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# *Featured Master's Thesis*

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Saba Sulaiman recently completed her MA in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Chicago, with a focus on Modern Persian Literature. She also holds a BA in Middle Eastern Studies and Economics from Wellesley College. During her time at the University, she presented a version of her MA thesis at the 27th Annual Middle East History and Theory Conference in May 2012.

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## Reading Parsipur Through the Eyes of Hedayat's *Blind Owl*:
## Tracing the Origins of Magical Realism in Modern Persian Prose

By Saba Sulaiman

### Magical Realism: Internationally Local?

The view that the literary genre of magical realism is specifically a Latin American export is fairly widespread. Alejo Carpentier argues that there is something particular to its natural landscape and cultural heritage which inspires literature that infuses magic into ordinary narrative, in order to reflect its "marvelous reality."[1] In his seminal essay on *Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction*,[2] Angel Flores acknowledges, however, that many of the Latin American predecessors to magical realism took their inspiration from Russian authors such as Nikolai Gogol and Fyodor Dostoevsky. In fact, recent scholarship on Russian writers (including, among others, Gogol and Dostoevsky) has argued that alongside Latin America, Russia was also a veritable hotbed of magical realist writings.[3]

The fact of the matter is that magical realism cannot conclusively be traced back to any particular literary tradition. This is because the "magic" in magical realism is often closely linked to the myths and legends of the literary, cultural, and sometimes spiritual traditions that that writers are native to. It is no surprise that this evidently cross-cultural literary trend continues to be adopted by writers from all over the world; indeed, magical realism constitutes "a discourse for a kind of international literary diaspora, a fictional cosmopolitanism of wide application."[4]

And yet it is widely assumed that contemporary writers of magical realism must find their inspiration from Latin American authors such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, regardless of their own local literary traditions. This is particularly true of Iranian author Shahrnush Parsipur, whose prolific and often feminist writings have been banned in Iran for their explicit themes, which include sexual abuse and other forms of gender oppression.

### Shahrnush Parsipur: 'Dostoevsky's Daughter'?[5]

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1) Alejo Carpentier, "The Baroque and the Marvelous Real," in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy P. Faris (Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 1995), 104.

2) Angel Flores, "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction," *Hispania* 38.2 (1955): 187–192.

3) Alexandra Berlina, "Russian Magical Realism and Pelevin as its Exponent," *Comparative Literature and Culture* 11.4 (2009).

4) As Wendy Faris argues, magical realism "gives voice in the thematic domain to indigenous or ancient myths, legends, and cultural practices, and in the domain of narrative technique to the literary traditions that express them with the use of non-realistic events and images, it can be seen as a kind of narrative primitivism." See Wendy B Faris, "The Question of the Other: Cultural Critiques of Magical Realism," *Janus Head* 5.2 (2002): 103.

5) Parsipur refers to herself as 'Dostoevsky's daughter' during an interview. Please see Brian Appleton, "An Interview with Shahrnush Parsipur," *Persian Heritage* 59 (2010): 23.

As Kamran Talatoff writes in *Breaking Taboos in Iranian Women's Literature*, Parsipur belongs to a literary movement that "has produced new forms and creative approaches to social problems and has addressed forbidden topics."[6] She currently lives in exile in the United States, much like other contemporary Iranian writers, such as Mahshid Amirshahi (who lives in France) and Moniru Ravanipur. In fact, Ravanipur's work, along with Parsipur's, has been noted for its "particular form of magical realism set in Iranian historical and regional contexts."[7] The important distinction here, however, is that scholarship on Ravanipur's use of magical realism in her first novel *Ahl-e-Gharq* (1989) already exists,[8] whereas there is little to no scholarship available on Parsipur's early work, particularly her short stories, which were written between 1966-1969.

Because of her unique and experimental writing style, Parsipur's literary influences have been the subject of much speculation. From claiming to be "Dostoevsky's daughter," to citing Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* as one of her most significant sources of inspiration,[9] Parsipur's admiration for Western literature is widely known and acknowledged.[10] Indeed, she also mentions Gabriel Garcia Marquez as an influence;[11] in fact, Houra Yavari argues[12] that *Touba and the Meaning of Night,* originally published in Persian in 1989, is clearly influenced by Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude.* While this hypothesis may be true for Parsipur's later work, Marquez cannot have been an influence in Parsipur's earlier work, because they were written before or at the same time that *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was first published in Spanish in 1967.[13] Her stories were certainly written much before a Persian translation of Marquez's work was available for distribution in Iran.

This paper is a study of five short stories written by Shahrnush Parsipur between 1966 and 1969. These stories were first published in Parsipur's first short story anthology, *Āvīzih'hā-yi bulūr* (Crystal Pendant Earrings), in 1977. Through a close reading of the texts in question, I will demonstrate how Parsipur's stories undeniably reflect that her greatest influence at the time was Sadegh Hedayat's

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6) For a complete biography and bibliography of her works, please see Kamran Talatoff, "Breaking Taboos in Iranian Women's Literature: The Work of Shahrnush Parsipur," *World Literature Today* 78.3 (2004): 43–46.

7) Nahid Mozaffari, Introduction to *Strange Times, My Dear: The PEN Anthology of Contemporary Iranian Literature*, ed. Nahid Mozaffari (New York: Arcade, 2005), xxii.

8) For example, see Nasrin Rahimieh, "Magical Realism in Moniro Ravanipur's Ahl-e-Gharq," *Iranian Studies* 23.1 (1990): 61–75.

9) Golbarg Bashi, "The Proper Etiquette of Meeting Shahrnush Parsipur in the United States," *The Iranian,* July 9, 2006.

10) