and prohibition of, evil (practices) and for good practices. They hope for a divine reward for what they do. They risk being killed, and most of them actually do perish in consequence of their activities as sinners and unrecorded, because God had not destined them for such activities. The Prophet Muhammad said: "Should one among you see evil activities, he should change them with his hand. If he cannot do that, he should change them with his tongue. And if he cannot do that, he should change them with his heart." (Ibn Khaldun, 1969,p.213)

People are of the opinion that those who keep their distance from the king and do not obey him, go astray and obey Satan. This person will be punished in this world and in the day after. The presence of the disobedient and disloyal person is discovered and noticed by the king through his angels, Surrush. God imposes on him a difficult life, with punishment revealed by his intent.

There exists no difference between the order of God and the King. Whoever ignores the order of the king commits a disobedience of God, being a sinful person with a bad future who will be shamed and blamed by the people. This person is a dishonest hypocrite who has cheated both God and the people and who should stay away from the faith. The results of life either punishment or happiness in both worlds-- depends on submission to the orders of the king. (Ibn Khaldun, 1969,p.363-369).

The disobedient person is a hateful being who keeps his distance from the right path, God's path, close to Evil's order. God chooses the king who is safeguarded and protected by God. Enemies of the king have difficult lives in this world and in the other world. Angels help the king to know and recognize his enemies from friends, obedience from disobedience, believers from unbelievers, sinful from loyal and honest person. The king asks God to punish his enemies. With God as the ultimate judge, the king asks God to punish his enemies and whatever happens to the enemy is considered the will of God. (Ibn Khaldun, 1969,p.62)

Al Mawardi argues that fighting inside an Islamic country can be managed against three different groups: renegades, oppressors or public offenders. Al-Mawardi, same as other political thinkers, consider the security and integrity of central government as the major determining factor for punishment of renegades, oppressors or public offenders. The renegades refers to certain apostatise people who converting to another religion after they have been judged to be Muslims. To him there is no punishment for renegades, as long as they live in a remote area and do not threat the security and integrity of central government and respect the law of land (Al-Mawardi, 2000, p.117-132)

The second group, Mawardi asserts, are people who engage in armed highway robbery, plunder, murder, and attacks or fighting brigands and highwaymen. He considers these actions as fighting against God and His Messenger as well as spread corruption throughout the world. To Al-Mawardi, their punishment is death penalty. The third group are the Muslims who rebels against the central government and in his word "adopt an innovation of their own". As far as these group of people are in isolated places and act as individual (i.e. there are not a major threat to central government) they should not fought.²³

Conclusion

The advice to rulers, or "the Mirrors for Princes," has been written by theologians, jurists, learned men, statesmen, men of affairs and secretaries. These authors have throughout history been familiar with the mechanisms of government and have often held influential administrative positions. They write in Islamic languages, attempting to advise rulers on various aspects of government. These writings reflect the dominate political, social, intellectual, cultural, and religious trends, as well as the norms of any given period. Consequently, these treatises provide valuable information about social, political, and ethical codes of the time. Moreover, the authors seek to educate the population on their duties to king and country and to implement political socialization of the masses based on the dominant political culture. Unfortunately, authors and scholars in Islamic political thought have not given enough credit to the Mirrors and have not analyzed or thoroughly examined the contents of this literature.

I believe that, the Mirrors for Princes are comprehensive literary texts that offer a unique view on various aspects of Islamic administrations and kingships. The Mirrors are the most decisive tool in the political socialization of the nations. Moreover, the Mirrors provide a systematic treatment of the problems of

government and state-civil society relations. Most importantly, the Mirrors for Princes have played a significant role through history in legitimizing political leaders at any given time and in delegitimizing any form of resurgence or rebellion (*Fitna*).

Note

1. For more information on this issue see: Safa. Zabihullah, The History of the Persian Literature (Iran: University of Tehran, ?); Zabihullah Safa Ganjineh Sukhan. (Iran: University of Tehran, ?); and Edward Brown. The Literary History of Persia (V.1-4) (New York: Combridge University Press, 1964-69).
2. Rosenthal, E. I. J. Political Thought in Medieval Islam (New York:Cambridge University Press,1962).
3. Hansen wehr in A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, translates "*Fitna* " as riot and discord. But this term and its derivation are used in Quran in five major denotation such as: 1) test, 2) seduction, 3) torment, 4) polytheist and idolization and 5) stray (Tafsir -i Nimonah, Vol. 2 Pp.17-18).
4. Indeed the kings and leaders are the primary, or the only, financial support for these works.
5. The Mirrors do not address the duty/duties of the people when the king is not just and qualified for this position. But, the Mirrors advice kings to be harsh on any form of disobedience from people and encourage them to build a strong army to over come any form of resurgence.
6. "An Annotated Bibliography on Government and Statecraft." Mohammad Taqi Danishpazhuh Translated and adapted by Andrew Newman, Manuals of Statecraft (Dastur-i Shahryari).Pp 213-239.
7. Abdollah ibn-al-Muqaffa has been known as Zandiğ and the member of Zinadiqah. This title used for people who regardless of their claim in public, are not really Muslim. There are two major reasons why these people introduce themselves as Muslim. First, they were hypocrite and they wanted to damage Islam from within. Second, due to the discrimination against non-Muslim and non-Arab people by dynasties, they hide their belief and introduce themselves as Muslim to have

opportunity to have higher social as well as political status in the society and become close to courts of leaders.

8. The Kalilah wa-Dimnah also known as the Panchatantra or the Five Books and was originally written in Sanskrit. Its translation into Persian was by the order of Anu Shierwan, Persian King of the Sasaneed Dynasty. (Mujtaba Minavi. Introduction into the Translation of the Kalilah wa-Dimnah by Nasrollah Monshi, Shikat-I Sahami-I Oufset, Tehran: 1964) P. I.
9. If in Islam there have been historically clear articulated rules for statecraft, then question becomes why did the kings and Amirs borrow this method from other sources than Islamic sources and from non-Muslim nations? The Caliphs, successors to the prophet Mohammed kept their distance from sources of knowledge, the city of knowledge (*Madina al-Ilm*), and the family of the prophet (*ahl-al Bayt*). Caliphs were not true believers to practice Islam, nor they did have knowledge about Islam. Thus, the Caliphs were not qualified to represent true Islam or capable to debate about Islam with unbelievers, especially Materialists and Jews, who were mostly armed with Greek methodology, logic, and philosophy. To overcome these weaknesses and possible humiliation in the eyes of strong, educated, and powerful Muslims; to legitimate their leadership among the masses; and to delegitimize any resurrection, especially by the supporters of the family of prophet Mohammed, as well as to understand the language of debate, they were looking for solutions to these shortcomings. They asked scholars to translate books and various texts on the art of statecraft, the rules and ordinances of government, and the rules for debates (relating specifically to logic and philosophy) from other languages, especially from the Greek into Arabic. In fact, the renaissance of translation was at peak in the reign of Harun al-Rashed and his son Mamun, who established the "House of Wisdom" (*Dar-al hikma*) founded public schools around the country, which are called *Nizamiyyah* by Shafai Wazir Nizam al-Mulk showing his intense hostility to the administration of these schools against Shia. The best source on this topic is the writings of the distinguished Islamic scholar, Allama Murtiza Askari. His provocative books are as follows: 'Abd Allah ibn Saba'; *bahth wa-tahqiq fi ma katabahu al- mu'arrikhun wa-al-mustashriqun `an Ibn Saba' wa-qisas Islamiyah ukhra mundhu al-qarn al-thani al-Hijri hatta al- yawm* (al-Qahirah : Matbu`at al-Najah, 1961/62); 'Abd Allah ibn Saba', *wa asatir ukhra* (Baghdad: Kuliyyah Asul al-Din, 1968); 'Abdul-lah Ibn Saba and other myths (Tehran : Islamic Thought Foundation, 1995); *Khamsun wa-mi'at sahabi mukhtalaq*. (Tehran: Majma` `Ilmi-i Islami, 2011); *Ma`alim al-madrasatayn: buhuth al-madrasatayn fi al-sahabah wa-al-imamah*. (al-Qahirah: Maktabat Madbuli, 1993); 'Ayshah dar tarikh-i Islam (Tihran.: Majma` `Ilmi-i Islami, 1992); 'Abdul-lah Ibn Saba and other myths (Tehran : Islamic Thought Foundation, 1995), and *Naqsh-i `Ayshah dar tarikh-i Islam* (Tehran: Majma` `Ilmi-i Islami, 1992).

