Mustafa Aslan

A Plague from the West: Jalal Al-e Ahmad's *Gharbzadegi* within the context of anti-Westernism in the Islamic World

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Supervisor: Professor Nadia Al-Bagdadi

Second Reader: Associate Professor Brett Wilson

Central European University

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by

Mustafa Aslan

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Chair, Examination Committee

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Thesis Supervisor

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Examiner

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Examiner

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Abstract

The present study of intellectual history places Jalal Al-e Ahmad's *Gharbzadegi* (Westoxication) within the context of anti-Westernism in the Islamic world. To establish the latter, this study traces the ideas of Muslim modernist thinkers of the nineteenth century and the Islamist thinkers of the twentieth century. It also offers a brief biographical account of Jalal Al-e Ahmad. The main hypothesis of this study is that Jalal Al-e Ahmad's *Gharbzadegi* constructs a very unique critique of the West. Within the genealogical trail of anti-Westernism in the Islamic world, *Gharbzadegi* considerably diverges from the mainstream line of thought. For this matter, it is neither an Islamist nor a secular anti-colonialist manifesto. Rather, it harbors several different ideological commitments, defines the problem of Westoxication and proposes an extensive form of self-empowerment as a remedy.

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Note on Transliteration

I have followed the transliteration system of IJMES (International Journal of Middle East Studies).

The transliteration chart can be found at https://ijmes.chass.ncsu.edu/docs/TransChart.pdf

Personal names such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh are written without diacritical remarks.

Introduction

A Plague from the West: Jalal Al-e Ahmad's *Gharbzadegi* within the context of anti-Westernism in the Islamic World

> I speak of "occidentosis" [Westoxication] as of tuberculosis. But perhaps it more closely resembles an infestation of weevils. Have you seen how they attack wheat? From the inside. The bran remains intact, but it is just a shell, like a cocoon left behind on a tree. At any rate, I am speaking of a disease: an accident from without, spreading in an environment rendered susceptible to it.[1]

This was the opening of Jalal Al-e Ahmad's seminal monograph entitled *Gharbzadegi* (Westoxication). Al-e Ahmad (1923-1969) used this metaphor to describe the influence of the West in Iran. For him, because of this influence, Iran was a dependent, shallow and alienated society during the pre-revolutionary era. It was the penetration of the West that was destroying everything vibrant, beautiful and authentic in Iran. Radical and inflammatory as his description might sound, it speaks beyond the bounds of individual feelings. Arguably, it is a candid testimony of how some intellectuals in Iran felt toward the West and its influence in Iran during the pre-revolutionary era. But, deep down, encounters like this also compel us to think about the myriad stereotypes that position "the West" as an atrocious, materialist, inhumane and rootless civilization. The present study of intellectual history places Jalal Al-e Ahmad's *Gharbzadegi* (Westoxication) within the context of anti-Westernism in the Islamic world. It primarily argues that Jalal Al-e Ahmad's *Gharbzadegi* constructs a very unique critique of the West. Within the genealogical trail of anti-Westernism in the Islamic world, *Gharbzadegi* considerably diverges from the mainstream line of thought. For this matter, it is neither an Islamist nor a secular anti-colonialist manifesto. Rather, it harbors several different ideological commitments, defines the problem of Westoxication and proposes an extensive form of self-empowerment as a remedy.

The notion of "the West" as a coherent unity, embodying the U.S. and the imperial powers of Europe, has been far-reaching over centuries.[2] Needless to say, this unity denotes both a

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[1] Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West* translated by R. Campbell (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1984) 27

[2] Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1928); Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972); William Hardy McNeill, *The Rise of the West: A History of the Human*

community of values and geopolitical alliance. Many historical developments have contributed to the maturation of this notion to this day. Chief among them is the Enlightenment as it nurtured the division of Eastern and Western Europe as two symbolic geographies during the eighteenth century.[3] Today, "the West" still materializes many political and cultural currents that are deeply entrenched in daily life as well as in scholarly circles. Although I find myself in agreement with contemporary scholars that this particular notion of ''the West'' cannot account for more than an imaginary construction, the passing decades of the twentieth century have witnessed the momentum of anti-Western movements, dramatically altering the course of history.[4]

So far, several scholars have engaged with the phenomenon of anti-Westernism in various regional and historical contexts.[5] The account of Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit subsumes different anti-Western ideologies in Eastern Europe, South Asia, and the Middle East under the concept of Occidentalism.[6] Cemil Aydın, on the other hand, focuses more on how the intellectuals of the Ottoman and Japanese empires critically approached the idea of a universal West during the nineteenth century.[7] Both of these studies are predicated on the dichotomy of East and West, although their authors do not take it for granted so easily. However, this presumed dichotomy became an ever more powerful trope for several scholars during the second half of the twentieth century. After the Cold War era, it inspired Samuel Huntington's thesis of "the clash of civilizations", which categorizes social and political conflicts between human communities based on the differences in their cultural and religious identities.[8] Nevertheless, anti-Western and anti-modernist philosophies have not originated solely within non-Western communities throughout the history. One can think of the rebel of luminaries such

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Community (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); David K. Fieldhouse, *The West and the Third World: Trade, Colonialism, Dependence and Development* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999)

[3] Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994)

[4] Carl W. Ernst, *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003) 37-70

[5] Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004); Cemil Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007)

[6] Occidentalism is a relatively new concept and its semantic field is still in the process of maturation. In *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies,* Buruma and Margalit use the concept of "Occidentalism" to denote anti-Western ideologies and movements. However, in other studies (see *Occidentalism: Images of the West* by James G. Carrier and *Occidentalism: Modernity and Subjectivity* by Couze Venn) "Occidentalism" is used as an umbrella term that encapsulates any attempt to conceptualize "the West", whether be in positive or negative terms. Therefore, I prefer to use the term "anti-Westernism" which can be conceived with more clarity and precision throughout this study.

[7] Cemil Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007)

[8] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1997)

as Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, and Ernst Jünger to modernity throughout their writings.[9] In fact, Jalal Al-e Ahmad was tremendously influenced by these thinkers.

However, today, one of the most polarizing forms of anti-Westernism is reproduced and disseminated by the strands of political Islam. Especially during the twentieth century, Islamist movements conflate religion with anti-Westernism, placing "the West" and "Islam" in diametrically opposing poles as two inherently antagonistic cultural assemblages.[10] In the second half of the twentieth century, Iran excelled in the Middle East as a country where the ubiquitous resentment toward "the West" and its would-be associations orchestrated political ambitions and intellectual ventures. As a non-Arab Muslim country which was never formally colonized, Iran had undergone a peculiar program of modernization and Westernization during the twentieth century. This program was implemented by the consecutive secular Pahlavi regimes in "a top-down manner", overlooking the internal dynamics of the society.[11] Therefore, the intellectuals of Iran perceived the secular state regime in their country as would-be associate of the West and criticized its policies from similar vantage points.[12]

The pivotal intellectuals of 1960s in Iran were peculiarly marked by their dissent to the policies of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi regime. Although this dissent had been their common attitude toward the Pahlavi regime, their ideological commitments were highly varied. Interestingly, however, on the eve of the revolution, these intellectuals become immersed in the political camp of the revolution that was both anti-Western and Islamist in nature. Hence, their political activism and influential writings played a pivotal role in the making of the revolution.[13] This, arguably, makes the revolution of 1979 an expedient phenomenon for the studies of intellectual history. Prior to the revolution, many intellectuals also critically engaged with the notion of ''the West'': they often defined it in ontological terms and speculated on its repercussions in Iran.[14] Jalal Al-e Ahmad articulated many distinctive critiques towards the

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[9] Graeme Garrard, *Counter Enlightenments: From the eighteen century to the present* (New York: Routledge, 2006)

[10] Carl W. Ernst, "The West and Islam?: Rethinking Orientalism and Occidentalism" *Ishraq: Islamic Philosophy Yearbook I* (Moscow/Tehran, 2010) 23-34

[11] Nikki R. Keddie, *Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Modern Iran* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1981) 168-179; Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982) 426-449

[12] Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1996) 20-51

[13] Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1993)

[14] Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1996) 52-76

West. His seminal monograph *Gharbzadegi* was one of the most poignant Occidentalist and anti-colonial manifestoes to emerge in the twentieth century. *Gharbzadegi* entered into the realm of recognition at Tehran in 1962. In *Gharbzadegi,* Al-e Ahmad perceives Iran as belonging to an Islamic civilization that has been in a clash with the West for more than a millennium.[15] The book also introduces his construction of *gharbzadegi* (Westoxication) as a disease that corrupts and eventually obliterates the native, authentic self of many nations around the world.[16] It does so by perpetuating an onslaught of mechanization and cultural alienation, creating soulless, shallow human communities.[17] Al-e Ahmad believed that this disease of Westoxication is inflicted on Iran by the modernizing regime of the shah and a large group of Western-minded intellectuals. Therefore, in the wake of the diffusion of Westoxication, what really remains at stake is Iran's authentic self.[18] *Gharbzadegi* became a highly popular read in Iran during 1960s despite state censorship.[19] The appeal of Al-e Ahmad was favorable for the pioneers of the Islamic revolution including Imam Khomeini and Ali Shariati.[20] In this study, *Gharbzadegi* will be analyzed in relation to the critiques of the West within the Islamic world that were formulated during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It will ask the question of how *Gharbzadegi* should be situated in this array of critiques in terms of its conceptual construction.

Structure of Chapters

The first chapter of this study traces the critiques of nineteenth-century Muslim modernist thinkers. It primarily focuses on the ideas of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida. In doing so, it also contextualizes the ideas of these thinkers. This chapter also shortly review the critiques of some of the prominent Ottoman thinkers. In a similar fashion, the second chapter will trace the Islamist thinkers of the twentieth century. It focuses on the

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[15] Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West* translated by R. Campbell (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1984) 18, 33-41

[16] Throughout this study, to differentiate the two entities, I use the upper case *Gharbzadegi* to refer to Al-e Ahmad's monograph and the lower case *gharbzadegi* to denote his construction of Westoxication. In *Gharbzadegi*, Al-e Ahmad defines Westoxication as "…the aggregate of events in the life, culture, civilization, and mode of thought of a people having no supporting tradition, no historical continuity, no gradient of transformation, but having only what the machine brings them…" (*Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West*, 34)

[17] Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Gharbzadegi* (Tehran: Revagh, 1962) 27-35

[18] *Ibid,* 55-63

[19] Stephen C. Poulson, *Social Movements in Twentieth-Century Iran: Culture, Ideology and Mobilizing Frameworks* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005) 188-193

[20] See the Foreword of *Occidentosis* written by Hamid Algar, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West* translated by R. Campbell (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1984) 16-20, also see the commemorative supplement on Jalal Al-e Ahmad in *Jumhuri-yi Islami*, Shahrivar 20, 1359/October 12, 1980

ideas of Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi, Sayyid Qutb and Necif Fazıl Kısakürek. The third chapter conveys a very brief biographical account on Jalal Al-e Ahmad's life. The last chapter analyzes the content of Al-e Ahmad's monograph *Gharbzadegi* in relation to the ideas of these thinkers.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Throughout this study of intellectual history, the ideas of Al-e Ahmad will be analyzed through a close reading of *Gharbzadegi*. As a methodological framework, I will use the analytical model of the German school for intellectual history (*Begriffsgeschichte*), also known as conceptual history.[21] This model will allow me to analyze the transfer of concepts across different regions and times. At this point, within the scholarship of *Begriffsgeschichte,* concepts are treated as merely linguistic entities. But, rather, they are shaped through and, in return, help shape historical events, texts and social institutions.[22] In the case of this study, I will investigate the transfer as well as critical juxtaposition of the concepts such as "the West", "authenticity", "modernization" and "progress". This study will also consult to a series of biographical accounts of Al-e Ahmad in order to contextualize his ideas. The utility of biography for social sciences has recently gained a momentum. Hence, scholars argue that there is a 'biographical turn' in the disciplines of social sciences.[23] Biography is a very popular genre for the general public. However, the relationship between social sciences and biography has been unsettled over the passing decades. Even in historical studies which are expected to have an intimate empirical interaction with biography, it somewhat remained a contested genre.[24] The reasons behind this are varied. Biography's narrative form as well as its exclusive concern with subjective, individual experiences have often relegated it to the margins of historical studies whereas social and political institutions inhabited more of a focal stage.[25] Although these convictions may seem justified to some degree, I firmly believe that they cannot fully discard the practicality of using biography in both historical studies and other disciplines of social sciences. Lastly, this study will appeal to the concept of genealogy as defined by in the existing

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[21] Reinhart Kosseleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002)

[22] Reinhart Kosseleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004) 75-92; Melvin Richter, *The History of Political and Social Concepts: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 9-25

[23] Prue Chamberlayne, Joanna Bornat and Tom Wengraf, *The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Science* (London: Verso, 2000)

[24] David Nasaw, "Introduction to AHR Roundtable: Historians and Biography" in *American Historical Review 3,* vol. 114, (June 2009) 573-578

[25] Barbara Caine, *Biography and History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 1

scholarship.[26] These particular evocations will hopefully allow me conceptualize how anti-Westernism has emerged and developed throughout centuries. In this respect, I will try to establish a genealogical trail which includes continuities as well as discontinuities. But, within this genealogical trail, all of the ideas interact and respond to one another in various ways.

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[26] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" in Donald. F. Bouchard, eds. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977); Mark Bevir, "What is Geneaology?" in *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 2, vol.2 (2008) 263-275

Chapter 1: Modern Muslim Critiques of the West: A Historical Survey

1.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to illuminate the genealogical development of the concept of the West and its critiques in the Islamic world during nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As one might expect, this genealogical trail is not monolithic. In this chapter, some of the ideas of Muslim thinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will be subjected to deeper analysis. Within this broad array of ideas, there are dominant, recurring trends as well as considerable divergences from these trends. However, in this chapter, all of these ideas will be placed in one, single conceptual framework: the critical juxtaposition of the West vis-à-vis the Islamic world. As has been shown in scholarship, these ideas interact and respond to one another in various ways. Furthermore, this chapter will contextualize and to some extent historicize these ideas. As such, it will incorporate some critical encounters and historical events in detail that, arguably, influenced and informed the making of these strands of thought.

The first section of this chapter analyzes the ideas of Muslim thinkers of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, mainly in the Arab world who came to be known as 'modernists'. These thinkers criticized European imperialism in various ways. They also believed in the essential compatibility of Islam and the foundations of Western civilization such as the pursuit of scientific knowledge and social progress. Additionally, they often emphasized the common cultural-intellectual heritage of the West and the Islamic world. Besides the historical roots of Abrahamic prophecy, the shared legacy of Muslim philosophers such as Avicenna and Averroes is invoked to justify this conviction. The most influential pioneers of this line of thought were Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida. Overall, these thinkers had not perceived the West in antagonism and they distinguished "the Western civilization" from European imperialism. Throughout this chapter, I argue in line with scholarship that this prevalent mood among Muslim thinkers of the nineteenth century had changed dramatically during the twentieth century in relation to several developments. Therefore, the second section of this chapter examines the Muslim thinkers of the mid- and later twentieth century who came to be labeled as 'Islamists'. To understand the intellectual shift from modernism to Islamism remains paramount as accordingly, the concept of the West had been glaringly transformed in the Islamic world. Besides their political critique of

European powers, these thinkers advanced the cultural critique of Western modernity and its set of attitudes towards the world. On this account, they rendered the ontologies of Islam and Western modernity as not only incompatible but also essentially antithetical. Lastly, these thinkers also refashioned Islam as a totalizing political ideology. This ideology operated the paradigm of a unitary Muslim world in opposition to the West. Altogether, with this chapter, I hope to establish a broad, encompassing historical context of anti-Westernism and its peculiar ideological entailments in the Islamic world in which Al-e Ahmad's *Gharbzadegi* will be placed.

1.2. Muslim Thinkers of the Nineteenth Century: Reformism and the West

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the majority of Muslim thinkers began to confront European imperialism as growing menace for the Islamic world. This conception developed in relation to several important historical events. Chief among these events was the Indian revolt of 1857 against the British East India Company. The history of Britain's colonial activities in India stretches back to the eighteenth century. In this respect, East India Company had been instrumental in sustaining Britain's economic and political interests in the country for quite a long time. However, it was not until the immediate aftermath of the revolt of 1857 when the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar was forcefully exiled to Burma, the British established direct control over the country. The year 1858 witnessed the establishment of British *Raj* (Rule) following the suppression of the revolt as the prerogatives of the East India Company was transferred to the British Crown. Prior to this, the British resorted to uncompromising and violent means to quell this joint Muslim-Hindu rebellion. Hundreds of civilians as well as Sepoys were killed by East India Company's army in India's major cities such as Delhi, Allahabad and Kanpur.[27] The effects of the revolt were devastating for both Muslim and Hindu populations. Sayyid Ahmed Khan (1817-1898), the forerunner of modernist Islamic thought in India, was working as an administrator in the East India Company when the revolt took place. As his life and writings after the revolt suggests, the brutality that Britain displayed during the revolt had not discouraged him from remaining loyal to the empire.[28] In

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[27] For a good review of the rebellion of 1857 see Eric Stokes and C.A. Bayly eds., *The Peasant Armed: The Indian Rebellion of 1857* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib, *Dastanbuy: A Diary of the Indian Revolt in 1857* translated by Khwaja Ahmad Faruqi (London: Asia Publishing House, 1970)

[28] George F. I. Graham, *The Life and Work of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1974) 15-24

1859, he published his famous *Asbab-e Baghavat-e Hind* (*The Causes of the Indian Revolt)* in Urdu. This work took an apologetic stance in its analysis of the revolt. Thus, Khan tried to correct the misperception of the British that the revolt was, in fact, a Muslim conspiracy against British power in India.[29] Another very influential modernist Muslim thinker who experienced the revolt of 1857 and its repercussions was Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897). As suggested by Nikki Keddie, al-Afghani was in India during the years of 1857 as he went there at a young age to supplement his religious education with positive sciences.[30] However, in his maturity, al-Afghani's stance toward the British had been very different than Khan. Presumably, al-Afghani was unsettled by the sheer violence British officers exerted against Muslim populations in order to suppress their uprising. Hence, at the time, for al-Afghani, the Indian revolt of 1857 might have become a paradigm for European imperialism: an enterprise of political and economic dominance assumed through force and coercion. Due to his anti-imperialist mindset and activism, al-Afghani had clashes with British authorities throughout his lifetime, particularly in Egypt and India.[31]

To his best ability, al-Afghani tried to reveal the immoral and self-contradictory aspects of the colonial ventures of European powers throughout the Islamic world.[32] Furthermore, he also strongly countered the biased attitude of European thinkers toward Islam and Muslims with rational arguments. This was best displayed in his diatribe against Ernest Renan's lecture *Islam and Science* as he argued that Islam has never been inimical to the pursuit of scientific progress in response to Renan's opposite claims.[33] For al-Afghani, the common agenda of the European powers was to transfer resources and wealth of the Muslim countries to the West. By so doing, al-Afghani claimed, Europeans aimed to materialize the permanent economic and political

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[29] Syed Ahmed Khan, *The Causes of the Indian Revolt* translated into English (Benares: Medical Hall Press, 1873)

[30] See Nikki Keddie's "Sayyid Jamal al-Din 'al-Afghani'" in Ali Rahnema, *The Pioneers of the Islamic Revival* (New Jersey and London: Zed Books, 2005) 14-15

[31] See the related chapters of Nikki R. Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din ''al-Afghani'': A Political Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972) and Muhammad Abduh, *Biographie* in Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani's *Réfutation des matérialistes* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1942)

[32] In his short-lived pan-Islamist periodical *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa* (The Firmest Bond) published between March and October 1884, al-Afghani argued that the Western military advance in the lands of Muslims was against the peaceful tenets of Christianity. For al-Afghani Europe's imperial powers were violating the principles of the Gospel urging to be just and non-violent by indulging in killings and exploitation in new colonies. See Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, *al-Athar al-kamila* (Complete Works), ed. Sayyid Hadi Khusrawshahi, 9 vols (Cairo, 2002), *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa,* 118; Umar Ryad, "Anti-Imperialism and the Pan-Islamic Movement" in David Motadel eds, *Islam and the European Empires* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) 136-137

[33] See al-Afghani's "Reply to Renan" in Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din ''al-Afghani''* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972) 181-187

dependence of Muslim nations on the West.[34] Interestingly, al-Afghani rarely spoke and wrote about Islam in religious terms. Rather, he spoke in sociopolitical terms: for him, Islam accounted for a common ideology for Muslims which can potentially unite them in solidarity against the yoke of European colonialism.[35] Moreover, al-Afghani perceived Islam as a mainspring of civilization. In fact, Islamic civilization was superior to European civilization because al-Afghani thought that the West borrowed its intellectual foundations from the Islamic civilization.[36] As far as al-Afghani was concerned, Europe's sole superiority over Islamic civilization was its prowess in economy and technology. These were brought largely due to Europe's advances in positive sciences and education. Therefore, al-Afghani maintained that Muslims should integrate these advances of Europe within their indigenous culture to challenge the political hegemony of the West over the Islamic world.[37]

Al-Afghani's impact was far-reaching as many Muslim thinkers from various regions picked up on his ground-breaking ideas and carried his zeal for modernism. Islamic Jurist Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), Egypt's leading voice of reform, was among these thinkers. Abduh befriended al-Afghani in Cairo around the year of 1872 when he was studying at the al-Azhar university. Shortly afterwards, he became al-Afghani's disciple and took his lessons in mathematics, philosophy and theology.[38] Together with al-Afghani, Abduh also founded the *Salafi* movement in Egypt which essentially aimed to engineer an Islamic revival based on modernist premises.[39] Throughout his life-time, Muhammad Abduh's views on the British had been similar to those of al-Afghani. He was discontented by how Britain blatantly betrayed the lofty ideals it came to represent as a result of its colonial ventures in Egypt.[40] Of course, unlike

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[34] See *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa* 1, March 13, (1884) in Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, *Al-Athar al-kamila*; Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din ''al-Afghani'',* 175-180

[35] Umar Ryad, "Anti-Imperialism and the Pan-Islamic Movement" in David Motadel eds, *Islam and the European Empires* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) 131-149; see also al-Afghani's various writings published in the journal *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa* through Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990) 318-320

[36] To support this argument, he refers back to the golden age of Islam when Europe was considerably influenced by the intellectual legacy of Muslim thinkers such as Avicenna and Averroes. See Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din ''al-Afghani'',* 45-53

[37] Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din ''al-Afghani'',* 101-109

[38] Nikki R. Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din ''al-Afghani'': A Political Biography,* 81-83

[39] Oliver Scharbrodt, "The Salafiyya and Sufism: Muhammad 'Abduh and his *Risalat al-waridat* (Treatise on mystical inspirations)." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 70 (2007) 89–115

[40] Abduh was quoted as saying: "We Egyptians believed once in English liberalism and English sympathy; but we believe no longer, for facts are stronger than words. Your liberalness we see plainly is only for yourselves, and your sympathy with us is that of the wolf for the lamb which he designs to eat." See Amin Osman, *Muhammad Abduh* (Washington D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1954) 59

India where the British enjoyed total control over civic administration, Egypt was ruled by the hereditary reign of its newly established monarchy of *khedives*. While as "viceroys", the *khedives* were formally bound to the rule of the Ottoman empire, the British exerted considerable influence on the Egyptian government during the second half of the nineteenth century. In addition, the British were already benefitting financially from the operation of Egypt's resources including the building and opening of the Suez Canal. However, this pseudo-independent period of Egypt ended with the failed proto-nationalist 'Urabi Revolt in 1882 when Britain invaded the country.[41]

Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) actively supported the revolt. After the revolt, he was exiled to Beirut by Khedive Tawfiq for three years. From Beirut he went to Paris in 1884 to join al-Afghani in the editorship of the short-lived pan-Islamist periodical *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa* (The Firmest Bond).[42] Although Abduh's anti-imperialist sentiments had been strong, as a thinker he was impressed by the progress of the West in science, just like al-Afghani. He urged Muslims to study the Western sources of knowledge that ultimately originated this progress.[43] On the other hand, he was also concerned about the repercussions of blind Westernization in the Islamic world and struggled with the question of authenticity (*asala*). Abduh believed that the integration of Europe's values and culture besides its science would uproot genuine Muslim culture. Therefore, for him, European ideas should not be altogether rejected but, instead, should be "filtered, distilled and integrated in a society whose core is religious and whose religious leaders have their place in the intellectual *avant garde* creating the new from the old. This can be done without losing what is perceived as essentially Islamic."[44] Abduh's concerns over the repercussions of Westernization and preservation of Islamic culture were very much attuned with the historical contingencies of his time. The rapid penetration of the British into Egypt must have partly nurtured these concerns. Naturally, in the wake of his encounter with various social and cultural tensions the British rule created in Egypt, Abduh might have thought

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[41] See Robert L. Tignor, *Egypt: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011) 196-228

[42] Between 1880-1882, Abduh acted as one of the leading figures of the civilian wing of the national opposition. He was the chief editor of *Waqai al-Misriyya* newspaper and regularly published his opinions. He often rebuked the involvement of foreign powers in Egypt. See Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789-1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970) 133-134

[43] John W. Livingston, "Muhammad Abduh on Science" in *Muslim World* 3-4, vol.85 (July-October 1995), 215-234

[44] See the original of this testimony in Rashid Rida, *Tarikh al-ustadh al-imam al-shaykh Muhammad Abduh* (The Biography of the Imam Master Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh), (Cairo: Dar al-Fadilah, 2003) 224. The translation is quoted from Umar Ryad, "Anti-Imperialism and the Pan-Islamic Movement", 142

that colonial expansion over the Islamic world and, as its byproduct, the dissemination of Western values would undermine the common Muslim heritage of the region.[45]

Among the pioneers of the *Salafi* movement in Egypt, it was Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935) who wrote most extensively and systematically about the West in his journal *al-Manar* (The Lighthouse). As the prominent disciple of Muhammad Abduh, Rida was tremendously influenced by the oeuvre of his mentor.[46] It remains beyond doubt that the link between the two thinkers was strong. However, Rida's thinking on the various issues of his time significantly diverged from the ideas of Muhammad Abduh at times as well. Rida developed his perception of the West based on his various encounters.[47] In his early thinking, he tried to analyze the underlying causes of the disparity between the advanced Europe and backward East.[48] He picked up on the argument that the driving force behind the progress of Europe was education. Of course, this argument was, by no means, a novelty. From Rifa'a al-Tahtawi (1801-1873) to Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, it had been a recurring trope in the Islamic world during the nineteenth century.[49] However, Rida thought that there was a direct link between education and Europe's political development as well. According to Rida, education endowed Europeans a unique awareness that they eventually fought to restrict the authority of their rules and establish constitutional governments. Concurrently, this provided Europeans freedom of thought and exertion of political rights.[50] On the other hand, just like al-Afghani, Rashid Rida was convinced that Europeans, in fact, learnt the foundations of their science from the Islamic civilization.[51] Rida accommodated similar concerns and sensibilities to those of

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[45] See also Yvonne Haddad's analysis of Muhammad Abduh in Ali Rahnema, *The Pioneers of the Islamic Revival* (New Jersey and London: Zed Books, 1994) 35-46

[46] For instance, Albert Hourani even went so far to define Rida as "Abduh's liege man: the mouthpiece of his ideas, the guardian of his good name, and his biographer." See Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789-1939,* 226

[47] Emad Shahin remarks Rida's personal contacts with liberal Christian intellectuals and American missionaries in Beirut, his travels to Switzerland in 1922 as vice president of the Syria-Palestinian Congress and to Germany. See Emad Shahin, "Muhammad Rashid Rida's Perspectives on the West as Reflected in *al-Manar*" in *The Muslim World 79,* (1989) 113-115

[48] In his journal *al-Manar,* Rida wrote "Europe attacks us with the strength of its nations, sciences, industries, organization, wealth, shrewdness, and wisdom… so long as we remain in this state of ignorance, disorder, fragmentation, and congealment, we will never be able to stand before Europe." See the original in Rashid Rida, *al-Manar* 8, (1905) 759; the English translation is quoted from Emad Shahin, "Muhammad Rashid Rida's Perspectives on the West as Reflected in *al-Manar*" in *The Muslim World 79,* (1989) 115

[49] Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789-1939,* 69-73

[50] See *al-Manar* 1, (1898) 869; Emad Shahin, "Muhammad Rashid Rida's Perspectives on the West as Reflected in *al-Manar*", 115-116

[51] In *al-Manar,* Rashid Rida indicated that "some fair-minded European scholars and intellectuals had admitted that the beginning of modern European civilization had been a consequence of what the Europeans acquired from Islam in Spain at the hands of Averroes and his disciples, and during their wars against the Muslims." See the original in *al-Manar* 1, (1898) 733; the English translation is quoted from Emad Shahin, "Muhammad Rashid Rida's Perspectives on the West as Reflected in *al-Manar*", 116

Abduh over the Westernization processes in the Islamic world. He believed that Western-oriented schools in the Islamic world train generations of intellectuals and activists that eventually become alien to their own cultural traditions. [52] Rida blames these native Westernizers of blindly mimicking the cultural norms of Europeans without having a nuanced appreciation of their achievements in science. Ultimately, he contended that these native Westernizers in the Islamic world contribute to the disintegration of the social bonds of their nations by promulgating alien values. [53] As it will be seen in the upcoming sections, this critical stance toward the Western-minded intellectuals and the perception of these intellectuals as "inside threats" becomes a quintessential trope in the twentieth-century Islamist critiques of the West. Nevertheless, overall, like Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida was well-aware of the difference between modernization and Westernization. Hence, he wanted Muslim nations including Egypt to immerse the scientific knowledge of the West in their own societies while preserving the culture and morality of Islam. [54]

In the very beginning of the twentieth century, nationalist movements in Egypt were on the rise. These nationalist movements overwhelmingly strove to free Egypt from the yoke of the British and ensure its economic independence. All in all, the emerging forerunners of Egyptian nationalism like Ahmed Lutfi al-Sayyid (1872-1963) and Sa'd Zaghlul (1859-1927) knew that this was the precondition of political independence. [55] Interestingly, though, throughout his writings in the early 1900s, Rida displayed an accommodating stance toward the rule of Britain in Egypt. [56] Along with other things, for Rida, Egypt enjoyed security and freedom of press under the British. [57] As it is argued by Emad Shahin, this demeanor might have been formed particularly based on one conviction: a revolution in Egypt against the British would not succeed. [58] In the post 'Urabi revolt context, one can see this conviction as justified since the memories of that devastating failure presumably were still vibrant during the early

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[52] Rashid Rida, *al-Manar* 20, (1917-1918) 341-343; Emad Shahin, "Muhammad Rashid Rida's Perspectives on the West as Reflected in *al-Manar*", 118; Emad Shahin, *Through Muslim Eyes: M. Rashid Rida and the West* (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1993) 47-54

[53] Rashid Rida, *al-Manar* 18, (1915) 229; Emad Shahin, "Muhammad Rashid Rida's Perspectives on the West as Reflected in *al-Manar*", 119; Emad Shahin, *Through Muslim Eyes: M. Rashid Rida and the West,* 47-54

[54] Emad Shahin, "Muhammad Rashid Rida's Perspectives on the West as Reflected in *al-Manar*", 124

[55] Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789-1939,* 179-189

[56] Rida thought that if a Muslim country had to be ruled by a European country, it should ideally be Britain since the under the British rule Muslims in India and Egypt enjoyed freedom of religion. See *al-Manar* 9 (April 1906) 231-233; Mahmoud Haddad, "Arab Religious Nationalism in the Colonial Era: Rereading Rashid Rida's Ideas on the Caliphate" in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 2, vol. 117 (April-June 1997), 253–77, 255

[57] See *al-Manar* 7 (1904) 358; Emad Shahin, "Muhammad Rashid Rida's Perspectives on the West as Reflected in *al-Manar*", 127

[58] Emad Shahin, "Muhammad Rashid Rida's Perspectives on the West as Reflected in *al-Manar*", 126

1900s. However, later on, he changed his perception of both the colonial rule of Britain, in particular, and, European imperialism, in general. To understand why this change occurred, one has to trace his experiences. Thus, at this point, several caveats can be put in order. In 1911, Italian forces invaded the Ottoman *vilayet* (province) of Tripoli through an opportunistic and aggressive military campaign. In the wake of this invasion, Rida who maintained an attachment to the Ottoman empire as the hub of the Caliphate, started to express his frustration.[59] In *al-Manar,* he called upon Egyptians to support the Ottoman empire through various means in its defense of Tripoli against the Italian aggression.[60] After the First World War, with drawing particular inspiration from Woodrow Wilson's call for self-determination, Egyptian nationalists vocally started to demand independence. To participate the Paris Peace Conference, a *wafd* (delegation) was formed mainly by the efforts of Lutfi al-Sayyid and Sa'd Zaghlul. But, their request to attend the conference for discussing the future of Egypt was rejected by the British. In March 1919, Zaghlul and the other members of the *wafd* were arrested and, then, deported to Malta.[61] In this period, Rida also had several clashes with the British authorities as they wanted to keep him under close scrutiny.[62]

Therefore, in the wake of these events, Rida's outlook towards the British changed dramatically during the early 1920s. He conveyed his late realization that the reforms of Britain in Egypt which he once perceived as positive initiatives, solely intended to sustain its imperial interests.[63] Two important developments further bolstered Rida's disillusionment. One was the placement of Syria and Iraq under mandate of France and Britain by the materialization of the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916). Whereas the other was the Balfour Declaration (1926) that announced Britain's support for the Jewish settlers in Palestine.[64] Rida thought that the British were using Jewish settlers to undermine the power of Arabs in the Middle East. For him, this newly emerging Jewish state would become the proxy of the West in the region, preventing the potential political unification of the Arabs of Egypt, Hijaz and Palestine. Besides this, the new

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[59] See Rida's writings in *al-Manar* 14 (1911-1912) 840-843; Emad Shahin, "Muhammad Rashid Rida's Perspectives on the West as Reflected in *al-Manar*", 128

[60] *Al-Manar* 15 (1912) 5

[61] Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789-1939,* 217-221

[62] See Emad Shahin, "Muhammad Rashid Rida's Perspectives on the West as Reflected in *al-Manar*", 129

[63] See *al-Manar* 22 (1920) 398; Emad Shahin, "Muhammad Rashid Rida's Perspectives on the West as Reflected in *al-Manar*", 129

[64] In *al-Manar,* Rida wrote: "Europe has destroyed all the good reputation it had in the Orient after its experience during and after the war. Nobody, any more, believes the word of the Europeans, nor does anybody trust them, or even perceive them to be qualified to exercise justice and virtue." See the original in *al-Manar* 22 (1920) 142; the English translation is quoted from Emad Shahin, "Muhammad Rashid Rida's Perspectives on the West as Reflected in *al-Manar*", 129

enemy within would distract the struggle of Arabs against European imperialism.[65] Coming to the 1930s, Rida's mindset became ever more confrontational. In a letter he sent to his friend Shakib Arslan (1869-1946), a zealous Lebanese pan-Islamist writer, Rida revealed his proposals to the Muslim Youth Association (*Jam'iyat al-Shubān al-Muslimūn*) for forming armed groups from its members to fight against the British.[66] At the first sight, this particular resurgent mood may seem as the byproduct of Rida's personal perception and experiences. But, as history unfolded, this resurgent mood prevailed in Egypt later on among Muslim thinkers and political activists. It also harnessed the formation of social movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood (*Jama'at al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*). In fact, it is attested elsewhere that Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, was influenced by the ideas of Rashid Rida.[67]

1.2.1 Critics from the Ottoman Empire

During the second half of the nineteenth century, many critiques of European imperialism were also articulated in the milieu of the Ottoman empire. Despite being sporadic and largely unsystematic, these critiques engaged with the phenomenon of imperialism and surfaced its immoral facets. One of the earliest of these critiques belongs to Ali Suavi (1838-1878), a leading Ottoman reformer who was enthusiastically committed to the Young Turks circles in Europe and their ideology. In 1870, Ali Suavi advanced a series of critical remarks on European imperialism throughout his article entitled *Demokrasi: Hükûmet-i Halk, Müsavat* (Democracy: Government by the People, Equality). This article appeared in the Paris-based Turkish newspaper *Ulum.* Through a rambling monologue, Ali Suavi criticized European powers of proclaiming themselves as the champions of democracy, freedom and equality while violating the rights and dignity of the peoples in their colonies.[68] Yet again, hypocrisy on the part of the

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[65] See *al-Manar* 15 (1929) 385-393, 450-468; Uriya Shavit, "Zionism as told by Rashid Rida" in *The Journal of Israeli History* 1, vol.34, (2015) 36-40

[66] See Shakib Arslan, *Al-Sayyid Rashid Rida wa ikha' arba'ina sana* (*Rashid Rida and Forty Years of Fraternity*) (Damascus, Matba'at Ibn Zaydun, 1937) 576; Emad Shahin, "Muhammad Rashid Rida's Perspectives on the West as Reflected in *al-Manar*", 130

[67] See the testimony of Hasan al-Banna's younger brother Jamal al-Banna in *al-Sayyid Rashid Rida, Munshi' al-Manar wa-ra'id al-salafiyya al-Haditha* (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-Islami, 2006) 4, 50; Ana Belen Soage, "Rashid Rida's Legacy" in *The Muslim World* 1, vol. 98 (January 2008) 3

[68] Particularly, Ali Suavi wrote that "Strangely enough, while the republicans in England and France speak about democracy, equality, and freedom, they have no wish to relinquish their hold over Canada, India, or Algeria. Just look how those Frenchmen talk pretentiously about freedom and equality, all the while seeking world domination like Caesar." Quoted from Ali Suavi, "Democracy: Government by the People, Equality," *Ulum Gazetesi* (Paris), May 17, 1870, reprinted in Charles Kurzman, eds., *Modernist Islam, 1840–1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 142

imperial powers of Europe appeared as the generic defect of the West. Coming to the 1880s, the biased outlooks of Europeans toward Islam and Muslims as well became a common concern that late Ottoman intellectuals avidly tried to address. At this point, Ernest Renan's infamous lecture "Islam and Science" delivered at Sorbonne University in 1883 mirrored this biased, 'Orientalist' demeanor.[69] As Renan's lecture appeared in the French newspaper *Journal des débats* in 1883, it courted the protests and polemical responses from Muslim thinkers. Besides al-Afghani who wrote a well-conceived response to the claims of Renan, Namık Kemal, one of the most renown writers of the late Ottoman era, also engaged with "Islam and Science".[70] In his *Renan Müdafaanamesi* (Defense against Renan) Namık Kemal rejected Renan's claims and argued that Islam as a religion is compatible with modern civilization. Additionally, he emphasized the common cultural-intellectual heritage of the Islamic world and Judeo-Christian West. Within this framework, Namık Kemal challenged the dichotomy between East and West which was the primary substance of Renan's argumentation.[71] In the post-*tanzimat* context, the overwhelming majority of Ottoman intellectuals were modernists who perceived their own heritage as a part of Western civilization and progress.[72] Therefore, their frustration was mostly stemming from the exclusivist, Orientalist outlooks of their European peers toward Muslims that rendered the ontologies of Islam and Western modernity not only incompatible but also essentially antagonistic.

Starting from the 1880s, Ottoman modernists frequently attended Orientalists congresses in Europe to enter into a dialogue with European thinkers and address their misconceptions on Islam. In 1889, Ahmed Midhat Efendi (1844-1912), one of the most prolific writers of the late Ottoman era, went to the Orientalist congress in Stockholm. In the congress, Ahmet Midhat Efendi impressed his European peers with his acumen in matters pertaining to religion, philosophy and science. He wanted to show how Ottoman intellectuals were like at the time and, thus, possibly clear the biases of European Orientalists.[73] Another similar moment was

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[69] Ernest Renan, "Islam and Science" in Ernest Renan and William G. Hutchison eds., *The Poetry of the Celtic Races and Other Peoples* (London: Walter Scott, 1896) 84-108

[70] Ataullah Bayezidof, the mufti of Russia also wrote a response to Renan's "Islam and Science". See Ataullah Bayezidof, *İslam ve Medeniyet* (Islam and Civilization) (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1993)

[71] See Namık Kemal, *Renan Müdafaanamesi: İslamiyet ve Maarif* (Ankara: Milli Kültür Yayınları, 1962)

[72] Ismail Kara, *Türkiye'de İslamcılık Düşüncesi I* (İstanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 1997) 19-20; Cemil Aydın, "Between Occidentalism and the Global Left: Islamist Critiques of the West in Turkey" in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East 3*, vol.26 (Duke University Press, 2006) 448-449

[73] See Carter Vaughn Findley, "An Ottoman Occidentalist in Europe: Ahmed Midhat Meets Madame Gulnar, 1889" in *American Historical Review* 1, vol. 103 (February 1993) 15-49; Baki Asiltürk, "Ahmet Midhat Efendi Müşteşrikler Kongresinde" (Ahmed Mithad Efendi at the Orientalist Congress) in *Türk Dili* 521 (May 1995) 570-76

Numan Kamil Bey's participation to the tenth Orientalist congress at Geneva in 1894. He was dispatched by the Ottoman administration of the time and appeared at the congress as an Ottoman official.[74] In this congress, Numan Kamil Bey presented a semi-official paper that was later on published as *İslamiyet ve Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniye Hakkında Doğru bir Söz* (A True Remark on Islam and the Ottoman empire). Throughout this paper, Numan Kamil Bey tried to argue that Islam is compatible with modernity with placing a particular emphasis on the reformist policies of the Ottoman empire. For Numan Kamil Bey, these policies revealed how the rule of the Ottoman administration was attuned with the contemporary developments in science and education. In his presentation, he also criticized the ideas of Muslim inferiority by addressing Ernest Renan, Constantin Volney, and William Gladstone. Lastly, he requested the audience to evaluate his arguments with sincerity and be objective in their attitudes toward Islam.[75] Overall, both figures seemed to present the modern, reformist image of the late Ottoman empire as an antithesis of Europeans' perceptions of Muslim states as backward and regressive polities.

However, among the late Ottoman intellectuals, it was perhaps Halil Halid (1869-1931) who delivered the most extensive critique of European imperialism throughout his book *The Crescent Versus the Cross*. Halid lived most of his life in Britain due to his sympathy to Young Turks and political opposition to regime of Sultan Abdülhamid II. During his years in Britain, Halid maintained a close relationship with the famous British Orientalist Elias John Wilkinson Gibb. He also taught at Cambridge University in various capacities and became the member of the university's Board of Oriental Studies.[76] In 1907, his seminal *The Crescent Versus the Cross* was published in English at London.[77] Throughout the book, Halid proposed a late nineteenth century version of clash of civilizations thesis. Halid started his book by expressing that he admired the achievements of Western civilization once and believed in its promises for the world like many of the contemporaries of his generation. However, later on, he reflected his disillusionment with the Western civilization when he came to acquire a true grasp of how Europeans were betraying their own proclaimed values by implementing vicious imperialistic

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[74] Cemil Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007) 53-54
[75] See Numan Kamil Bey, *İslamiyet ve Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniye Hakkında Doğru bir Söz* (İstanbul: Tahir Bey Matbaası, 1898)
[76] Syed Tanvir Wasti, "Halil Halid: Anti-Imperialist Muslim Intellectual" in *Middle Eastern Studies* 29, no.3 (July 1993) 559–579; also see Halid's autobiography Halil Halid, *The Diary of a Turk* (London: A. C. Black, 1903)
[77] Halid's *The Crescent Versus the Cross* was written and published in English during the year of 1907. I prefer to cite from its version published in Ottoman Turkish in the same year. See Halil Halid, *Hilal ve Salib Munazaasi* (Cairo: Matbaa-i Hindiye, 1907)

policies throughout the world.[78] Halid believed that a Christian agenda was implicit in European imperialism. He perceived Europeans' interventions in the Islamic world as modern Christian crusades. For Halid, the real aim of the Europeans was to create "the Kingdom of God" on earth and he pointed to their missionary activities in the colonized lands as an attestation.[79] He also thought that Europeans wanted Muslim states, particularly the Ottoman empire, to disintegrate since they perceived the carriers of the Islamic civilization as the most important resistance force against their absolute hegemony over the world.[80] To counter European imperialism, on the other hand, Halid saw the necessity of forming a pan-Islamic unification (ittihad-ı İslam), in though and action, from the Muslim nations.[81] But, perhaps, the most notable analytic contribution of Halid to the conceptualization of the West was his analysis of imperial era supremacist discourses. He argued that while mentally rendering Muslims and other non-European nations uncivilized (gayr-i mütemeddin) communities, Europeans also self-fashioned themselves as the representatives of superior Western civilization over the passing decades. Moreover, for Halid, this supremacist discourse served as a rationale for Europeans' civilizing mission (vazife-i temeddün) which was materialized by the invasions and colonization of non-European countries.[82] Briefly, to label Halil Halid as an avid Ottoman anti-imperialist would not be a misnomer. Throughout *The Crescent versus the Cross,* he stressed the religious motivations behind the European imperialism of the nineteenth century. Therefore, for Halid, much of the international politics of his time was orchestrated by the conflict between Christian West and Muslim East as two communities of values.

In conclusion, the modernist Muslim thinkers of the nineteenth century were mostly preoccupied with the plight of European imperialism. Therefore, their critiques were overwhelmingly political, directed at the interventions of European powers throughout the Islamic world. At the same time, they also addressed the biased, Orientalist demeanors of European intellectuals. Overwhelmingly, these thinkers believed in the essential compatibility

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[78] Halil Halid, *Hilal ve Salib Munazaasi,* 4-6

[79] To support this particular argument, he also quotes Matthew 10: 34 as "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword." See Halil Halid, *Hilal ve Salib Munazaasi,* 41

[80] Halil Halid, *Hilal ve Salib Munazaasi* 27-31; Cemil Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia,* 66; Syed Tanvir Wasti, "Halil Halid: Anti-Imperialist Muslim Intellectual", 568-569

[81] However, Halid did not clearly define this pan-Islamic unification. He, first, wanted all Muslims to be genuinely aware of Europeans' attempts to infiltrate in Muslim countries through myriad ways. Second, he urged them to nationalize their own natural resources and boycott Western goods in their countries. Lastly, he felt that a political unification among the Muslim states is necessary to effectively determine and implement these policies. See Halil Halid, *Hilal ve Salib Munazaasi,* 180-212

[82] Halil Halid, *Hilal ve Salib Munazaasi* 8-10, 170-179; Cemil Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia,* 66-68

of Islam and the foundations of the Western civilization. Furthermore, they emulated the achievements of the Western civilization such as its progress in science and education. I argue in line with scholarship that this prevalent mood has changed in the twentieth century in relation to several historical developments. The next chapter will show that chief among these developments were the First World War and the formation of Israel in the Middle East. Eventually, a shift toward radicalism in thought and action occurred in the Islamic world. This was particularly marked by the rise of Islamism. The mindsets of the twentieth-century Islamist thinkers harbored two major points of rupture. Internally, they broke up with the tenets of modernism and rejected the idea of religious reform. Externally, they took an uncompromising attitude towards the West. They advocated the incompatibility of Islam and the West with simultaneously articulating critiques of Western modernity.

1.3 Muslim Thinkers of the Twentieth Century: Islamism and the West

Many pivotal developments changed the scene of international politics during the twentieth century. The First World War marked the definitive disintegration of several multinational empires that ruled over vast territories for centuries. Among these polities were the Ottoman, Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires. The disintegration of these empires led to the emergence of new nation states throughout Europe and the Middle East. As far as the Middle East was concerned specifically, its political landscape has changed radically after the First World War with the emergence of these new nation states. In the former Arab provinces of the Ottoman empire, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq emanated as the new mandates of France and Britain. Concurrently, after its war of independence, Turkey was established as a secular nation state in 1923 under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Afterwards, he launched a series of reforms aiming primarily to modernize and, to a certain extent, Westernize the country. In Iran, Reza Shah ended the reign of Qajar dynasty with a coup and established his military monarchy in 1925. He implemented reforms similar to those of Atatürk in Iran. Overall, after the First World War, the Middle East was transformed by these changes that engendered new social and cultural dynamics throughout the region. According to Albert Hourani, the early twentieth century up to the Second World War was part of the "liberal age" for the Arab world when the European influence procured new ideas of social reform, individual rights and democratic representation.[83]

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[83] See the Preface of Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789-1939*

But, this was only one side of this vibrant and equally turbulent period. On its other side, many resurgent Islamist movements have flourished in reaction to the changing political setting of the Arab world and new tensions emerged accordingly. At this point, the formation of Israel in the Middle East was perhaps the most pivotal event that Arab intellectuals and political activists constantly grappled with. As the analysis of Rashid Rida revealed already, Israel was perceived as a colonial enclave in the Middle East mostly due to the support it mustered from the West to its cause. This cultivated a broader conception of Western imperialism as a menace operating through complex mechanisms and multiple forces. As such, for instance, the Muslim brotherhood sought Zionism as the new proxy force of Western imperialism and their cooperation represented the utmost inimical geopolitical alliance to Muslims. [84] On this account, Muslim Brotherhood represented the new typology of Islamist organization that stimulated a wave of resurgence in thought and action. The organization embedded its ideological convictions deep into Egypt and other Arab states such as Jordan, Palestine and Syria partly with the inspiring writings of Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966).

In South Asia, a similar wave of resurgence was represented by Abu al-A'la Mawdudi's *Jamāt-i Islāmi* (The Community of Islam) during the interwar years. Eventually, it played a significant role in the formation of Pakistan, the first Islamic republic to emerge in the twentieth century. In Turkey, on the other hand, Islamism evolved as an opposing ideology to the policies of secular Turkish state mostly by individual activism. In this respect, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and his seminal publication *Büyük Doğu* (The Great Orient) had been very instrumental in carrying out the Islamist zeal. At the same time, these thinkers, that is to say Mawdudi, Qutb and Kısakürek, launched comprehensive critiques of the West which added to the conceptual repertoire of Islamism. These critiques were not so much directed to politics of Western powers but contemplated on the peculiar doctrines, socio-cultural norms, attitudes and practices of the West that informed what we call "Western modernity". In what follows, the critiques of these thinkers as well as their encounters and experiences will be discussed.

Sayyid Abul Ala al-Mawdudi (1903-1979) has been a pivotal figure in the context of twentieth-century British India. His political and religious thought had contributed substantially to the formation of resurgent political Islam in the world. Mawdudi was a talented writer and ferocious critic of the West who perceived Islam as a comprehensive ideology

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[84] Richard Paul Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 229-230

governing all aspects of human life. In his very early ages, he began to learn Arabic and Persian from his father Mir Sayyid Ahmad Hasan who was a respected Sufi *pir* (spiritual master) in New Delhi. This enabled him to access the classical sources of Islamic theology throughout his life.[85] Upon the death of his father in 1918, Mawdudi started to work as a journalist in a local newspaper *Taj* at the city of Jabalpur.[86] After working for *Taj,* he maintained his career in journalism in various newspapers including *al-Jamaat* (The Community) and *Tarjuman al-Qur'an* (Qur'anic Interpretation).[87] In 1941, Mawdudi established his party *Jamaat-i Islami* (The Community of Islam) in British India. In a relatively short time, *Jamaat-i Islami* became an influential political organization, propagating Mawdudi's totalizing vision of Islamic state.[88] Mawdudi's party continued to be an active force in Pakistan as well after the emergence of the country, although, interestingly, he was against the establishment of independent Pakistan on the grounds that it was essentially a nationalist project, not an Islamic one.[89] There were many tensions in the early twentieth-century British India that shaped Mawdudi's perception of Islam and its interaction with the West. As is known, after the outbreak of the Indian Revolt in 1857, the Muslim elite in India underwent a transformation that was largely propelled by the apologetic modernist tradition of Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan and his contemporaries such as Chiragh Ali. This tradition that was primarily sustained by Khan's Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, strived to reconcile the Islamic tradition with European rationalism.[90] Even, Mawdudi's father Mir Sayyid Ahmad Hasan was among the first students of the college at Aligarth although he left the college later on to study law.[91] For Khan, the expansion of Western civilization was inevitable. In the wake of this reality, Khan argued that Muslims should reconfigure their religious beliefs and commitments based on modernist

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[85] Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) 10-14

[86] *Ibid,* 16

[87] *Ibid,* 19-26, 30-40

[88] For a good review of the history of *Jamaat-i Islami* see Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994)

[89] Eran Lerman, "Mawdudi's Concept of Islam" in *Middle Eastern Studies* 4, vol.17 (October 1981) 495-496

[90] For more information on the Aligarth movement and the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College see Shan Muhammad, *The Aligarth Movement: Basic Documents 1864–1898* (Meerut : Meenakshi Prakashan, 1978)

[91] See Sayyid Abu'l A'la Mawdudi's "Khud Nivisht" (Autobiography) in Muhammad Yusuf Buhtah, *Mawlana Mawdudi: Apni awr Dusrun ki Nazar Main* (Mawlana Mawdudi: In His Own and Others' View) (Lahore: Idarah-i Ma'arif-i Islami, 1984) 27; Ali Rahnema, *The Pioneers of the Islamic Revival,* 99

premises.[92] This meant that the Islamic tradition which became a stagnant theology at the hands of the Ulama according to Khan, should be reformed and attuned to the new age.[93]

Mawdudi, on the other hand, was very much critical of apologetic Islamic modernism and its teachings.[94] He believed that trying to reconcile Islam with the West was impossible as well as unnecessary. Thus, for Mawdudi, the norms of Islam and the West were incompatible since they entailed radically different ontologies.[95] This conviction also bolstered his very peculiar perception of history unfolding through a constant battle between Islam and un-Islam (*kufr*) which, for Mawdudi, was represented by the West and distorted renderings of Islam.[96] Furthermore, as Mawdudi advocated, there was no need for religious reform since Islam already harbored codes of conduct that were all-encompassing, coherent, complete and perfect.[97] In fact, Mawdudi was convinced that Muslims all around the world were in the state of decline because they abandoned to live up to these conducts. Therefore, Muslims should reassert true Islam as prescribed by the Qur'an and *hadith* in their communities in order to overcome this state of decline. For Mawdudi, this also necessitated an Islamic state which could properly implement the conducts of Islam on the level of governance.[98]

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[92] For instance, Khan emphasized the importance of *ijtihad* (Independent Reasoning) in interpreting religious sources and urged Muslims to abandon *taqlīd* (Imitation, conformity to prior legal precedents and doctrines) which heavily contributed to the decline of Islam according to Khan. See Bashir Ahmad Dar, *Religious Thought of Sayyid Ahmad Khan* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1957) 113-114, 248-254

[93] See Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan's "Lecture on Islam" translated from Urdu in Christian W. Troll, *Sayyid Ahmed Khan: A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978) 307-332

[94] Mawdudi is quoted as saying "Western civilization has become the judge of the merits and 'faults' of Islam-not vice versa…In Egypt, Shaykh Muhammad Abduh adopted a similar line of compromise and thus opened the door wide for the Westernizers in the Arabic-speaking world who came after him." See the original in Maryam Jameelah and Maulana Maudoodi, *Correspondence between Maulana Maudoodi and Maryam Jameelah* (New Delhi: Crescent Publications, 1996) 57-58; the English translation is quoted from Eran Lerman, "Mawdudi's Concept of Islam", 496

[95] To illuminate the dichotomy between Islam and Western modernity, Mawdudi suggested that "The root of roots and the supreme principle of Islamic jurisprudence is that exalted Allah is in Himself the promulgator of law, but they in the West acknowledge no right for God in the promulgation of law-for them it is done by the legislative council, elected by the nation. And in politics Islam seeks an Islamic government and the West aims at national government. Islam turns toward internationalism and the eyes of the West are on Nationalism. In economics Islam provides for the eating of Halal and for alms and charity and forbids interest absolutely, while economic order in the West is based only on interest and profit. And in ethics Islam looks towards after-life happiness and the West looks towards material profit in this life. And in social affairs the way of Islam differs again from the way of the West in almost everything . . ." See the original in Sayyid Abul Ala al-Mawdudi, Nahnu wal-hadarah al-gharbiyyah (Damascus: n.d.) 35-36; the English translation is quoted from Eran Lerman, "Mawdudi's Concept of Islam", 502-503

[96] See Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr's "Mawdudi and the Jama'at-i Islami: The Origins, Theory and Practice of Islamic Revivalism" in Ali Rahnema, *The Pioneers of the Islamic Revival,* 105

[97] Sayyid Abul Ala al-Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding Islam* (London: Islamic Foundation, 1992) 9-24

[98] To form a community and government based on Islamic principles was also the aim of Mawdudi's *Jamaat-i Islami*. See Aziz Ahmad, "Mawdudi and Orthodox Fundamentalism in Pakistan" in *Middle East Journal* 3, vol.21 (Summer, 1967) 369-380

It remains beyond doubt that the mindsets of Khan and Mawdudi were radically different. But, one should also be mindful of the fact that Khan and Mawdudi lived in very different historical milieus. During the second half of nineteenth century, Khan saw the West as a rising, triumphant civilization, dominating the scene of international politics. This was largely the outcome of its advances in science. Hence, he wanted his fellow Muslims to harmonize their beliefs with modern scientific thought.[99] Hence, for Khan, the domination of the West was a natural outcome of its achievements and prowess. Whereas, during the first half of the twentieth century, Mawdudi perceived the West as a declining civilization while admitting its dominance over Muslim countries. He retained that the colonial domination of the West, particularly that of the British empire, had subjugated Muslims to the knowledge of the West. But, this was largely due to Muslims own failure of implementing Islam in their lands and establishing its peculiar institutions. Therefore, by establishing their own institutions in lands of Muslims, Western powers acquired control over the knowledge production. This subjected Muslims in the colonial space to "mental slavery" which can only be overwhelmed by a Islamic revival.[100] On the other hand, in his essay *Intihar al-hadara al-gharbiyya* (The Suicide of Western Civilization) written in the early 1930s, Mawdudi also foresaw the inexorable demise of the West, itself. As the signs of this demise, Mawdudi pointed to the First World War, economic breakdown, contagious diseases and the collapse of family as a social institution in Europe.[101] For Mawdudi, two elements were particularly catalyzing the decline of the West: nationalism and birth control. According to Mawdudi, the former was the root cause of wars and mass destruction in Europe whereas the latter undermined the maintenance of family and procreation.[102] Of course, one might see this as a very superficial reading of the West. Mawdudi deduced the impending doom of the Western civilization from the few historical contingencies

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[99] One should also note that Khan had an accommodating attitude toward the British colonial rule. This differentiates him from the other Muslim thinkers of the nineteenth century such as al-Afghani and Abduh. See Aziz Ahmad, "Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Jamal al-din al-Afghani and Muslim India" in *Studia Islamica* 13, (1960) 55-78

[100] See Masood Ashraf Raja's analysis of Mawdudi's several essays written in the 1930s, Masood Ashraf Raja, "Abu'l A'la Mawdudi: British India and the Politics of Popular Islamic Texts" in Shafqat Towheed, *New Readings in the Literature of British India, C. 1780-1947* (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verl, 2007) 173-191

[101] Mawdudi enlisted the indicators of the decline of the West as "The World War, the economic problems, increasing unemployment, the spread of contagious diseases [such as the flu epidemic of 1919] and the deterioration of family order-all these are manifest omens." See in Arabic translation Sayyid Abul Ala al-Mawdudi, "*Intihar al-hadarah al-gharbiyyah*" in *Nahnu wal-hadarah al-gharbiyyah* (Damascus: n.d.) 76; the English translation is quoted from Eran Lerman, "Mawdudi's Concept of Islam", 503

[102] Mawdudi expressed this as "The state of affairs now indicates that the stage of warning and of collecting evidence is almost over, and the hour of judgement is near. Two powerful demons have seized the West, dragging it towards self-destruction-the demon of birth control (Shaytan qat' al-nasl) is one, and the demon of nationalism (Shaytan al-qawmiyyah) is the other." See Sayyid Abul Ala al-Mawdudi, *Intihar al-hadarah al-gharbiyyah* in Nahnu wal-hadarah al-gharbiyyah -.s.a.-(Damascus: n.d.) 77; the English translation is quoted from Eran Lerman, "Mawdudi's Concept of Islam", 503-504

of his time. Nevertheless, Mawdudi's ideas place a few caveats in order. First, they are good representatives of the general stance of twentieth-century resurgent Islamism. This stance is not only very much critical of the modernist attitudes among the Muslim thinkers but also perceives an inherent antagonism between Islam and the West. Second, in Mawdudi's various writings, one can observe a universalistic vision of revival predicated upon a return to pure, uncontaminated Islam. However, this discourse of return to Islam did not solely retain a simple urge for Muslims to practice the conducts of Islam in their own personal lives. In fact, it appealed to the establishment of Islamic states across Muslim countries which, eventually, demanded political activism to achieve it.

Another, and perhaps most influential ideologue of Islamism in the twentieth century was the Egyptian thinker and political activist Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966). Qutb is known for his substantial contribution to the theorization of Islamism in with his book *Ma'ālim fī al-tarīq* (Milestones, 1964.)   His influence was tangible across many countries in the Middle East and North Africa both during and after his lifetime. Qutb has also been notorious for his ferocious anti-Westernism, embedded in his doctrine of *jahiliyya* (Barbarism). Qutb lived through one of the most contentious periods in the history of modern Egypt. He witnessed the advent of British tutelary regime, the blossom of various nationalist and Islamist movements and, finally, the domination of Nasser's regime during which Qutb was jailed. Qutb was a figure of extraordinary complexity. Therefore, it becomes difficult to understand Qutb unless his ideological commitments and political affiliations are scrutinized, simultaneously. At this point, his activism in the Muslim Brotherhood (*Jama'at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*) attains particular importance. During the early 1920s the British still held a firm grasp over its colonial enterprises in Egypt, particularly of the management of the lucrative Suez Canal trade. The country's political elites cooperated with the British in return for wealth and status. Foreigners, particularly the British, exerted a strong influence on the government of Egypt and sustained a strong monopoly over the country's economy. Hence, in the 1920s, the disparity between the prosperous elites and the impoverished populations of the country was devastating.[103] The Muslim Brotherhood flourished in this setting, partly as a reaction to persisting influence of the British in Egypt. It emerged with activities of its first pioneer, the young charismatic Muslim socialist Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949), in the small town of Ismailiyah near the Suez Canal in 1928. In the town, Banna started preach his message of Islamization in public spaces

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[103] For a good review of this period see the pertinent chapters of Robert L. Tignor, *State, Private Enterprise and Economic Change in Egypt 1818-1952* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984)

and managed to attract a considerable audience.[104] In a relatively short time, what was initially a small grass root organization, became a leading Islamic socialist movement in Egypt. It strived to address plights of Muslims such as political inferiority, the autocracy of Arab monarchies and the rise of Zionism in the neighboring Palestine.[105] In 1949, Hasan al-Banna was assassinated, possibly by the encouragement of the Egyptian government and its British allies. However, this could not silence the organization. Coming to the 1950s, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt mustered approximately half a million members and represented politically the camp of opposition in Egypt almost by itself.[106] In July 1952, the Free Officers Corps of the Egyptian army launched a *coup d'état* and dethroned King Farouk.[107] Qutb joined the Muslim Brotherhood in 1953, following the military coup of Free Officers. Before joining the movement, Qutb was a relatively moderate Islamist writer who held affiliation with Egypt's Ministry of Education (*wizārat al-maʿārif*).[108] In the Muslim Brotherhood, he was appointed as the head the organization's Department of Propagation (*qism nashr al-daʿwa*).