10. In reviewing the Mirrors, authors have neglected the sources and heritage's of these texts. Despite their claim, the Mirrors are not an extension of Persian political culture into Arabs. Although the Persian point of view on leadership has had some influence on the content of the Mirrors, it is not the primary source nor the only one. In addition, Persian has been influenced by other nations and cultures. For example, the idea that the king is chosen by God is common among many nations and not limited to Persia.
11. For example, Saddar Nasr and saddar Bundelesh, edited by Ervand Bahmanji Nasarvanji Dhabhar. " The Rivayats, which are written in Pahlavi and in Persian, are records of religious laws and doctrines, customs, legends, and traditions of the Persians. In the old Rivayats, there are Saddars (one hundred) and compositions of a like nature. The second/new Rivayats, answers the questions of believers.
12. Both books, Killila Wa Dimna and Sand Bad, are translated into Persian and Arabic, and their legends and stories are narrated in other books and Mirrors too. However, the influence of mysticism on the Mirrors is not identical. The books that are more focused on ethical and moral codes were more influenced by Sufis. This issue is obvious in some major books those authors are Sufi, such as The Council of Kings by al- Ghazali. In his introduction to the translation of the Ghazali book into the English language, the translator says: "The translator asserts that Materials found in 'Mirrors' passed into popular folklore; and having been used along with Sufi materials by Sa'di in his Bustan and Gulistan."
13. There are anthropological, sociological, and geographical approaches to discussing the origin of the term king and the establishment of kingship in Israel. These authors have focused on the security issue and the threat of the Philistine people along with the environment and the agrarian nature of the community. To them the kingship in Israel is a complex interrelationship of security and geographic and environmental issues as well as the peoples response to this security dilemma and environment episode. According to advocates the earliest states of Israel were founded around Moab, Ammon, and Edon, close to enemies brother.
14. For more information see; The Anchor Bible Dictionary,, Vol. 4, pp. 46 and Old testament: the second history of Ayyams 36:22-33 and Uzra 1:1-5
15. For example, the phrase "the religion and kingship are twin brothers" is not a tradition from the Prophet Mohammad but a sentence from Ardishir the founder of the Sasaneed dynasty --Dimnah p.4. The phrase "the kings are shadows of God" does not have any determined source.
16. As far as Islamic political thought is concerned, authors classified the literature into three different approaches; philosophical, jurisdictional and administrative. I believe that, this form of classification is not appropriate because authors (regardless of their specialty), jurists, statesmen, or philosophers have used these

different methods interchangeably based on the subject of study. For example, theorists use philosophical and theological arguments when they discuss the indispensability of leadership, and they use Islamic law and jurisprudence when they argue about the mutual duties and responsibility of leaders versus masses. Finally, they use advice and admonishment in regard to methods of administration.

17. For instance, Ghazali in *The Council for Kings* focuses on the following issues: 1) qualities required in kings, 2) accounts of the kings, 3) on the Wizarat and the character of Wazir, 4) on the art of the pen and the functions of secretaries 5) on magnanimity in kings, citing aphorisms of the sages, 6) on intelligence and intelligent persons, and 7) on women and their good and bad points.
18. To the *Mirrors* authors, God endowed the king with noble qualities; whoever is blessed with these qualities is qualified to be king. These qualifications include; just, powerful, smart, determined, religious, humble, faith, grant, race, noble birth, demos, demonic, brave, upright, honorable, gentleman, Respectable, decent, intelligent, having common sense), splendid, magnificent, grand, just, righteous, modest, bashful, demure, Victorious, Triumphant, Strength, Power, Great strength, Virtue, talent, Skilled, Harmless, Noble, Broad-Minded, Bashfulness, Modesty, Prudent, Wise, Intelligent, understanding, apprehensive, acute, sharp, ending badly, Nobel quality, endowed and good ascendance.
19. Thaqaalibi in *Adab al-Muluk* refers to various verses of the Quran and Tradition from the Prophet that say people should obey kings and rulers because; he it is who has made you successors in the land and raised some of you above others by various grades. (al-Anam: 65) O my people! remember the favor of Allah upon you when he raised prophets among you and made you kings Say: O Allah, master of the Kingdom! Thou gives kingdom to whomever thou finds pleasant and takes away the kingdom from whomever thou pleasant, and thou exalts whom thou pleasant and abasest whou thou pleasant; in think hand is the good; surely; thou has power over all things. Al-Imran:26.The gratitude of king according to the Prophet:The king is the shadow of God in the earth, whoever obeys him is obeyed God, and whoever rejects him is rejected the God.
20. Tusi in his book *Akhlaq-I Nasiri* (Nasiri Ethics) claims that Muhammad b. Hasan al-Tusi, known as Al-Nasir al-Tusi, says thus: the writing of this book, entitled *The Nassrian Ethics*, came about at a time when he had been compelled to leave his native land on account of the turmoil of the age, the hand of destiny having shackled him to residence in the territory of Quhistan. There, for the reason set down and recalled at the outset of the book, this compilation was undertaken; and, to save both himself and his honor, he completed the composition of an exordium in a style appropriate to the custom of that community for the engly and adulation of their lords and great ones. This is in accordance with the sense of the verse. 'And humour them while you remain in their house; 'And placate them while you are in

their land' and also the well-attested tradition: 'With whatsoever a man protects himself and his honor, it shall be recorded to him as a favour'. While such a course is contrary to the belief, and divergent from the path, of the People of the Sharita and the Sunna, there was nothing else I could do.' For this reason, the book was provided with a dedication in the manner aforementioned.