The hopes of the members of the Muslim Brotherhood for the future of Egypt were raised as the new regime of the Free Officers displayed an accommodating demeanor toward the organization.[109] However, this had changed rapidly. In 1954 when an assassination attempt on the life of Gamal Abd al-Nasser took place, the Muslim Brotherhood was held responsible for this act. In the same year, the regime of Egypt imprisoned hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood members including Sayyid Qutb.[110] About a decade, Qutb stayed in prison and had been subjected, at times, to torture and ill-treatment. It is argued that this episode of his life matured Qutb's leanings towards radicalism.[111] His ground-breaking book *Milestones* (*Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*) published in 1964 when Qutb was released from prison for a short period. Thus, *Milestones* was the fruit of his years in prison.[112] Throughout the entirety of his life, Qutb

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[104] Richard Paul Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 1-12
[105] *Ibid,* 209-231
[106] *Ibid,* 80-89
[107] The coup was primarily designed and orchestrated by General Muhammad Naguib and Colonel Gamal Abd al-Nasser. For a good review of the revolution of 1952 see ʿAfaf Lutfi as-Saiyid-Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 107-115
[108] He also went to the U.S. with the initiative of the Ministry of Education and had spent one year at Colorado College of Education (now University of Northern Colorado) between 1949-1950 in order to research the American education system. For further information about his sojourn in the U.S. see John Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islam* (London: Hurst, 2010) 139-156
[109] Gamal Abd al-Nasser even invited the members of Muslim Brotherhood to join the new parliament in 1953. However, the leadership of the organization refused. See Richard Paul Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 105-110
[110] John Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islam*, 190-195
[111] *Ibid,* 2-3
[112] *Ibid,* 233

produced copious ideas and they can be subjected to different categorizations. On this account, I will focus specifically on his perception of the West and his doctrine of *jāhiliyya* as they remain inextricably linked throughout his writings. Contemporary scholars attest the centrality of the doctrine of *jahiliyya* in Qutb's overall intellectual profile.[113] However, as one might expect, the doctrine of *jahiliyya* had not emerged *ex nihilo*. In the most conventional sense, *jahiliyya* is translated as "the Era of Ignorance" and refers to the predicament of pagan Arabs prior to the emergence of Islam. However, in the Qur'an and pre-Islamic literature, the term is also used to denote "barbarism", a disposition for committing extreme and deviant behaviors.[114] Interestingly, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida saw imprints of *jahiliyya* in the Islamic world and argued that some of the Muslims were "more corrupt in their religion and morals than those concerning whom these verses were revealed."[115] Mawdudi defined every conduct defying Islamic morals as embodiments of *jahiliyya.* Therefore, he perceived much of the West in *jahiliyya* primarily due to its materialistic morality. However, he also contended that some Westerners might be shunned from *jahiliyya* thanks to their belief in God and the life Hereafter.[116] Lastly, he thought that the Muslim world of his time harbored the elements of both *jahiliyya* and Islam, simultaneously.[117]

It is argued that Qutb was influenced by Mawdudi in developing his doctrine of *jahiliyya.*[118] But, in his rendering of *jahiliyya,* Qutb mostly emphasizes its one very defining characteristic: rejecting divine authority for human authority.[119] In the words of Qutb, therefore, the *jahiliyya* of his time "is based on a rebellion against Allah's sovereignty on earth. It transfers to man one of the greatest attributes of Allah, namely sovereignty (*hākimiyya*), and makes some men lords over others."[120] On this account, Qutb believed that the sovereignty (*hākimiyya*) of Allah should be established by the implementation of the laws of Allah, namely

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[113] Gilles Kepel and Jon Rothschild, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and Pharaoh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) 46; Youssef M. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1990), 123

[114] Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-religious Concepts in the Quran* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1966) 28-35

[115] See the original in Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-hakim*, (Cairo: Dar al-Manar, 1947-54 [1907]) 422; the English translation is quoted from William E. Shepard, "Sayyid Qutb's Doctrine of *Jahiliyya*" in International Journal of Middle East Studies 4, vol. 35 (November 2003) 523

[116] Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *A Short History of the Revivalist Movements in Islam* translated by Al-Ash'ari (New Delhi, Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, 2009) 17-18

[117] *Ibid,* 30-34

[118] William E. Shepard, "Sayyid Qutb's Doctrine of *Jahiliyya*" in International Journal of Middle East Studies 4, vol. 35 (November 2003) 523

[119] *Ibid,* 524-525

[120] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* edited by A.B. al-Mehri (Birmingham: Maktabah Booksellers and Publishers, 2006) 27

the *Sharia* and a strict adherence to it in the society. This would enable a genuine Islamic culture to flourish and make society Muslim in character.[121] Qutb emphasized that a society is either a Muslim society or *jahili* society.[122] Unlike Mawdudi, Qutb believed that *jahiliyya* and Islam cannot live in the same domain. Moreover, a Muslim society where the sovereignty (*hākimiyya*) belongs to Allah alone, procures a humane civilization (*hadara insaniyya*) in its organization and treatment to its individuals. Whereas a *jahili* society where the authority belongs to one man, a certain party, class or race, is inhumane and degenerative.[123]

From this standpoint, Qutb thought that the entire West was living in *jahiliyya*. He justified this conviction in *Milestones* through constructing a complex web of premises. In his first premise, he contends that the sovereignty (*hakimiyya*) is given to humans in the West. As such, then inevitably, human relationships are determined by worldly (*dunyawiyy*) ethics. Qutb suggests that these ethics, whether be 'capitalistic', 'socialistic' or 'bourgeoisie', ultimately are *jahili* ethics determined by the environment and changing conditions of the world. On the other hand, unlike worldly ethics, the ethics prescribed by Islam are transcendental, that is to say that they are beyond common experience and thought.[124] Qutb notes that adherence to these worldly ethics has led Westerners to value material production more than anything.[125] Moreover, due to their limited scope and flawed nature, their worldly ethics could not prevent Westerners from indulging into animalistic desires and pleasures. Hence, deviant sexual relationships and behaviors emerged in the West as they were not rendered immoral.[126] For Qutb, healthy family

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[121] *Ibid,* 99-104

[122] In *Milestones,* Qutb indicates: "Islam knows only two kinds of societies, the Islamic and the *Jahili*. The Islamic society is that which follows Islam in belief and ways of worship, in law and organization, in morals and manners. The Jahili society is that which does not follow Islam and in which neither the Islamic belief and concepts, nor Islamic values or standards, Islamic laws and regulations, or Islamic morals and manners are cared for." See Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones,* 106

[123] This is explained in *Milestones* as: "The fact is that attitudes, the way of living, the values, criteria, habits and traditions, are all legislated and affect people. If a particular group of people forges all these chains and imprisons others in them, this will not be a free society. In such a society some people have the position of authority, while others are subservient to them; hence this society will be backward, and in Islamic terminology is called a *Jahili society*." See Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones,* 108

[124] *Ibid,* 110

[125] In *Milestones,* Qutb maintained that "A society which places the highest value on the 'humanity' of man and honours the noble 'human' characteristics is truly civilized. If materialism, no matter in what form, is given the highest value, whether it be in the form of a 'theory', such as in the Marxist interpretation of history, or in the form of material production, as is the case with the United States and European countries, and all other human values are sacrificed at its altar, then such a society is a backward one, or, in Islamic terminology, is a *Jahili society*" See Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones,* 109

[126] In *Milestones,* Qutb wrote that "In all modern Jahili societies, the meaning of 'morality' is limited to such an extent that all those aspects which distinguish man from animal are considered beyond its sphere. In these societies, illegitimate sexual relationships, even homosexuality, are not considered immoral. The meaning of ethics is limited to economic affairs or sometimes to political affairs which fall into the category of government interests." See Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, 111

life is the nucleus of a humane, civilized society. Such a life, however, cannot be sustained in the West where animalistic desires are not controlled. Altogether, therefore, Western societies are uncivilized no matter how much they progress in industry and science.[127] Qutb's informed his anti-Westernism with these negative portrayals of the West. In Qutb's philosophy, the West represented greed, materialism, oppression and sexual degeneration. But, he further claimed that it was not only Western societies living in *jahiliyya*. In fact, some Muslim societies that exercised secularism in governance and usurped the sovereignty of Allah were living in *jahiliyya* as well.[128] From this perspective, actually, any Muslim country which does not implement the laws of Allah but choses instead to other forms of laws and governance is succumbed to *jahiliyya.[129]* Thus, one can imagine what Qutb might have thought of the secular nationalist regime of Turkey or Soviet-style socialist regime of Nasser's Egypt. Eventually, Qutb believed that history has always been and will be shaped by the fight between *jahiliyya* and Islam. However, justice, equality and peace will never prevail unless the vanguards of faith uproot *jahiliyya* and establish the sovereignty of Allah on the earth.[130] It was perhaps this final verdict of Qutb that, later on, nurtured the militant Islamist organizations' predilection for cosmic war.[131] All in all, Qutb was an articulate ideologue. His teachings had transcended geographical regions and decades.

During the twentieth century, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1904-1983), the veteran poet, novelist and playwright, emerged as the primary forerunner of Islamism in Turkey. Interestingly, Kısakürek has been a neglected name in the recent literature on Islamism, which focuses more on the intellectuals of South Asia, Egypt, and Iran. He was known by his dissenting stance against the secular Kemalist regime of Turkey throughout his lifetime. His ideal of *Büyük Doğu* (The Great Orient) inspired some well-known Turkish Islamist

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[127] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones,* 111-112

[128] In *Milestones,* Qutb revealed this as "Among Muslim societies, some openly declare their 'secularism' and negate all their relationships with the religion; some others pay respect to the religion only with their mouths, but in their social life they have completely abandoned it. They say that they do not believe in the 'Unseen' and want to construct their social system on the basis of 'science', as science and the Unseen are contradictory! This claim of theirs is mere ignorance, and only ignorant people can talk like this. There are some other societies which have given the authority of legislation to others besides Allah Almighty; they make whatever laws they please and then say, "This is the Shari'ah of Allah". All these societies are the same in one respect, that none of them is based on submission to Allah alone. After explaining these facts, the position of Islam in relation to all these *Jahili* societies can be described in one sentence: it considers all these societies un-Islamic and illegal. Islam does not look at the labels or titles which these societies have adopted; they all have one thing in common, and that is that their way of life is not based on complete submission to Allah alone. In this respect they share the same characteristic with a polytheistic society: the characteristic of *Jahiliyyahh.*" See Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones,* 95

[129] See Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones,* 91-93

[130] See Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones,* 68-69

[131] John Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islam*, 14-15

intellectuals including but not limited to Nurettin Topçu and Sezai Karakoç. [132] Today, Kısakürek's legacy is still revered by the leadership of the incumbent Islamist Justice and Development Party *(Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)*. [133] Kısakürek was born into a relatively wealthy family. His father, Abdülbaki Fazıl Bey was a deputy judge and he held several high tenures in Bursa and Istanbul at courts. In his youth, Kısakürek went to Robert College in Istanbul, a prestigious foreign high school that was established by American missionaries in the nineteenth century. Afterwards, he started study Philosophy at Darülfünun, now Istanbul University, in 1921. Between 1924 and 1925, he went to Sorbonne University in Paris with the scholarship provided by Turkey's Ministry of National Education. [134] Although it is argued that Kısakürek was influenced by Henri-Louis Bergson during his years in Paris, it remains a notoriously challenging to surface this presumed connection from his writings. [135] After returning to Turkey in 1926, he started to give lectures at the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul. [136] Perhaps the most significant experience in Kısakürek's life was, however, his encounter with Abdülhakim Arvasi, a sheikh of the *halidiye* branch of Naqshbandi Sufi order in Istanbul. This encounter is considered as a turning point in Kısakürek's life as it profoundly changed his perception of Islam. Before meeting with Arvasi, Kısakürek had a relatively secular lifestyle and mindset. However, after becoming a regular attendant of Arvasi's lectures (*sohbet*), Islam gradually became the defining ontology in his writings. [137]

Kısakürek harshly criticized the Westernization and modernization processes of Turkey. His hostility toward the cultural influences of Europe in Turkey can be attested by several of his writings. In fact, Kısakürek formulized an alternative narrative of history in which he thought that the entire Ottoman tradition of *tanzimat* and secular republic betrayed the Islamic

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[132] Michelangelo Guida, "Founders of Islamism in Republican Turkey: Kısakürek and Topçu" in *Intellectuals and Civil Society in the Middle East: Liberalism, Modernity, and Political Discourse*. Ed. Mohammed A. Bamyeh (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012) 111-132; Cemil Aydın and Burhanettin Duran, "Competing Occidentalism of Modern Islamist Thought: Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and Nurettin Topçu on Christianity, the West and Modernity" in *The Muslim World 103*, vol.103 (October 2013) 479-500; Cemil Aydın, "Between Occidentalism and the Global Left: Islamist Critiques of the West in Turkey" in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East 3*, vol.26 (Duke University Press, 2006) 446-461

[133] Michelangelo Guida, "Founders of Islamism in Republican Turkey: Kısakürek and Topçu", 111-120; Sean R. Singer, "Erdogan's Muse: The School of Necip Fazil Kisakurek" *World Affairs,* vol.176, no.4, November/December 2013, 81-88

[134] See the official biography of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek in M. Orhan Okyay, *Necip Fazıl Kısakürek* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1987) 1-3

[135] Rasim Özenören, "Necip Fazıl Kısakürek" *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: İslamcılık,* Y. Aktay (ed.) (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004) 139

[136] M. Orhan Okyay, *Necip Fazıl Kısakürek,* 2

[137] See the autobiography of Kısakürek, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *O ve Ben* (İstanbul: Büyük Doğu Yayınları, 1975)

self (*kimlik*) of Turkish people by infusing the thinking of Europe into the society. [138] Kısakürek's critiques of the West were always entangled with his cultural nationalism. This cultural nationalism was perhaps best conveyed in his statement "since Islam has fallen in Turkey, it can only rise again from Turkey." [139] Kısakürek started to coin his construction of *Büyük Doğu* (The Great Orient) during the 1940s. He also operated a journal with the same name and regularly published his opinions on this publication. [140] *Büyük Doğu* was a poignant construction that aimed for a Islamic revival and awakening in Turkey. After this awakening, Kısakürek thought that Turkey will again unite with other Muslim nations and start to counter the political hegemony of the West throughout the world. [141] On the other hand, he believed that the West is devolved into a decadent, materialist and shallow civilization after the institutions of family and religion were destroyed in Europe over the passing centuries. For Kısakürek, this brought a deep identity crisis which evades all aspects of human life in the West. He maintained that the emergence of communism and fascism in Europe during the twentieth century were all the byproducts of this deep crisis of Western civilization. [142] Kısakürek also criticized Western orientalist discourses. He expressed that Westerners established derogatory conceptions of the Muslims and other non-Western groups in order to justify their power politics and oppression in "the East". [143]

1.4 Conclusion

The ideas of the thinkers of the twentieth century were transformed by the far-reaching shift toward radicalism. As a result of this, a very powerful resurgent mood has prevailed among these thinkers and this also created the rise of Islamism. The conceptual differences between Islamism and modernism are vast. Islamism extended the critique of West. It included the doctrines, socio-cultural norms, attitudes and practices of the West that informed what we call "Western modernity" into its semantic domain. Furthermore, as a socio-political ideology Islamism not only procured intellectual critique but also formulated different forms of activism that considerably altered the political landscape of the Islamic world during the twentieth

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[138] Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *Doğru Yolun Sapık Kolları* (İstanbul: Büyük Doğu Yayınları, 1996); Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *Sahte Kahramanlar* (İstanbul: Büyük Doğu Yayınları, 1977)

[139] Cemil Aydın, "Between Occidentalism and the Global Left: Islamist Critiques of the West in Turkey", 453

[140] *Anahatlarıyla İlk Necip Fazıl Kısakürek Biyografisi* (First Biography of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek) (İstanbul: Büyük Doğu, 2000) 2-3

[141] Cemil Aydın and Burhanettin Duran, "Competing Occidentalism of Modern Islamist Thought: Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and Nurettin Topçu on Christianity, the West and Modernity", 485-489

[142] Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *Batı'nın Buhranı* (Crises of the West), Büyük Doğu 1/19, (November 19, 1943)

[143] Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *Batı'nın Doğu'ya Bakışı* (Western Conception of the East), Büyük Doğu 15, (May 30, 1952)

century. Lastly, Islamism shaped and disseminated the discourse of "Islamic state" as an alternative form of governance in the Islamic world. This also created various dynamics of tension within and outside Muslim communities.