21. These arguments are based on the interception of some verses of the Quran such as: O you who believe! Be not forward in the presence of Allah and his Prophet, and be careful to your duty to Allah; surely Allah is hearing and knowing. Hujarat:. O you who believe! Do not raise your voices above the voice of Prophet, and do not speak loud to him as you speak loud to one another. Hujarat:2.
22. To support these arguments, the Mirrors refers to some questionable tradition (Hadith) from Prophet and Imams. These Traditions are as following:
 1. From the fourth Imam, Sayyid al-Sajidin said "The king's right upon you is that you know that God has made you a trial (*fitna*) for him. God is testing him by giving him power and kingship over you. You must know that you are obligated not to make yourself the object of his wrath and anger and thereby throw yourself to destruction and become his partner in his sin through the harm and punishment which he brings down upon you. (Arjumand, 1988, p. 220)
 2. The Prophet said: "There are eight people who, if they are abased and made lowly, have none to blame but themselves: A person who makes himself present at a meal without having been invited, a guest who orders around his host, a person who seeks good from his enemies, a person who seeks bounty and beneficence from the base, a person who places himself between two people in their secret matter which they have not shared with him, a person who shows contempt for a king, a person who sits in a place where he has not the worthiness to sit, and a person who speaks to someone who does not listen to him. (Arjumand, 1988, p.221).
 3. The Prophet said: "God says, 'I am God other than whom there is no god. I created kings and their hearts are in My hand. If a people obey Me, I will make the hearts of kings compassionate toward them, and if a people disobey Me, I will make the hearts of kings angry toward them. Busy yourselves not with cursing kings! Repent toward Me of your sins and I will incline their hearts toward you and make them compassionate.
 4. As Imam Sadiq has said: "When God wants good for certain subjects, He appoints for them a compassionate king and ordains for him a just vizir." (Arjumand, 1988, p. 231).

5. Imam Mosa Kazim said to his followers "Oh partisans, do not make yourselves lowly by failing to obey your king. If he is just, ask God to preserve him, and if he is tyrannical and unjust, ask God to set him aright. (Arjumand, 198, p.230.).
 6. Imam Sadiq said, "If anyone disputes with one of these three people; he will be laid low: father, king, and creditor. (Arjumand, 198, p.235).
23. Al-Mawardi, *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniya*, Nashr-e Ilmi, Tehran, 1384

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Citizenship Rights of Iranian Minorities

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Abstract

In Islam, all human beings are equal in terms of human rights and therefore minority is meaningless in the real sense of the word. The first Imam of the Shiites instructs Muslims to fill their heart with favor and kindness toward people because people are either of the same religion to Muslims or their fellow creatures. The rights of religious minorities, among all minority groups, are studied in Islamic jurisprudence under the category of citizens' rights, rather than human rights. This study postulates the hypothesis that there is basically positive discrimination in Islam and by extension in the Iranian laws and jurisprudence, in favor of religious minorities.

Key Words: Minorities, human rights, citizens' rights, positive discrimination, Iran

Introduction

While throughout history certain religious minorities have experienced occasional discriminations against the Islamic principles of human rights, the permanent Islamic principles manifested in Islam and tradition of Prophet emphasize that all humans, including minorities, are equal in terms of human rights. When it comes to human beings, the Quran makes no discrimination between people, whether a stranger or a Muslim. Faith, in all its forms, is an indication of more citizenship rights rather than a higher level of human rights. The holy Quran depicts the society of Muslims and good doers giving the priority to those who are obedient to the benefit of public interest, and in a society of Muslim majority, the priority is given to Muslims. However, the Muslim community highlights the need to observe human rights of all people, even though they are non-Muslims. Therefore, in Islam minority is a meaningless concepts and all are equal in terms of being a human. Therefore, religious minorities are the only minorities recognized in Islamic jurisprudence, whose rights can be better explained under citizenship rights.

The most important criticism of Iranian laws regarding minorities is not the text of the law, but it is the application of the law. In fact the application of the law is a general problem, and is not solely regarding minorities in Iran. In any event for the purpose of the promotion of the rights and presence of religious minorities in various social arenas, and their active participation in decision making levels, some local and national measures have been taken in the form of fundamental laws. Article 14 of the Iranian Constitution¹ warns Muslims as a majority in Iran that they treat their fellow non-Muslim citizens with dignity so that they do not feel that they have been marginalized. These individuals are split into two groups of non-legal religious and non-legal social minorities. The term non-legal does not necessarily mean those who break the law or the opponents, but it is allocated to groups that are not included in the law, even if they are not the opposition. Below, certain criticisms leveled at the Iranian laws are examined.

A. Laws Governing the Citizen's Rights of Minorities in Iran

The most important criticism of Iranian laws regarding minorities is not the text of the law, but it is the application of the law. In fact the application of the law is a general problem, and is not solely regarding minorities in Iran. In any event for the purpose of the promotion of the rights and presence of religious minorities in

various social arenas, and their active participation in decision making levels, some local and national measures have been taken in the form of fundamental laws.

Below are some of the main examples:²

1. Active participation in legislation

- There are five seats in the Iranian Parliament for the religious minorities. There are two seats for Armenians and one for each other minority:

Assyrians, Jews and Zoroastrians³. Sunni Muslims have no specific reserved seats, but can take part in the ordinary election process at all constitutional levels⁴. Considering that the 70 million population of Iran has 290 members of parliament, the small population of religious minorities (approximately 200,000) has been allocated five seats in the Parliament according to the law. According to article 67 of the Constitution⁵, when swearing in, religious minorities can swear on their own holy books.

- Also minorities in the event of getting votes are permitted to be present in town and city councils.⁶

2. Active cultural participation

- In the next stage by allocating budget number 503784, the Islamic government has provided maximum support for religious minorities in the Iranian society. Also by providing specific and general rights and benefits⁷ and facilitates the cultural, social and legal rights of religious minorities just like the rest of society. For example religious minorities in Iran can be active in the following cultural and social arenas:

- Having permits for various publications
- Restoring and renovation of relevant sites
- Having schools for minorities
- No restrictions in learning ethnic language
- Freedom to hold religious ceremonies
- Benefitting from government budget and credit
- Facilitation in getting a passport for leaving the country
- Appointment of religious minorities heads of schools and their employment as teachers

- The teaching of Armenian Christian lessons in the Armenian language.
- Support and freedom of these activities and holding of religious ceremonies in the country's synagogues and churches and the right to have special schools for Zoroastrians are some of the other supports of the Islamic Republic of Iran regime for religious minorities. With regards to publications, Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians do have their own publications.

3. Specific social and religious rights

- As well as enjoying official national holidays, religious minorities can enjoy their own special days such as Eids (feasts) and other ceremonies, i.e. Yum Kippor, birthday of Zoroaster, Christmas and Easter⁸.
- The content of the Tax Exemption Law for Religious Places of Worship and Associations (1933)⁹ was renewed in 1987.
- The practical commitment to Islamic laws for Muslims recruitments was changed in the 1995 Selection Law for minorities, and the application of this law is based on their own conditions and regulations, and of course religious minorities must not openly violate Islamic laws.

4. Minorities judicial rights issues

- With regards to personal property, minorities have their own religious and customary rights according to the Constitution including: a) freedom in personal property, b) retirement rights, c) equality of religious minorities Dia (money for blood) with Muslims. The Amendment to the religious minorities inheritance with the support of 199 members of the Islamic parliament.
- In criminal issues minorities have the same facilities as Muslims. According to article 148 of the executive bylaws of the Prisons' Organization and reform and rehabilitation measures (2001)¹⁰ when a prisoner is accepted in prison, his or her religion is stated in the questionnaire, and all facilities for their religious ceremonies and rituals are provided with the assistance of the Islamic Culture and Guidance Ministry via prison officials. Articles 144 and 145 of the said guidelines state:

Each prisoner that belongs to one of the officially recognized religions of the country can in public or solitary confinement have his or her own religious book, prayer book and facilitation for his or her own prayer rituals. Any prisoner that belongs to one of the country's

official religions when necessary can request for a religious representative to be present in prison upon the approval of the warden, and to guide him or her in his or her religious duties.

- Furthermore, towards the guaranteeing of these rights and freedoms and the application of the Constitution and the benefitting of all of the nation such as minorities from the rights stated in the law, article 570 of the Islamic Penal Code states:

Any official and agent associated with State agencies and institutions, who unlawfully strips members of the public of their personal freedom or deprives them from their rights provided in the IRI Constitution, shall be sentenced to two months to three years' imprisonment, in addition to dismissal from the service and prohibition of employment in state offices for one to five years.¹¹

B. Rights of Non-mentioned Minorities

Article 14 of the Iranian Constitution warns Muslims as a majority in Iran that they treat their fellow non-Muslim citizens with dignity so that they do not feel that they have been marginalized.¹² Also the law stresses that other Muslims that have all human rights must be treated with dignity and justice and their human rights be respected. This reiteration of the legislator is a positive discrimination in legal definition so that the majority does not ignore the rights of minorities. The non-Muslim who are not Christians, Jewish or Zoroastrians, due to their low numbers the legislator has not fully named them, as long as they are not deemed as against the Islamic Republic system, they are fully entitled to their human rights and citizen's rights. These individuals are split into two groups of non-legal religious and non-legal social minorities. The term non-legal does not necessarily mean those who break the law or the opponents, but it is allocated to groups that are not included in the law, even if they are not the opposition. Article 14 of the Constitution is credible for the rights of those who do not conspire against Islam and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

1. Religious Minorities not mentioned in the Constitution

The human rights of all minorities, whether or not mentioned in the constitution and law, according to article 3 of the Iranian Constitution¹³ is guaranteed by the government. One of the criteria of citizen's rights and not human rights goes back to the loyalty levels in the public's interest. It is the duty of the democratic regime and government to secure such public interest. The more the citizen's commitments of the individual, the more benefits he or she has. Undoubtedly from the citizen's duties perspective, the duties of a Muslim individual is much more than a non-Muslim's and for a non-Muslim citizen that has a social contract with the Islamic government alongside other Muslims, he or she is deemed the citizen of the Islamic government. This is deemed a unique advantage (in both old and new legal systems). Because as well as current costs of citizenship, Muslims are duty bound to carry out religious duties such as the payment of a fifth of their income, prohibited from buying and selling of unlawful goods and property, and citizen's commitments such as conscription, religious war and defence, in such way that the tax of a Muslim is three to four times that of a non-Muslim individual, while non-Muslim citizens do not have religious and legal commitments and enjoy all their human rights that include suitable jobs, social security, retirement, health, education and housing. This level of commitment is proportionately less for non-Muslim citizens that have Holy Books, for the simple reason not in financial and religious commitment of Muslims and not economic and legal commitments of those that have Holy Books, and fundamentally due to the link with the government not being specific (active loyalty) and in a way declaration of neutrality with regards to the dominant ideology the non-Muslim citizen is exempt from political, defence and military commitments, therefore in the same proportion they are denied the same rights in these types of participations. But continually the fundamental rights of these types of minorities are provided in accordance with the Constitution.

Examples of non-legal minorities are Buddhists and Bahaiis in Iran. These individuals have human rights as specified in article 14 of the Constitution. These rights are credible and standing for as long as they do not conspire or take action against the majority or against Islam and the Islamic Republic. But if they openly advertise and take provocative action, then naturally they will face the reaction of the law.

2. Non-legal and Semi-legal Social Minority Citizens

According to the Constitution, all Iranian citizens benefit their basic human rights. Pursuant to the very principles of the Iranian Constitution, family is one of the most important social and civil institutions. By definition, family has is a combination of the opposite sexes, and from this aspect tendencies towards the same sex for setting up a family in Iran is against religious jurisprudence and the law. Therefore, in Iran it is deemed as sexual identity disorder of the individual. From this aspect homosexual groups are non-legal, but transgenders are not necessarily non-legal. In both instances visible action or formation of a social body is reviewed via a permit from the Interior Ministry.

1) **Homosexuality**: is deemed non-legal according to religious jurisprudence and law. Therefore, in Iran homosexuality is deemed as a sexual identity crisis in Iran.¹⁴ It must clearly be said that crime in Iran has a meaning when it is clearly committed. If homosexuality is a type of disease, then it must be cured, and of course there is no necessity for forced treatment. Just like some of the current psychological approaches, in Iran homosexuality is seen as a disorder. This disorder is reviewed in a collective of mental disorders. Homosexuals in Iran suffer from the lack of awareness. They are mistreated in the family and society which increases their mental pressure. This is why these individuals receive medical support. According to Chapter Three¹⁵ and article 3 of the Constitution, in any event these individuals can enjoy the basic rights. But these rights must not be towards the actual advertisement of the individual. Therefore the treatment issue in Iran and including treatment of HIV/AIDS must never be affected by the discovery of the sexual orientation of the person.

2) **Transsexualism**: in Iran with a tendency to sex change are free from legal and religious law aspects and there are no restrictions. Iran is the first Islamic country which officially recognizes sex change. Some believe that this shows the importance of the human rights and spirit of mankind's status in the Shia jurisprudence. The first fatwa in this regard goes back to Imam Khomeini before the 1979 revolution.¹⁶ In his 1964 book, *Tahrir Al-wasilah*, and on the subject of *Mustahdisah* issues¹⁷, for the first time brought up the subject of sex change in the world of Shia and Islam. The religious views of many Shia clergy, including the current Leader of the Islamic revolution Ayatollah Khamenei is the same. The number of sex change operations in Iran compared to European countries is much higher (for example 250 compared to 40). Perhaps because in Iran open and official homosexuality is non-legal in Iran, the observation of the rights of the patient in

many instances is deemed as part of human rights in Iran and the government has specific guarantees. Unlike other Islamic countries, sex change operation is legal for individuals that pass psychological interviews and can afford to pay the surgery fees. These surgeries are done in accordance with the latest international standards. Many patients from Eastern Europe and Arabic countries travel to Iran for this surgery.¹⁸ Some Iranian citizens are transsexual and from human rights aspect in the event that they wish to, the Iranian government will take upon facilitating all support possibilities for sex change and formation of a family. In some instances individuals that are cared for by Imam Khomeini Aid and Welfare organizations or individuals that are proved to be poor can benefit from free services in promotion to their financial status. From this aspect Iran is even much more advanced in issuing sex change verdicts compared to most countries, especially Islamic ones. Because in the event that the diagnosis is confirmed by the Coroner's Office, so that the individual can make suitable physical sexual gender appearance in society, the Coroner's Office issues a permit and the Islamic Republic of Iran's police authority is also included in this permit and cooperates. Often the individual is supported legally and all regulations regarding the new gender are applicable. In any event these individuals are accorded the rights in article 14 of the Constitution and enjoy full human rights.