Chapter 2: Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1923-1969): Portrait of an Iranian Intellectual

As the main hypothesis of this study, I argue that Jalal Al-e Ahmad's *Gharbzadegi* (Westoxication) constructs a very unique critique of the West. Within the genealogical trail of anti-Westernism in the Islamic world, *Gharbzadegi* considerably diverges from the mainstream line of thought. For this matter, it is neither an Islamist nor a secular anti-colonialist manifesto. Rather, it harbors several different ideological commitments, defines the problem of Westoxication and proposes an extensive form of self-empowerment as a remedy. But, to fully capture the tenets of this hypothesis as well as the formation of *Gharbzadegi*, it is necessary to enter into Al-e Ahmad's world of experiences, encounters, thoughts, and emotions. In stepping into this world, I believe it would also be helpful to harness a degree of empathy toward Jalal Al-e Ahmad if not necessarily sympathy. In this way, the intellectual fabric of *Gharbzadegi* which was informed by a series of personal experiences, becomes more sensible. As an outspoken writer, political activist and social critic, Jalal Al-e Ahmad assumed these identities simultaneously by living a very vibrant life, full of great achievements as well as tensions, failures, and contradictions. Throughout his life, he struggled to absorb different ideologies: communism, nationalism, existentialism and, finally, religious nationalism. Nevertheless, Al-e Ahmad had left a far-reaching legacy which is still being revered by generations of Iranians.

The beginning of the twentieth century harbored several events that dramatically altered the social and political landscape of Iran. On this account, the constitutional revolution of Iran (1905-1911) was a pivotal moment as it materialized a series of ground-breaking reforms. It introduced the country's first constitution and led the way for the establishment of the *majles* (parliament) in 1906. However, the period following the revolution until 1925 was very chaotic.[144] As such, Ervand Abrahamian argues that Iran became a "failed state", to employ modern terminology, by the 1920s. The government administered jointly by the Qajar dynasty, and its ministers was utterly dysfunctional. Moreover, individual rebellions were brewing in the different regions of the country, further exacerbating social order and security.[145] This predicament terminated relatively with the *coup d'état* of 1921 which was led by Reza Khan (1878-1944). In 1925, Iran's military monarchy was established definitively, and Reza Khan

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[144] For a good review of this period see Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 34-62
[145] *Ibid,* 61-62

became the Shah of the country.[146] Jalal Al-e Ahmad was born in 1923, two years after the Persian *coup d'état*. His family upheld firm religious commitments. His descent traced back to Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, the fifth of Imam of the Shi'a branch of Islam. Jalal's father, Sheikh Ahmad, was an *alim* (religious scholar), and many of his relatives were *rohani* (member of the clerical class). Jalal's paternal uncle Ayatollah Mahmud Taleqani, for instance, was one of the most well-known clerics of the pre-revolutionary era.[147] His family originally came from the village of Aurazan in the Taliqan region of Northern Iran. Jalal's spent most of his childhood in the Pachinar district of south Tehran where his father worked as an *Imam* (prayer leader) in a local mosque.[148] Jalal's early life was shaped by the tension between the strong religious orientation of his household and rapidly modernizing Iranian society at large.[149]

During his childhood in the 1920s, Jalal and his family experienced the reforms of Reza Shah's regime. With other things, these reforms introduced new state bureaucracy, education system, Western-style clothes to the society, aiming to modernize and, to some extent, Westernize Iran.[150] Reza Shah also limited the powers of clerics by discarding several of their privileges.[151] Jalal's family was financially doing well until 1932. This was the year when Ali Akbar Davar, Reza Shah's minister of justice, ceased the notarial capacity of clerics. This deprived Jalal's family from a considerable portion of their financial income.[152] Jalal's father tried to defy these changes, and as a result lost his state-registered position as an *Imam*.[153] In the wake of financial hardships, Jalal could not continue his education beyond primary school but worked instead to support his family. He fixed watches and worked as an electrician in the bazaar for several years. During these years, he also secretly attended the night classes of Dar

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[146] *Ibid,* 63-66

[147] Al-e Ahmad describes his family as "My father, elder brother and the husband of one of my sisters died holding the positions of ruhani. Now a nephew and the husband of another of my sisters are still ruhani and the rest of my family are all religious - with the odd exception." See the original in the short autobiography of Al-e Ahmad through "Masalan Sharh-e Ahvalat" (A Sort-of Autobiography) in Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Yek Chah Va Do Chaleh* (A Pit and Two Holes) (Tehran: Ravagh Publishers, 1343/1964) 47; the English translation is quoted from Robert Wells, *Jalal Al-Ahmad: Writer and Political Activist* (PhD Thesis, Faculty of Arts, University of Edinburgh, 1982) 2

[148] Jalal Al-e Ahmad, "Masalan Sharh-e Ahvalat", 47

[149] In her article "Shohar-e Man Jalal" (My Husband Jalal), Al-e Ahmad's wife Simin Daneshvar wrote as "Like in his works, where he is between politics-leisure, belief-disbelief, credulity-incredulity; in his everyday life, he is always surrounded by a duality between the spiritual and physical aspects of life, which, I'm sure it comes from his childhood, from his relation with his family." See the original in Simin Daneshvar, "Shohar-e Man Jalal" in *Andisheh va Honar* 5th Period, No.4, (1343/1964) 347; English translation is my own

[150] Michael Hillmann, *Iranian Culture: A Persianist View* (New York: University Press of America, 1990) 119

[151] Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran,* 75-85

[152] Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West* translated by R. Campbell (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1984) 9

[153] Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 99

al-Fonun, a prestigious high school that was known to be the hub of modern education in Tehran.[154] In 1943, Jalal was sent to a seminary in Najaf, Iraq by his father to study Shi'a theology. His father always wanted him to conform with the long-standing family tradition and be a cleric in the future. However, Jalal did not stay in Najaf for more than a few months. Instead, he decided to return Tehran in order to complete his high school degree at Dar al-Fonun.[155] This was not well received by Jalal's father Sheikh Ahmad. It was the first step of Al-e Ahmad towards what would later on be his long separation from the household of his father.[156]

The year 1943 was a defining episode in Jalal's life. It was his senior year at Dar al-Fonun when he became attracted to the ideas of Sayyid Ahmad Kasravi (1890-1946). As a historian of the constitutional revolution and social reformer, Kasravi was notorious for his fierce anti-clerical views. He stood as an influential figure in Tehran during the early 1940s. While Kasravi was a professor of law at the University of Tehran, he gave lectures at Dar al-Fonun and other institutions. His circles usually consisted of young people who were seeking to learn about alternative worldviews. Hence, Kasravi inspired these people with his positivistic outlook on the social and political issues of Iran.[157] Jalal's various exchanges with Kasravi started to change his mindset. He started to sympathize with Marxism which was a flourishing ideology among young Iranians during the early 1940s. In 1943, Jalal graduated from Dar al-Fonun and enrolled to the Teachers College in Tehran. But, more importantly, in the same year he also joined the socialist Tudeh Party.[158] Tudeh party was established in 1941, the same year that Reza Shah abdicated in favor of his son, Mohammad Reza following the Allied Forces occupation of Iran. These where the times of the Second World War and the Allied Forces did not tolerate Reza Shah's flirtations with Germany. Al-e Ahmad described these times as "the war had for us no killing, destruction and bombs. But, it had famine and typhus and chaos, and the painful presence of occupation forces."[159] During these times, the Tudeh Party gradually

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[154] Jalal Al-e Ahmad, "Masalan Sharh-e Ahvalat", 47

[155] *Ibid,* 48

[156] Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 99

[157] In 1946, Kasravi was murdered in front of a court at Tehran by a member of extremist Shi'a organization *Fadayan-e Islam* (Devotees of Islam). For a good review of Kasravi's life and ideas see Ervand Abrahamian, "Kasravi: The Integrative Nationalist of Iran" in Ellie Kedouri and Sylvana Haim, *Towards a Modern Iran* (London: Frank Class, 1980) 271-295

[158] Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1993) 42-48

[159] See the English translation of "Masalan Sharh-e Ahvalat" in Michael C. Hillmann, ed., *Iranian Society: An Anthology of Writings by Jalal Al-Ahmad* (Lexington, KY: Mazda, 1982), 18

grew up to be a leading political organization, promoting the cause of socialism throughout the country. On the other hand, the conservative political circles of Iran always accused the Tudeh Party of being the proxy political organization of the Soviets and blindly advocating their political interests in Iran.[160] Jalal's participation to the Tudeh Party signified a radical ideological transformation in his life. In his young ages, he embraced the party and its revolutionary message for the people of Iran. As such, he excelled as an exceptional personality within the ranks of the Tudeh party. Only within four years, he became a member of the party's central committee for Tehran and a delegate to its national congress. He also wrote prolifically for the publications of Tudeh such as *Mardum* (People) and *Rahbar* (Guide).[161]

In 1945, Jalal's first prominent work in fiction, *Did va Bazdid* (Visits Exchanged) was printed and distributed in Tehran.[162] *Did va Bazdid* included a series of short stories. In these stories, Jalal ridiculed Shi'a religious customs and portrayed them as utmost superstition.[163] Although this critical attitude toward religion was highly prevalent among the secular Iranian intellectuals of the time, in the case of Al-e Ahmad, it revealed his personal ideological transformation. In 1946, he graduated from the Teachers College. Afterwards, he started to work as a school teacher in Tehran. While working as a teacher, Jalal maintained his other careers in writing and political activism.[164] In 1947, he published his *Az Ranji Kih Mi'barim* (On Account of Our Sufferings), a collection of short stories that were written with a very heavy tone of social realism.[165] While Jalal displayed a firm commitment to Marxism and believed in its promises of reform in Iran, his relationship with the Tudeh party became extremely turbulent between 1945 and 1947. In 1945, Azerbaijan Democratic Party (*Ferqa-ye Demokrat-e Azarbayjan*), a pro-Soviet political party led by Jafar Pishevari, proclaimed an autonomous state under the patronage of the Soviet Red Army in Azerbaijan. Tudeh Party's leadership issued an official declaration of support for ADP. Afterwards, the Soviet Red Army remained in Azerbaijan and Stalin demanded oil concessions from Iran. These unfolding events led to the crisis of 1946.[166] Within Tudeh, a group of party members including Khalil Maleki (1901-1969), one of the leading political activists of the party, and Jalal Al-e Ahmad thought

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[160] For a good review of the history of the Tudeh Party in Iran see Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982) 281-325
[161] Jalal Al-e Ahmad, "Masalan Sharh-e Ahvalat", 49-50
[162] See Kamran Talattof, *Persian Language, Literature and Culture: New Leaves, Fresh Looks* (London: Routledge, 2015) 267
[163] See Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Did va Bazdid* (Visits Exchanged) (Tehran: Amir Kabir Publisher, 1960)
[164] Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West*, 10
[165] Kamran Talattof, *Persian Language, Literature and Culture: New Leaves, Fresh Looks*, 267
[166] Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions,* 218-224

that the party's decision to support ADP betrayed Iran's own national interests. This internal dispute within the party started to shake its foundations. Both Al-e Ahmad and Maliki were prominent members of the Tudeh party who significantly contributed to its administration and organization in Iran. Hence, in 1948, this dissident group decided to leave the Tudeh party for seeking alternative prospects in politics.[167] After this breakup, Maleki, Al-e Ahmad and other former members of the Tudeh Party formed their own Socialist Tudeh League. They tried to gain recognition from the Soviets. However, this attempt failed and they were denounced as traitors by Radio Moscow. Hence, the members of this new initiative forcefully parted their ways.[168]

After these bitter experiences, Jalal preferred to distance himself from politics for a while.[169] In this period, he produced another collection of short stories entitled *Seh'tar*.[170] In 1950, he married with the well-known novelist Simin Daneshvar. His marriage with Daneshvar, however, further distanced Al-e Ahmad from his family since his father did not approve this marriage due to the secular orientation of Daneshvar.[171] In this period, he also translated many works from European literatures to Persian including Albert Camus' *L'Étranger* (The Stranger), Jean-Paul Sartre's *Les Mains Sales* (Dirty Hands) and Eugene Ionesco's *Rhinocéros* (Rhinoceros).[172] In the early 1950s, Jalal stepped into politics yet again. These were the times when the National Front (*Jebha-ye Melli*), a coalition of nationalist, socialist and liberal parties led by Mohammad Mosaddegh (1882-1967), was pushing for the nationalization of Iranian Oil.[173] In 1952, Jalal joined Mozzafar Baghai's (1912-1987) Toilers Party (*Hizb-i Zahmatkashan*) along with Khalil Maleki. At the time, the Toilers Party was one of the parties of National Front, supporting Mosaddegh's oil campaign. However, later on, Baghai decided

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[167] Jalal Al-e Ahmad, "Masalan Sharh-e Ahvalat", 47

[168] Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran,* 100

[169] On his experience in the Tudeh Party, Al-e Ahmad wrote later on as "There was a time when there was the Tudeh Party and it had something to say for itself. It had launched a revolution. It talked about anti-colonialism and it defended the workers and the peasants. And what other objectives it had and what excitement it generated! And we were young and members of the Tudeh Party, not having the slightest idea who was pulling the strings." See the original in Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Dar Khedmat va Khyanat-i Rowshanfekran* (On the Service and Treason of Intellectuals) (Tehran: Kharazmi Publisher, 1979) 175; English translation is quoted from Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran,* 100

[170] Kamran Talattof, *Persian Language, Literature and Culture: New Leaves, Fresh Looks*, 267

[171] Simin Daneshvar reflected on this fact as "From his family, he respected his mother, did not have a good relationship with his father, who was a dominant and obstinately religious person. They used to quarrel and not speak with each other; Jalal left his paternity home long before we met. His father did not accept me as his daughter-in-law, did not step into our home for more than ten years, on the day of our wedding, he went to Qom-displaying his protest against our marriage." See the original in Simin Daneshvar, "Shohar-e Man Jalal" in *Andisheh va Honar* 5th Period, No.4, (1343/1964) 348; English translation is my own

[172] Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran,* 101

[173] For a good review of this period see Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran,* 97-118

to withdraw his support from Mosaddegh. Hence, Khalil Maleki and Jalal Al-e Ahmad left the party in protest.[174] In 1952, Khalil Maleki founded a new party named *Niru-yi Sevvum* (The Third Force) to which Al-e Ahmad joined in the same year. *Niru-yi Sevvum* embraced Third Worldism as its primary ideological assemblage without espousing a pro-Soviet stance. The party also fiercely supported then prime minister Mosaddegh's cause for the nationalization of Iranian oil. Al-e Ahmad, served the new party in a variety of capacities. Most notably, he wrote for the party's major publications *Ilm va Zendagi* (Science and Life) and *Niru-yi Sivvum* (The Third Force).[175] However, the military coup of August 1953 and the political climate that prevailed in its aftermath made it very challenging for socialist fractions to operate freely in the country. The prime minister Mosaddegh, the national hero of many Iranians, was imprisoned after the military coup. Furthermore, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi seized this opportunity and consolidated absolute political power.[176] Jalal left *Niru-yi Sivvum* due to his internal disputes with the party's leadership in 1953.[177] Arguably, the active support of the U.S. and Britain to the coup of 1953 also nurtured his anti-Western sentiments that were reflected artfully in *Gharbzadegi* later on.