Conclusion

As stated, minority in specific terms in Islam is meaningless, and from the Islamic religious and legal aspects of Iran, all are equal as human beings and enjoy full human rights. Therefore fundamentally the religious minorities issue is only a pertinent minority in Islamic law, which is reviewable under citizen's rights and not human rights. This review is not solely for Islamic law, but in all modern law schools, the subject of minorities' rights is pertinent under citizen's rights. Fundamentally as stated the level of these legal variables is not humanity but the level of loyalty in the preservation of collective happiness and general public interest.

In view of this explanation, the criminality of non-legal social minorities are pursuable by the law if they result in practical propaganda and advertising, otherwise the searching and investigation of these individuals is a crime and sin. As long as non-religious and non-mentioned religious minorities do not advertise in public, they are safe and their human rights must be guaranteed by the Islamic government.

Note

1. Article 14 In accordance with the sacred verse; ("God does not forbid you to deal kindly and justly with those who have not fought against you because of your religion and who have not expelled you from your homes" [60:8]), the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and all Muslims are duty-bound to treat non-Muslims in conformity with ethical norms and the principles of Islamic justice and equity, and to respect their human rights. This principle applies to all who refrain from engaging in conspiracy or activity against Islam and the Islamic Republic of Iran.
2. This paper relies on an oral statement presented by the authors at the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2015. Authors represented the Organisation for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV), an Iranian NGO with ECOSOC status.
3. Federation Internationale des Ligues des Droits de L'Homme (August 2003). "Discrimination against religious minorities in IRAN" (PDF). Retrieved 2008-05-19.
4. US Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (2007). "International Religious Freedom Report 2007: Iran". US State Department. Retrieved 2008-05-19.
5. Article 67

Members of the Assembly must take the following oath at the first session of the Assembly and affix their signatures to its text: In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. In the presence of the Glorious Qur'an, I swear by God, the Exalted and Almighty, and undertake, swearing by my own honor as a human being, to protect the sanctity of Islam and guard the accomplishments of the Islamic Revolution of the Iranian people and the foundations of the Islamic Republic; to protect, as a just trustee, the honor bestowed upon me by the people, to observe piety in fulfilling my duties as people's representative; to remain always committed to the independence and honor of the country; to fulfill my duties towards the nation and the service of the people; to defend the Constitution; and to bear in mind, both in speech and writing and in the expression of my views, the independence of the country, the freedom of the people, and the security of their interests. Members belonging to the religious minorities will swear by their own sacred books while taking this oath. Members not attending the first session will perform the ceremony of taking the oath at the first session they attend.

6. In the fourth city and village Islamic councils elections, a number of Christian citizens were elected to the councils in Urumiah Fereydoon and Fereydoonshahr. Also Zoroastrians have representatives in the city and village councils in Yazd province .

7. For example clause 19 of the Budget Act (2007) states that “Those that are covered by Imam Khomeini Aid Committee, and the Welfare Organization, mosques, Hussainiyas (a congregation place for Shia commemoration ceremonies in relation mostly to the events of Muharram), Mahdiyas (a congregation place for Shia commemoration ceremonies in relation to Imam Mahdi, the 12th Imam of Shias), rural schools, religious schools, the graves of the martyrs and religious minorities places of worship that are recognized subject to article 13 of the Constitution, are exempt from one-time payment of water rates, sewage, electricity and gas .

Article 13, Iranian Constitution:

Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian Iranians are the only recognized religious minorities, who, within the limits of the law, are free to perform their religious rites and ceremonies, and to act according to their own canon in matters of personal affairs and religious education.

8. Decree number 99416 dated 3 Dey 1366 (24 December 1987), issued by the National Administrative and Employment Affairs, concerning leaves from work for religious minorities in their religious feasts
9. See Islamic Parliament Research Center, available at: <http://rc.majlis.ir/fa/law/show/96172>
10. Executive guidelines of the Prisons’ Organization and reform and rehabilitation measures (2001), available at: <http://prisons.ir>
11. Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran – Book Five.
12. In accordance with the sacred verse; "God does not forbid you to deal kindly and justly with those who have not fought against you because of your religion and who have not expelled you from your homes" [60:8], the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and all Muslims are duty-bound to treat non-Muslims in conformity with ethical norms and the principles of Islamic justice and equity, and to respect their human rights. This principle applies to all who refrain from engaging in conspiracy or activity against Islam and the Islamic Republic of Iran.
13. Article 3 In order to attain the objectives specified in Article 2, the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has the duty of directing all its resources to the following goals: 1. the creation of a favorable environment for the growth of moral virtues based on faith and piety and the struggle against all forms of vice and corruption; 2. raising the level of public awareness in all areas, through the proper use of the press, mass media, and other means; 3. free education and physical training for everyone at all levels, and the facilitation and expansion of higher education; 4. strengthening the spirit of inquiry, investigation, and innovation in all areas of science, technology, and culture, as well as Islamic studies, by establishing

research centers and encouraging researchers; 5. the complete elimination of imperialism and the prevention of foreign influence; 6. the elimination of all forms of despotism and autocracy and all attempts to monopolize power; 7. ensuring political and social freedoms within the framework of the law; 8. the participation of the entire people in determining their political, economic, social, and cultural destiny; 9. the abolition of all forms of undesirable discrimination and the provision of equitable opportunities for all, in both the material and intellectual spheres; 10. the creation of a correct administrative system and elimination of superfluous government organizations; 11. all round strengthening of the foundations of national defence to the utmost degree by means of universal military training for the sake of safeguarding the independence, territorial integrity, and the Islamic order of the country; 12. the planning of a correct and just economic system, in accordance with Islamic criteria in order to create welfare, eliminate poverty, and abolish all forms of deprivation with respect to food, housing, work, health care, and the provision of social insurance for all; 13. the attainment of self-sufficiency in scientific, technological, industrial, agricultural, and military domains, and other similar spheres; 14. securing the multifarious rights of all citizens, both women and men, and providing legal protection for all, as well as the equality of-all before the law; 15. the expansion and strengthening of Islamic brotherhood and public cooperation among all the people; 16. framing the foreign policy of the country on the basis of Islamic criteria, fraternal commitment to all Muslims, and unsparing support to the mustad'afiin of the world.

14. Sexual identity is given to a collective of sex, gender, gender identity and gender role and sexual orientation. When we put all these together and add the behaviour of the individual the sexual identity is then clarified.
15. Iranian Constitution- CHAPTER III The Rights of the People
16. And in a part of the issue an edict is given: “apparently sex change operations for men and women have no problems and surgery on even an individual that is a neuter to be become a man or a woman is not haram”.
17. Imam Rouhullah Khomeini (Ra), Tahrir Al-Wasilah, Translated by Dr. Sayyid Ali Reza Naqavi, Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini’s Works, 2001
18. Francis Harrison: Sex Change Operation in Iran, BBC Persian 23 February 2005.

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Book Review

***Einführung in die islamische Philosophie: Die Geschichte des Denkens von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, Hamid Reza Yousefi, Ulrich Rudolph, Paris: Vrin, 2014, 128 pages, ISBN-13: 978-3825240820**

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While Professor Hamid Reza Yousefi focuses on philosophy in general, highlighting its purpose and nature before fitting Islamic thought into that larger scheme, Ulrich Rudolph writes more narrowly on the history of Islamic philosophy, making for a more fluid prose. The latter demonstrates the centrality of the intellect for Islamic thinkers throughout the centuries, as it fed the continued development of Islamic philosophy, particularly in and near Persia from 1200, after which European Christians lost interest. As Rudolph helps us see, this rejection stemmed not so much from the lack of philosophical development in the Islamic world as from the fact that the course of Islamic philosophy, following an entirely different path from western, served no purpose to the latter. This parting of ways led to a distinctive development of Islamic philosophy in comparison to the West. The intellect as leitmotif in certain areas of Islamic philosophy paralleled reason's centrality in western philosophy, though reason also played an important role in the Islamic world.

The analysis of the intellect and other spiritually-centered aspects of Islamic philosophy supports the author's positive view of Islamic thought, contrasting with the common western belief that Muslim inquiry experienced a sort of "fall" from the heights of reason by supposedly embracing irrationality. This optimistic view echoes Yousefi's.

The intellect as a continuing source of inspiration and discussion influenced all manner of thinkers until the two most recent centuries, when Islamic philosophy, caught up in western preoccupations, developed certain reactionary tendencies, something Yousefi likewise captures quite well. Rudolph

shows that the centrality of Islamic belief in the centuries-long discussion on the intellect never prevented an enduring ancient Greek influence.

Islamic philosophy, or the philosophy of the Islamic world, which also included Christian thinkers such as those at Baghdad's House of Wisdom, has been a largely religious undertaking. Islamic philosophy never lost its soul, perhaps because of the endurance of the intellect alongside reason, though at times western influence has turned thoughts elsewhere. Rudolph's analysis clearly depicts the centrality of Islamic belief as never preventing Islamic philosophy from expressing concerns independent of the Qur'an and Shariah, though, as in Christendom, debate over the roles and relationship between theology and religion were commonplace.

The eclectic nature of such thinkers as al-Kindi (died ~865) never prevented the establishment of a kind of common base for the treatment of the intellect, Rudolph shows. Al-Kindi exemplifies the medieval Islamic polymath. Rudolph informs us that, influenced by Plato, Aristotle and Proclus, al-Kindi was an independent, creative thinker, choosing "his own path for the interpretation of Aristotle." (26) The Stagirite's giant footprint in Islamic philosophy stems largely though not exclusively from the preoccupation with the intellect, an influence which reappears throughout *La philosophie islamique*. Al-Kindi in *On the Soul* "is the first author to speak of three degrees of knowing," the intellect in power, the actualised intellect, and the intellect in act. (27) Yet this was far from the final word on the subject of the soul and the intellect. Interestingly, Rudolph also notes certain parallels with earlier Christian thinkers, including the development of a negative theology under the influence of Neoplatonism and the Christian John of Philippus as well as al-Kindi's parallel with the ancient Christians in attempting to "reconcile the majority of ancient philosophical concepts and argumentative strategies with his personal religious convictions." (25) Rudolph could have included more on the interplay between Muslim and Arabic-speaking Christian philosophers throughout the centuries.

True to his eclecticism, al-Kindi also pursued an Aristotelian path for his "natural philosophy," in contrast to his Platonist psychology and ethics. Again, this diversity and the interplay between the ancient and the novel keep reappearing throughout the centuries as depicted by Rudolph. Al-Kindi's philosophically-welcoming attitude became a blueprint. In sharp contrast to our logical, material, and utilitarian age, many Muslim thinkers, starting with al-Kindi, embraced paradox, with Rudolph noting that philosophical knowledge and the wisdom derived from revelation could "co-exist independently." (27) Perhaps it was this

same spiritual mindset that allowed al-Kindi to place philosophy under religious dogma, but without completely overwhelming the former.

Rudolph effectively covers the growing tension in the Islamic world between religion and philosophy, exemplified early on with Abu Bakr al-Razi (died 925), the Islamic world's first thinker to defend philosophy's independence, most likely prompted by his own daring thinking regarding the eternity of time, space, the human soul, and matter, all of which were rejected by the religious community. Again, this thought centers around the intellect, seeking a spiritual grasp of knowledge capable of each human, which would "liberate their souls." (36) This portrayal of knowledge as spiritual in nature, a constant in Islamic philosophy, lent to its pursuit a religious aura, something that Henry Corbin, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and others have so convincingly portrayed in recent decades.

For western readers new to Islamic philosophy, Rudolph provides a clear enough history, including the centrality of certain individuals, moving as we do from al-Kindi to al-Razi to al-Farabi (died 950). The latter's theories of the intellect provide the reader with a sense of what might have been in western Christendom had minds and hearts remained open to more than just reason and epistemology. While many westerners question whether a more religiously-open philosophy could have led to western developments in science and progress, al-Farabi's pursuit of the idea that divine thought is not only reflexive, as Aristotle taught, but productive shows the potential for much development. (45) The intellect agent "offers our soul knowledge like the sun diffuses light," Rudolph notes. (45) While Rudolph never makes political theory central, he notes its importance for al-Farabi, whom he also connects to Baghdad's House of Wisdom.

Initially highlighting Avicenna's rationalist rather than spiritual teachings, Rudolph focuses on the latter in the chapters covering reactions to the great thinker. The author of *La philosophie islamique* covers Avicenna's centuries-long primacy over particularly the eastern part of the Islamic world, something that more recent Islamic thinkers would come to criticize for leading Islamic thought away from reason and therefore away from western-style accomplishments in science and technology. Rudolph notes one reason for Avicenna's importance: He "did not content himself with systematically ordering or presenting didactic material, but totally rethought many things in many ways." (58) This is especially true, Rudolph notes, in *The Book of Healing*, which turned to Aristotle's texts concerning logic, physics, metaphysics, and mathematics.