After his short political career in *Niru-yi Sivvum,* Jalal again started to devote his time and energy to writing. Al-e Ahmad went to his ancestral village of Aurazan and recorded his impressions of community life in an anthropological monograph named *Owrazan* (1954). After staying in Aurazan for a while, he traveled to the village of Takistan in northern Iran and Persian Gulf island of Kharg.[178] He produced two additional anthropological monographs, analyzing the customs and life routine of the locals in Takistan and Kharg.[179] After examining these monographs, The Institute of Social Studies and Research (*Mo'asseseh Motale'at va Tahqiqat Ejtema'i*) at the University of Tehran offered Al-e Ahmad to work in its Office for Persian Monographs (*Daftar Monografiha-ye Farsi*).[180] Al-e Ahmad accepted the offer and

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[174] Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West,* 11

[175] *Ibid,* 12; Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran,* 49-50

[176] For a good review of the coup of 1953 see Mark J. Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne, *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004)

[177] Jalal Al-e Ahmad, "Masalan Sharh-e Ahvalat", 51; Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West,* 12

[178] Jalal Al-e Ahmad, "Masalan Sharh-e Ahvalat", 52; Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West,* 12

[179] These monographs were *Tat Neshinha-ye Boluk Zahra* (1958) on Takistan and *Jazire-ye Kharg: Dorre yatim-e Khalij* (1960) on Kharg. See Nematollah Fazeli, *Politics of Culture in Iran*: *Anthropology, Politics and Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2006) 114

[180] Jalal Al-e Ahmad, "Masalan Sharh-e Ahvalat", 52; Nematollah Fazeli, *Politics of Culture in Iran*: *Anthropology, Politics and Society in the Twentieth Century,* 101

started to work at the institute possibly in 1960. In his ethnographic works at the institute, he was particularly successful in employing Persian classical travel writing style.[181] However, after working three years, Al-e Ahmad quitted his tenure over internal disputes with his academic sponsors. He thought the institute was Western-oriented, aiming to serve only the predilections of Westerners.[182] Whereas the institute's researchers criticized Al-e Ahmad for not conforming with the desired scientific standards for research.[183]

In the early 1960s, Jalal also set on to write his seminal monograph *Gharbzadegi* (Westoxication), one of the most poignant anti-Western writings to emerge in the twentieth century. Originally, Al-e Ahmad prepared the early version of the monograph as a report for the meetings on the problems of contemporary Iranian culture (*Showra-yi Hadaf-i Farhang-i Iran*) organized by the Ministry of Culture (*Vezarat-i Farhang*) in November 1961 and January 1962, respectively.[184] However, given the controversial nature of this writing, it was not included in the curriculum of the meetings. Instead, copies of Al-e Ahmad's report were circulated among his fellow intellectuals for their comments and criticisms.[185] In the spring of 1962, Al-e Ahmad managed to publish the first five chapters of *Gharbzadegi* in *Ketab-e Mah* (Book of the Month), a literary journal of the daily *Keyhan*.[186] But, state censorship intervened quickly and Al-e Ahmad could not publish the rest of *Gharbzadegi* in *Ketab-e Mah.* In September 1962, Al-e Ahmad managed to publish the full form of *Gharbzadegi* in one thousand copies with his own efforts.[187] In 1963, he revised the monograph and tried to republish it in its new form. Yet again, the Iranian government banned the monograph and confiscated its existing copies.[188] In 1964, he sent the monograph abroad and tried to get it published in Europe with the help of Iranian students but he could not succeed in this effort.[189] Hence, only in 1978, one year before the revolution, that *Gharbzadegi* was published openly

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[181] Nematollah Fazeli, *Politics of Culture in Iran*: *Anthropology, Politics and Society in the Twentieth Century,* 101

[182] On his job at the institute, Jalal wrote that "I saw that they wanted to make a commodity out of those monographs for European consumption and only with European criteria. But I wasn't cut out for this sort of thing. Because my aim in such an endeavor was a renewal of self-awareness (*az nov shinakhtan-i khish*) and a new assessment of the local environment with our own criteria." See the original in Jalal Al-e Ahmad, "Masalan Sharh-e Ahvalat", 52; the English translation is quoted from Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran,* 104

[183] Nematollah Fazeli, *Politics of Culture in Iran*: *Anthropology, Politics and Society in the Twentieth Century,* 101

[184] See Ali Gheissari, *Iranian Intellectuals in the 20ᵗʰ Century* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998) 88

[185] *Ibid,* 88; Robert Wells, *Jalal Al-Ahmad: Writer and Political Activist,* 43

[186] Robert Wells, *Jalal Al-Ahmad: Writer and Political Activist,* 43-44

[187] Robert Wells, *Jalal Al-Ahmad: Writer and Political Activist,* 44

[188] Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran,* 76

[189] *Ibid,* 76

in its complete form.[190] Despite these interruptions, however, the monograph garnered a lot of success and it became a highly popular read in Tehran. Its existing volumes were copied and distributed with individual efforts.[191] It is also recounted that Al-e Ahmad met with Imam Khomeini several times. During their meeting in 1962, they discussed the newly published *Gharbzadegi* and Khomeini spoke approvingly of the monograph. At the same time, it should be remarked that the accounts of these meetings are not particularly reliable.[192] *Gharbzadegi* introduces Al-e Ahmad's totalizing construction of Westoxication as a disease that threatens to corrupt Iran and, eventually, obliterate its authentic (*aseel*) cultural identity. He characterizes the effects of *Gharbzadegi* as dependence, degeneration and alienation. As a remedy for Westoxication, on the other hand, he offers an action toward self-empowerment. This can also be rendered as a part his discourse of return to the self (*bazgasht be kish*). He urges for a realization of a third possibility (*rah-e sevvum*) of defining an indigenous ideology against the techno-scientific onslaught of the West. At this point, he becomes inspired by the Islamic past of Iran and the potential of the clerical establishment in the country. Of course, one might interpret *Gharbzadegi* as an attestation of Al-e Ahmad's reconciliation with Islam. However, such presumptions should be rendered very carefully.[193]

In 1964, Jalal went to Mecca to perform hajj. This visit inspired him to write *Khasi Dar Mighat* (Lost in the Crowd), a lively travelogue that subjected his experience in Mecca.[194] In 1967, he wrote his last novel *Nafrin-i Zamin* (The Curse of the Land) which narrated the disruptions caused by Mohammad Reza Shah's land reform in the Iranian countryside through the eyes of a school teacher.[195] In the same year, he also started to write *Dar Khedmat va Khyanat-i Rowshanfekran* (On the Services and Treasons of the Intellectuals) which took up on the issues raised in *Gharbzadegi* more meticulously. Throughout *Dar Khedmat va Khyanat-*

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[190] See Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Gharbzadegi* (Tehran: Ravagh, 1356/1978)

[191] Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*, 76-78

[192] See Robert Wells, *Jalal Al-Ahmad: Writer and Political Activist*, 124; Roy Parviz Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran*, 303

[193] Simin Daneshvar painted a somewhat different picture about Al-e Ahmad's reconciliation with Islam as she wrote "If he turned to religion, it was the result of his wisdom and insight because he had previously experimented with Marxism, socialism and to some extent, existentialism, and his relative return to religion and the Hidden Imam was toward deliverance from the evil of imperialism and toward the preservation of national identity, a way toward human dignity, compassion, justice, reason, and virtue. Jalal had need of such a religion." See Jalal Al-e Ahmad and Michael C. Hillmann, *Iranian Society: An Anthology of Writings* (Lexington, KY: Mazda, 1982) xi

[194] Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Khasi Dar Mighat*, A Traveler's Diary (Tehran: Amir Kabir Publisher, 1966). This book has been translated into English: Jala Al-e Ahmad, *Lost in the Crowd*, trans. John Green (Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1985).

[195] Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Nafrin-i Zamin* (Tehran: Ravagh, 1357/1978)

i Rowshanfekran, Al-e Ahmad criticized Iranian intellectuals for blindly mimicking the West and labeled them as the carriers of the disease of *gharbzadegi* (Westoxication).[196] This book was his last written work. Jalal Al-e Ahmad died in 1969 at the village of Gilan in Northern Iran. His body was buried near the Firuzabadi Mosque at south Tehran. On the other hand, his sudden death raised a lot of suspicions as his elder brother Shams Al-e Ahmad speculated that Jalal might have been poisoned by the Iranian intelligence agency SAVAK.[197]

From his life, three of Al-e Ahmad's experiences arguably influenced his construction of *gharbzadegi* the most. First, his early encounter with the Allied Forces' occupation of Iran in 1941. As he reflected on this event, the occupation had been humiliating experience for Iranians as foreign forces directly intervened in the country and orchestrated the abdication of Reza Shah. Second, the military coup of 1953 that overthrew the democratically elected prime minister Mohammad Mosaddegh. Al-e Ahmad supported Mosaddegh's campaign for nationalization of Iranian oil through various political activities. Hence, the involvement of Britain and the U.S. in the organization of the coup might have bolstered his anti-Westernism. Third, his disillusionment with the Tudeh party and Marxism. This might have led Al-e Ahmad to perceive Islam as the only socio-political ideology that can realistically mobilize the masses in Iran toward collective action.

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[196] Al-e Ahmad, *Dar Khedmat va Khyanat-i Rowshanfekran* (On the Service and Treason of Intellectuals) (Tehran: Kharazmi Publisher, 1979)
[197] Shams Al-e Ahmad, "Jalal Shahid Shod ya beh Marg-e Tabi'i Mord …Shams: Jalal-ra Koshtand" (Was Jalal Martyred or Did He Die a Natural Death?...Shams: Jalal Was Murdered) *Javan* 27 (15 Tir 1979) 24-25

Chapter 3: *Gharbzadegi:* A Plague from the West

Jalal Al-e Ahmad's monograph *Ghrabzadegi* has been a seminal document over the passing decades. Its influence transcended across cultural and regional boundaries. In the foreword of its English translation *Occidentosis: A Plague from the West,* Hamid Algar defined the monograph as "a document of the ideological ferment that ultimately led to revolution."[198] In this particular chapter, I set on to analyze the ideas of *Gharbzadegi.* As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, Jalal Al-e Ahmad defines *Gharbzadegi* (Westoxication) as a disease that infected Iran and threatens to transform it into a dependent, degraded and inauthentic nation. To resist this disease, however, he proposes an extensive form of self-realization based on the Islamic identity of Iran. In any case, analyzing *Gharbzadegi* is, by no means, a modest task. The monograph harbors complex ideas that should be rendered meticulously. But, part of the challenge of reading and interpreting *Gharbzadegi* lies also in Al-e Ahmad's style of writing: one can realize that he is highly unsystematic in expressing his thoughts. Furthermore, at times, he falls into self-contradictions and does not hesitate to make very far-fetched historical claims. Nevertheless, *Gharbzadegi* has its own gravity. It is a unique document that transformed the concept of the West and articulated a distinct critique. Hence, in what follows, the ideas of *Gharbzadegi* will be traced and approached critically. In doing so, my focal concern also will be to situate these ideas within the context of anti-Westernism in the Islamic world and unearth the monograph's novelties.

In the Preface of *Gharbzadegi,* Al-e Ahmad tells the journey the monograph. This journey was marked by obstacles: difficulties of publishing the book and censorship.[199] He also makes two acknowledgments that deserve particular attention. First, he conveys that he was influenced by Ernst Junger (1895-1998) and his *Uber die Linie* (Over the Line), as work that accomodates a heavy tone of nihilism.[200] Second, he acknowledges that he appropriated the

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[198] See the Foreword of Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West* written by Hamid Algar

[199] As a result of these, in *Gharbzadegi* he remarks that "…this wretched book of mine has been the object more of gossip than of discussion, and its name has been more frequently mentioned than its contents have been appreciated." See Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West,* 26

[200] In *Gharbzadegi*, Al-e Ahmad wrote that "…Junger and I were both exploring more or less the same subject, but from two viewpoints. We were addressing the same question, but in two languages." See Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West,* 25

term *gharbzadegi* (Westoxication) from his mentor Ahmad Fardid (1912-1994).[201] At the time they interacted, Fardid was a professor of philosophy at Tehran University. He was known the be the most authoritative interpreter of German philosophy, particularly of Heideggerian historicism and ideas on authenticity. Therefore, Ali Mirsepassi argues that, in fact, Al-e Ahmad had appropriated many ideas from the philosophy of Heidegger through his various exchanges with Fardid.[202] This is a complex connection and it requires a brand new discussion to be addressed. However, as one reads through Al-e Ahmad's rendering of mechanization (*mechanosis*) and alienation (*biganagi*) in *Gharbzadegi*, these connections become more intelligible. First of all, Heidegger displayed suspicions over the prospects of technology.[203]

After making these acknowledgments, Al-e Ahmad conveys his initial description of *gharbzadegi*.[204] In the English translation of the monograph, *gharbzadegi* is translated as "Occidentosis". There are also other translations such as "Westoxication" (Keddie) and "Weststruckness" (Hillmann).[205] The suffix *–zadegi* in Persian conventionally suggests a state of being struck by a disease or ailment.[206] Nevertheless, for Al-e Ahmad, *gharbzadegi* is global malady with two poles. One pole is the West which includes Europe, Soviet Russia and North America. Hence, the West is the pole that can use the machine to process raw materials and turn them into market goods. He thinks that these raw materials are not only oil, cotton, iron, gut but also "myths, dogmas, music, and higher worlds."[207] The other pole, on the other hand, is composed of "backward, developing or nonindustrial nations that have been made into consumers of Western goods."[208] After defining these poles, Al-e Ahmad indicates that Iran belongs to the pole of backward and developing nations with its current predicament.[209] At this

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[201] On this connection, Al-e Ahmad wrote that "I owe the expression "occidentosis" [Gharbzadegi] to the oral communications of my other mentor, the esteemed Ahmad Fardid, one of the participants in the aforementioned congress. If any exchanges of substance took place at that conference, one was surely that between him and myself, one productive of many more ideas under the same rubric that are all well worth recounting." See Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West,* 25-26

[202] For a very good review of this connection see Ali Mirsepassi, *Political Islam, Iran and the Enlightenment: Philosophies of Hope and Despair* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 33-39, 85-129

[203] Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013)

[204] Throughout this study, to differentiate the two entities, I use the upper case *Gharbzadegi* to refer to Al-e Ahmad's monograph and the lower case *gharbzadegi* to refer to his construction of Westoxication.