The comparison of Avicenna with al-Farabi sheds light on the tension between faith and reason. While the latter worked to separate theology and philosophy, Avicenna paid mere lip service to this. Furthermore, Avicenna “placed at the center of his thought themes that Farabi had put to the side, including ontology, theology, psychology, and above all the doctrine of the individual soul.” (59) The centuries-long reaction to this philosophical theology, as Rudolph describes it, stemmed in part from the fact that in developing his ontology, Avicenna went against the grain in asserting that one needed only reason, and not the senses, to prove certain things. (60) This continued Islamic philosophy's focus on both the intellect and Aristotle. While Avicenna clearly adopted a new perspective, he likewise maintained much from before, most likely due to Islam's ability to unify. Rudolph's clarity in describing Avicenna's doctrine of the intellect and the spiritual nature of knowledge helps readers to appreciate this great thinker.

Noting that “the Avicennian project opened a new level of discussion and was the basis for future reflections,” Rudolph outlines the reaction, beginning with al-Gazali (died 1111). He also ties much of Averroes' teaching in with Avicenna. Given the latter's close reading of Aristotle, entitling the chapter on Averroes (died 1198) as “The Return to Aristotle” does seem confusing. Avicenna and Averroes emphasized different aspects of the Stagirite's writings, yet we do see in *La philosophie islamique* how they both belong to the wider philosophical current.

Nevertheless, Rudolph gives us a good picture of Averroes being much less philosophically ambitious than Avicenna. This appealed to Europeans, who, led by Thomas Aquinas, came to reject the intellect's spiritual role, as this seemed to threaten the Church's sacramental edifice. Perhaps it was the task of opposing al-Gazali, who was moved by Avicenna's spiritual-philosophical speculations, that brought about Averroes' minimalism. A “rehabilitated” philosophy, in other words, would have to be more limited. Rudolph portrays Averroes as basing his understanding of the intellect on his reading of Aristotle instead of on the Qur'an. (97) Yet we see none of the nominalism of the later Christian West, for the medieval philosopher fully affirmed universals within his notion of the intellect. Again, Rudolph's writing style makes this clear and shows the connections to the wider Islamic philosophical tradition.

The split in the Islamic world, exemplified by the tensions between Avicenna's followers and the Averroists, was exemplified with the School of Isfahan, with its nexus in the Shi'ite world. Mir Damad and Mulla Sadra exerted little influence on North Africa. This eastern school continued the focus on the intellect and a mystical

rendering of knowledge and philosophy in general, whereas the western Islamic world became more defined by its rationalism, something that Rudolph often leaves unsaid. The introduction to Damad and Mulla Sadra, though satisfying enough as it shows how these thinkers both fit into established patterns while unearthing new possibilities, seems unbalanced without an equal account of the Arab West, which only makes a reappearance in the last chapter, which stresses Islamic philosophy's change of direction under strong western European influence.

It is in the last two centuries, as Rudolph describes it, that the inner divisions in Islamic thought became more noticeable. He notes Muhammad al-Gabiri (died 2000) who referred to the “epistemological fracture” in the Islamic world between East and West, where the Moroccan laments the more mystical, esoteric orientation of eastern philosophy due to Avicenna's influence, including irrationalism and a “utopian inclination. In the West, in contrast, a tradition of rationalist critique developed from the eleventh century,” with Averroes as its high point. (142) Thus the nineteenth-century's confrontation with western thought also forced Islamic thinkers to deal with the limitations of their own philosophical tradition. Rudolph illustrates the resulting instability through Paris-based Algerian Mohamed Arkoun (died 2010) who, from the familiar postmodern critical-deconstructivist position, aimed to “develop a new rationality capable of taking into consideration several aspects of thought ... and linking religious reason to philosophical reason.” (144-145) As Rudolph notes, this threatens to destroy the idea of reason's universality and unity. The book ends by giving readers the impression that Islamic philosophy has become as disunited and unstable as western post-modern thinking.

German-based academic Hamid Reza Yousefi precedes his short but informative sketches of the most important Persian- and Arabic-language thinkers throughout the centuries with a discussion on the nature of philosophy and its universality. Islamic philosophers have integrated a great deal of variety from outside sources into their own thinking, and have, in turn, offered their own unique, religiously-inspired contributions to the eternal human striving for knowledge and understanding. The author consistently applies Islamic philosophy's connection to this universality throughout the book, highlighting at the same time unity within diversity. *Einführung in die islamische Philosophie* highlights how as Islamic culture drew together diverse traditions and peoples, multiplicity marked the Muslim intellectual world from the beginning, with the faith providing a single vision to varying degrees. Yousefi never laments this heterogeneity nor envisions an enchanting moment of pure unity and single-mindedness as certain contemporary

Muslim thinkers seem to do. Unity never means mono-culture, though it did sometimes provide for a powerful, productive, and optimistic universalism.

Yousefi divides Islamic philosophy into three periods, the first one consisting of an initial “flowering” comprising a great deal of diversity and a striking breadth of learning, idealized in the great polymaths, such as Averroes, who studied philosophy, theology, medicine, and law, or al-Farabi, whose interests encompassed mathematics, physics, logic, grammar, metaphysics, and social science. Highlighting Persian and Arab writers, Yousefi centers the second phase on the School of Isfahan and on the attempt to rebuild knowledge and society after the Mongols had destroyed many of the previous institutions, such as Baghdad's House of Wisdom. As so often in the book, Yousefi focuses on the Iranian perspective, including that country's transition to Shi'ite Islam. The author, echoing Rudolph, stresses that Islamic philosophy never ended after the twelfth century, as westerners have often assumed. The third phase of Islamic philosophy, not surprisingly, focuses on the reactions to western colonialism, which often included a reassessment of its own history. The Europhile and Europhobic strains in Islamic thinking, as well as the middle position, play a large role in this phase.

Via the biographical sketches, the book portrays how in Islam's early centuries, the ancient Persians and Greeks found a home within the new religion, prompting the Muslim world to deepen its relation to philosophy through these various men. This intellectual vigor led in turn to the well-known re-transmission of ancient thought to the West, exemplified by twelfth-century Toledo's importance as a cultural crossroads. Through this service, the Islamic world inspired much of later European culture. Yousefi returns repeatedly to Islamic philosophy's intermediary position, in this case between the ancient Greeks and the medieval and post-medieval Europeans. The author shows Islamic philosophy's internationalist and universalist credentials and avoids relegating it to a mere service position vis à vis the West.

Yousefi points out Islamic philosophy's direct influence on Europeans, as with Ibn Musa Kharazmi's (780-850) importance for Roger Bacon's (1214-92) optics or the great status of Avicenna's (980-1037) “Canon medicinae” from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries in Europe, but Einführung in die islamische Philosophie remains focused on challenging any limitation of Islamic philosophy to being the handmaiden of western thought. Sometimes the West failed to understand the nuances of Islamic philosophy. For instance, the author briefly notes Averroes' complex though unbalanced influence on the Latin Scholastics, due to the limited

selection of his writings which made their way into Latin and therefore into medieval European consciousness. The analysis on Averroes shows the restraints of the book's encyclopedic setup, as more elaboration would have benefited some readers given the western impact of this important thinker. The way in which Islamic philosophy inspired so much western thinking shows the vibrancy and original nature of the former, as Yousefi notes.

Perhaps indicating an overly-keen need to prove Islamic philosophy's relevance and credentials against western philosophy, the author tends to show how a given Islamic thinker anticipated a corresponding westerner by several centuries, which seems to authenticate the earlier, Islamic individual. Thus Zakariya Razi (865-932) foreshadowed some of René Descartes' thoughts on reason; al-Farabi's anthropologically-oriented philosophy anticipated Max Scheler (1874-1928) and Arnold Gehlen (1904-76); the astronomy of Khage Nasireddin Tousi (1201-1274) predated that of Copernicus (1473-1543). More positively, readers might also see this practice as the author's attempt to highlight the already-familiar with new information, a helpful and common pedagogical tool. Readers likewise benefit from this teaching skill when the author links Islamic history and writers to the corresponding western history. In this case, perhaps western readers would have benefited from elaboration on any European connections or parallels to the fascinating Ikhwan as-Safa, a group of intellectuals who went a long way in achieving the ideal of unified, spiritually-based learning with their brotherly, Pythagorean, and encyclopedic endeavors.

Yousefi's discussion of the Iranian-American Seyyed Hossein Nasr (born 1933) offers some insights into a wider comparison of civilizations. The latter criticizes western philosophy's role in serving power, exemplified by its reductionist tendency. The lack of a holistic view has led to the carving up of knowledge into new disciplines, which Nasr claims, echoing Edward Said, serve as a tool for the exercise of western colonialism throughout the world. Like so many of the thinkers presented in this book, Nasr sees philosophy as a spiritual endeavor, an opinion considered outdated and naive in the West. As Yousefi observes, Nasr's intellectual career has focused on the quest to define a perennial philosophy in order to protect non-western cultures from continued cultural encroachments. Nasr's critique of modern western science forms part of his holistic, traditionalist project. This description of Nasr, a highlight of the book, supposes Islamic philosophy's universalism, and shows how, by being at least somewhat rooted in traditional perspectives, Islamic philosophy offers a viable alternative to western reductionism

and power. For Yousefi, Islamic thinkers have remained much more open than post-medieval westerners to the notion of philosophy as wisdom.

Yousefi does not address the faith-reason or religion-philosophy contrast in as much detail as John Paul II did in *Fides et ratio* perhaps because the Muslim world has not seen such a divide between these perspectives, with some Islamic thinkers going so far as to see this as a uniquely western problem. Unlike the late pope's encyclicals, *Einführung in die islamische Philosophie* never expresses a sense of defensiveness or of fighting a multiple-front battle. The sketches of Persian thinkers Mirza Fathali Akhondzade (1812-1878) and Talbof Tabrizi (1830-1909) note the openness of some areas of Islamic culture to western ideas, and also to reason, which Akhondzade coupled with his economic writings as a social critic. He held Voltaire as an example of reason-based philosophizing, according to Yousefi. These biographies demonstrate how Islamic thought by this time had lost a certain amount of its own creative steam, and had often become dependent on western thinking, something that the author does not try to avoid. The preoccupation with modernization led to the search for a sort of Islamic Enlightenment, perhaps without too much thought on the dark side of this eighteenth-century movement.

Yet Islam could bring about its own unique modernization. Yousefi expands the faith-philosophy binary to include science: "Ontological philosophical reflection brings together philosophy and scientific thinking within the spiritual history of Islam. This philosophical reflection encompasses every dimension of human life and thought." While many western philosophers and theologians would assent to this, they would ensure science's preeminence in the most economically and militarily powerful domains. Yousefi's confidence in Islamic philosophy and in religion contrasts with the western churches' ineffectiveness and defensiveness in building an ethical framework for such endeavors as stem-cell research and euthanasia. Envisioning man as God's caliph on Earth, the Qur'an calls humans to live a life of struggle and exertion instead of one of comfort. Man's freedom calls him to responsibility, including in the philosophical arena. This makes scientific ethics as much a part of the philosophical endeavor as anything else, whether science agrees or not.

Just as the author avoids defensiveness when examining the modern secularizing onslaught, so he avoids triumphalism at this moment of western moral and spiritual decay. It is here that his message of Islamic philosophy's universalism finds its greatest promise, for the many Islamic philosophers have maintained a religious standard even while developing reason or science in their own way. This

contrasts with the reason- and science-initiated spiritual upheaval seen in the West that led to secularization. Yousefi notes that Nasr challenges the notion of western freedom, seeing in the modern, consumerist world an invisible cage preventing the person from living freely, especially when under the media's sway. The eclectic Egyptian Karam Khella (b. 1934) offers a more indirect though expansive philosophical answer in his turn to ancient elements from his native land, including the pre-Coptic religious values of balance, harmony, truth, and completeness.

Yousefi's *Einführung in die islamische Philosophie* partly indicts western materialism, deconstruction, and individualism. Despite much diversity and social and political upheaval, Islamic philosophers throughout the ages have attempted, to varying success, a hermeneutics of continuity, creating a holistic religious and philosophical unity that assumes philosophy's spiritual nature and that thereby assigns reason and epistemology supportive rather than dominant roles. This has not prevented innovation, some of which pushed hard against established boundaries. Schahabeddin Suhrewardi (1154-1191) regarded Zarathustra, Plato, and Hermes as the fountains of philosophy as he turned to Greek, Persian, and Islamic thinking, combining "reason, intuition, and transcendence" according to Yousefi. Suhrewardi brought together philosophy, theology, and mysticism, injecting Zarathustrian concepts of light, cosmology, and angelology into his underlying Islamic perspective. For those who followed this, such wisdom-seeking had a direct bearing on the individual's spirituality.

Yousefi's frequent forays into western thought works well alongside discussing writers in their original background and their Islamic and mostly Persian and Arabic perspectives. However, in addition to a few words on European traditionalists such as René Guénon and Frithjof Schuon, more on the life and thought of Henry Corbin (1903-78), the great French thinker who was so enamored by Persian thought yet who likewise participated in Carl Jung's Eranos conferences, would have buttressed Islamic philosophy's universalist credentials. Perhaps how Europeans, Indians, or others have more recently come under the influence of Islamic philosophy might determine the topic of another book.

The authors highlight Islamic philosophy's spiritual qualities, which to some might seem naive and undeveloped but to others counter cultural and refreshing. The orientation towards Iran leaves one wondering about the rest of the Islamic world at certain periods of time. Do the authors mirror westerners in disregarding certain areas and periods of Islamic philosophy? At the same time, neither book examines how non-western and non-Greek philosophies impacted Islamic

philosophy, aside from the occasional reference to Persian or ancient Egyptian thinking. Islamic philosophy's relationship to Buddhist, Indian, or Daoist philosophy would invite another way of envisioning Islamic philosophy's universalist credentials. On the whole, however, both authors succeed in showing this universality alongside Islamic philosophy's uniqueness.