[205] Nikki R. Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) 189; Michael Hillmann, *Iranian Culture: A Persianist View,* 124-128

[206] Al-e Ahmad initially describes *gharbzadegi* as "I speak of "occidentosis" [Gharbzadegi] as of tuberculosis. But perhaps it more closely resembles an infestation of weevils. Have you seen how they attack wheat? From the inside. The bran remains intact, but it is just a shell, like a cocoon left behind on a tree. At any rate, I am speaking of a disease: an accident from without, spreading in an environment rendered susceptible to it." Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West,* 27

[207] *Ibid,* 27

[208] *Ibid,* 27

[209] *Ibid,* 27

point, a few caveats can be put in order. As it can be observed, Al-e Ahmad perceives the world quite in Manichean terms. The West is producer and it consists of developed, industrialized and wealthy nations. Whereas the other pole is consumer and it consists of underdeveloped, backward, and poor nations.[210] Moreover, the dependence between these two poles is not only economic but also cultural. In other words, the backward, nonindustrial nations not only consume the material goods of the West but they also consume its culture and ideologies. In these processes, obviously, "the machine" occupies the center. It is the machine that essentially creates this dependence and renders the West superior. This becomes much more clear as Al-e Ahmad reflects that:

> We have been unable to preserve our own historicocultural character in the face of the machine and its fateful onslaught. Rather, we have been routed. We have been unable to take a considered stand in the face of this contemporary monster. So long as we do not comprehend the real essence, basis, and philosophy of Western civilization, only aping the West outwardly and formally (by consuming its machines), we shall be like the ass going about in a lion's skin. We know what became of him.[211]

What should one understand from this "fateful onslaught" of the machine? On the one hand, Al-e Ahmad seems to criticize Iran's economic and technological dependence to the West. Although he does not denounce the policies of the Shah regime explicitly, one can feel that he also puts them on the target. But, the whole problem goes beyond Iran's relationship with West, whether be political, economic or cultural. Al-e Ahmad indicates that the West also suffers from "the machine."[212]

Within the context of anti-Westernism in the Islamic world, Jalal Al-e Ahmad's critique of technology is pretty unique. The overwhelming majority of Muslim thinkers of the nineteenth century viewed technology as an important dynamic behind the progress of the West. Therefore, most of them urged the adoption of technology besides the West's science. Their critique of the West usually centered around European imperialism. The Islamist thinkers of the twentieth century, on the other hand, extended these critiques by contemplating on Western

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[210] In *Gharbzadegi*, Al-e Ahmad also wrote that "The West comprises the sated nations and the East, the hungry nations. To me, South Africa is part of the West. Most of the nations of Latin America are part of the East, although they are on the other side of the world." See Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West,* 28

[211] *Ibid,* 31

[212] In *Gharbzadegi,* Al-e Ahmad wrote that "Although the one who created the machine now cries out that it is stifling him, we not only fail to repudiate our assuming the garb of machine tenders, we pride ourselves on it." See Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West,* 31

modernity and its inherent attributes. However, they mostly criticized those attributes that create tension with religion and tradition such as secularism and individualism. On this account, one may argue that Al-e Ahmad is, in fact, closer to the European anti-modernists in thought. Eventually, Al-e Ahmad pronounces the dilemma that Iran faces in his time as:

> So long as we remain consumers, so long as we have not built the machine, we remain occidentotic. Our dilemma is that once we have built the machine, we will have become mechanotic, just like the West, crying out at the way technology and the machine have stampeded out of control.[213]

This was the ultimate plight of Iran. According to Al-e Ahmad, the West was powerful and superior because of the machine. But, to feed the machine and run its industries in Europe, the West started its colonial ventures all over the world. Therefore, the West devolved into a materialistic and atrocious civilization also because of the machine.[214] Afterwards, he dives into history through a rambling monologue to support these convictions. He traces events from the colonial history of European powers. Across this history, Al-e Ahmad thought, the West enslaved every nation that crossed its path. Eventually, it was only Islam that resisted this wave of subordination.[215] In the second chapter of the monograph, Al-e Ahmad develops this historical narrative further. He mentions the wars between Christians and Muslims throughout the history. He argues that until the fifteenth century, the rulers of the Islamic world protected the Muslims against the attacks of the West with their heroic culture of *jihad* and martyrdom.[216] In the third chapter, he marks the rise of the Safavid dynasty during the fifteenth century as a moment when the unity of the Islamic world started to shatter. For Al-e Ahmad, this was because Safavids built their entire politics on the slaughter of the Sunnis.[217] Hence, Al-e Ahmad was convinced that the Sunni-Shi'a rivalry, particularly between the Safavids and the Ottoman empire, played a considerable role in the decline of the Islamic world at the face of the West.[218] As a result, the West advanced its industry and level of knowledge whereas Muslims quarreled over internal divisions.[219]

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[213] *Ibid,* 31

[214] *Ibid,* 31-33

[215] In *Gharbzadegi,* Al-e Ahmad wrote as "Thus only we in our Islamic totality, formal and real, obstructed the spread (through colonialism, effectively equivalent to Christianity) of European civilization, that is, the opening of new markets to the West's industries." See Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West,* 31

[216] *Ibid,* 36-44

[217] *Ibid,* 46

[218] *Ibid,* 51-54

[219] In *Gharbzadegi,* Al-e Ahmad wrote that "Contemporary with the appearance of the Renaissance in the West, the demon of a medieval type of inquisition reared its head in our Middle East and the furnace of religious

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This is one of the most notable self-contradictions of Al-e Ahmad in *Gharbzadegi*. In fact, throughout the entire monograph, he registers ambiguous thoughts about scientific progress and technology. He perceives the machine as the greatest evil of all times. But, he also realizes that it is also a force for progress and superiority. Secondly, he goes over different historical periods that have no connection. He simultaneously refers the Golden Age of Islam and the predicament of Muslims during the nineteenth century. One important novelty of his analysis is, on the other hand, the historical paradigm for decline of the Islamic world. The Muslim thinkers of the nineteenth century saw the roots of this decline in the complicity of Ulama. Since Islam became a stagnant theology at the hand of the Ulama, this accounted for the decline of Islamic world altogether. Whereas the Islamist thinkers of the twentieth century argued that this decline occurred because Muslims abandoned to follow the true, pristine Islam in their lives. At this point, Al-e Ahmad adds the Sunni-Shi'a divide to the repertoire of the reasons behind the decline of the Islamic world. Al-e Ahmad marks the constitutional era of Iran in the beginning of the twentieth century as a moment when the machine and its foreign ideologies violently attacked Iran. He perceives the constitutional revolution as the first fully-fledged encroachment of the machine in Iran.[220] In addition, he celebrates Sheikh Fazlollah Nouri (1843-1909), a well-known cleric that fiercely opposed the Constitutional Revolution.[221] This is yet another difference of Al-e Ahmad from the nineteenth-century Muslim thinkers such as Rashid Rida who rendered constitutionalism and rule of law as the positive attributes of the West that should be adopted by Muslims. At this point, Al-e Ahmad perceives the clergy as the last and perhaps the only segment of Iranian society that could resist this encroachment of the machine. However, then, he indicates that "…but in the Constitutional Era, with the onslaught of the first wave of the machine, the clergy drew into their shell and so shut out the outside world, wove such a cocoon about themselves that it might not be rent until the Resurrection."[222] Al-e Ahmad indicates that, in fact, the clergy could have prevented the encroachment of the machine in Iran.[223]

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differences and religious wars was ignited. Thus, as Mr. Fardid says, where the West ends, we begin. As the West stood, we sat down. As the West awoke in an industrial resurrection, we passed into the slumber of the Seven Sleepers." See Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West,* 55

[220] *Ibid,* 51-54

[221] *Ibid,* 56

[222] *Ibid,* 56

[223] In *Gharbzadegi,* Al-e Ahmad expressed that "Actually, the clergy could and should have armed itself with the weapons of its enemy and countered the occidentosis of governmental and quasi- governmental broadcasting by installing its own transmitters in Qum and Mashhad, just as the Vatican has done. If the clergy knew what a precious seed for rebellion against every government of the oppressors it had implanted in the hearts of the people

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Then in the fifth chapter of *Gharbzadegi,* Al-e Ahmad talks about the effects of the onslaught of the machine. He emphasizes the emptiness and stillborn nature of life in Iran as a result of this onslaught.[224] This was because the machine infused itself in all of the segments of Iranian society. For instance, Al-e Ahmad thinks that the machine ruined the lives of native people living in the rural areas of Iran. This idea was conveyed by Al-e Ahmad in *Gharbzadegi* as:

> The logic of machine consumption compels urbanization, which follows from being uprooted from the land. To migrate to the city, you must be uprooted from your ancestral lands, flee a landlord's village, or tire of tribal migrations and forsake them. This is the first contradiction ensuing from our occidentosis: to respond to the machine's call to urbanization, we uproot the people from the villages and send them to the city, where there's neither work nor housing and shelter for them, while the machine steps into the village itself.[225]

As it can be observed in Al-e Ahmad's words, the onslaught of the machine distorts the natural structure of Iranian society. In the rest of the chapter, he talks about the debased nature of city life.[226] For Al-e Ahmad, industrialization and blind mechanization ruined everything that was beautiful, authentic and vibrant. However, in the wake of the machine's onslaught, only religion in Iran protected itself.[227] After suggesting this over a series of premises, Al-e Ahmad indicates that Iranian people look up to the return of the Imam of the Age and hopes that he will end the oppression, degradation and injustice.[228] On this account, he reveals his first explicit appeal to Shi'a theology. But, this still remains as a very obscure response to the problem of mechanization and Westoxication. Al-e Ahmad realizes that he should deliver a realistic answer to this glaring question. Therefore, in the sixth chapter of *Gharbzadegi* Jalal Al-e Ahmad asks:

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with its doctrine of "the non- necessity of obeying the holders of rule," if it were able to make clear to the people the real nature of these rulers and translate general religious principle into specific injunction through its own media outlets (newspapers, radio, television, film, and so forth), and if it were able to give its work some impetus through participation in international religious organizations, it would never get caught up in these minutiae in a way that leads to being so uninformed and uninvolved." See Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West,* 59

[224] In *Gharbzadegi,* Al-e Ahmad describes this predicament as "We now resemble an alien people, with unfamiliar customs, a culture with no roots in our land and no chance of blossoming here. Thus all we have is stillborn, in our politics, our culture, and our daily life." See Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West,* 59

[225] *Ibid,* 66

[226] *Ibid,* 67-70

[227] *Ibid,* 71

[228] *Ibid,* 71

> Now we, as a developing nation, have come face to face with the machine and technology, and without our volition. That is, we have resigned ourselves to whatever may come. What are we to do? Must we remain the mere consumers we are today or are we to shut our doors to the machine and technology and retreat into the depths of our ancient ways, our national and religious traditions? Or is there a third possibility (*rah-e sevvum*)?[229]

Earlier in *Gharbzadegi,* Al-e Ahmad admits that abandoning the machine and returning back to a primitive form of life is not a realistic option.[230] To blindly consume the machine and submit to its subordination cannot be an option as well. Al-e Ahmad emphasizes that this has been the road that Iran followed and this caused the disease of Westoxication.[231]

For Al-e Ahmad, the West uses the machine to subordinate other nations. Thus, the West produces the machine and exports it these countries. Therefore, these nations not only become entirely dependent to the West in their consumption of the machine but they also let the machine reshape the structure of their societies. In the end, these nations become the slave of the machine. They gave up all of their energy and resources to feed it. Meanwhile, as the producer and exporter of the machine, the West benefits the most from all of these processes. Colonialism and imperialism were the inevitable results of mechanization since the West had to find resources to run its industries. Iran was just one among many nations that fell victim to the will of the machine. All in all, besides romantic primitivism and consumer subordination, Al-e Ahmad delivers his third possibility in the following sense:

> The third road- from which there is no recourse-is to put this jinn back in the bottle. It is to get it under control, to break it into harness like a draft animal. The machine should naturally serve us as a trampoline, so that we may stand on it and jump all the farther by its rebound. One must have the machine; one must build it. But one must not remain in bondage to it; one must not fall into its snare. The machine is a means, not an end. The end is to abolish poverty and to put material and spiritual welfare within the reach of all.[232]

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[229] *Ibid,* 78

[230] In *Gharbzadegi,* Al-e Ahmad reveals this as "I am not speaking of rejecting the machine or of banishing it, as the utopianists of the early nineteenth century sought to do. History has fated the world to fall prey to the machine. It is a
question of how to encounter the machine and technology." See Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West,* 30

[231] *Ibid,* 78

[232] *Ibid,* 79

To accomplish this, as Al-e Ahmad realizes, Iran should manufacture the machine.[233] It should build up its own industries and use its own resources. But, this is not a modest task. First, the country needs an economy that can provide the means for these initiatives. For Al-e Ahmad, this should be an independent economy. Furthermore, this extensive process of self-empowerment should be supported culturally. In this respect, Iran needs a new education system that can create the intellectual basis for utilizing such reforms. Lastly, then, it should create new markets to make this capital available for rural areas.[234] But, Al-e Ahmad does not provide an answer as to how exactly Iran can launch these reforms. He does not answer from where should it start to try to achieve these goals.[235] He only explicates that Iran has not embarked on this road because the West provided everything in its ready-made form.[236] In fact, this analysis distinguishes Al-e Ahmad from the Islamist thinkers of the twentieth century such as Mawdudi and Qutb. These Islamist thinkers reacted to modernity by retreating to their tradition. Against the pernicious effects of modernity, they proposed a return to pristine Islam and adherence to its principles. Central in this analysis was also the notion of "Islamic state", a state that can implement the tenets of Islam from the level of governance. Al-e Ahmad does not suggest such a response. Of course, his remedy to the onslaught of the machine is very ambiguous. As it was pronounced earlier, it seems as an extensive process or initiative of self-empowerment partly inspired but not altogether shaped by the Islamic past of Iran.

Several scholars engaged with the content of *Gharbzadegi* and their insights may extend our understanding of the monograph. Ali Mirsepassi appeals to Jeffrey Herf's studies on German romantic tradition in his criticism of *Gharbzadegi*.[237] Herf defines German romantic intellectual movements as "reactionary modernism". He indicates that although German romanticism reacted to modernity by pursuing self-realization, authentic experiences and new identities, it was very much part of the modernity, itself.[238] Therefore, Mirsepassi finds similarities between the discourses of German romanticism and *Gharbzadegi*. He also thinks that Al-e Ahmad's interaction with Ernest Junger may attest this point. In their study *Foucault*

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[233] In *Gharbzadegi,* Al-e Ahmad claimed that "To achieve control of the machine, one must build it. Something built by another -even if it is a charm or a sort of talisman against envy- certainly carries something of the unknown, something of fearsome "unseen worlds" beyond human access." See Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West,* 79

[234] *Ibid,* 79

[235] In *Gharbzadegi,* he warned the reader as "(Please don't ask me to go into the details; this isn't my line or the function of this book.)" See Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Occidentosis [Gharbzadegi]: A Plague from the West,* 79

[236] *Ibid,* 80-85

[237] Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran,* 105

[238] Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 15

and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and Seductions of Islamism, Janet Afary and Kevin Anderson, on the other hand, argue that *Gharbzadegi* cultivates "a Nietzschean critique of modern technology with a Marxian one of alienated labor, also attacking the cultural hegemony of the West." [239] They also emphasize the references in the monograph to European existentialist thinkers such as Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre.[240]All of these, eventually, suggests that Al-e Ahmad appropriated the ideas of European thinkers and infused them into his own critique of the West. Lastly, Mehrzad Boroujerdi employs the term "nativism" to interpret the interaction of Iranian intellectuals with the concept of the West. He defines nativism as "doctrine that calls for resurgence, reinstatement or continuance of native or indigenous cultural customs, beliefs and values."[241] It can also be argued that some of the aspects of *Gharbzadegi* also appeals to this definition of nativism.

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[239] Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and Seductions of Islamism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005) 59
[240] *Ibid,* 59
[241] Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2007) 14-15

Conclusion

In conclusion, as a socio-historical phenomenon anti-Westernism in the Islamic world harbored a very broad repertoire of critiques. It is very significant to remark that some of these critiques are also very much anti-modern in nature. To the present day, anti-Westernism has been a global phenomenon, permeating across geographical regions and centuries. It reminds us its relevance and salience through continuing to inform very different forms of social and political conflicts in the world. Throughout this study, I tried to place Jalal Al-e Ahmad's *Gharbzadegi* in the context of anti-Westernism in the Islamic world. In doing so, I compared and contrasted his ideas with those of the prominent Muslim thinkers. Hopefully, this endeavor generated burgeoning insights for understanding anti-Westernism and its intellectual foundations in the Islamic world. The modernist Muslim thinkers of the nineteenth-century launched constructive criticisms toward European imperialism. Within the milieu of the nineteenth century, imperialism had been their major concern. Accordingly, their critiques were mostly political directed to the policies of European powers. During to the twentieth century, as I tried to reveal, anti-Western ideas overwhelmingly produced by Islamist thinkers. While quite confidently defining modernity as an essentially Western construction, these thinkers often placed the West and Islam in diametrically opposing conceptual poles. Throughout this study, I argued that Jalal Al-e Ahmad's *Gharbzadegi* considerably diverges from the mainstream attitudes of both of these milieus. To some extent, it even represents a novel typology of critique, conflating the problems of Westoxication and mechanization. Al-e Ahmad's response to these problems, however, was not an undemanding rejection of the West and technology, altogether. Rather, under the influence of several European thinkers, Al-e Ahmad tried to counter these problems with a program of self-empowerment. From a researcher point of view, this somewhat unearths that anti-Westernism in the Islamic world has been, in fact, a very complex and heterogeneous phenomenon. In thought, there are continuities and commonalities as well as discontinuities and divergences. Eventually, this urges anybody who set on to study this phenomenon seriously to cultivate a nuanced appreciation by thinking beyond essentialist conceptual markers.

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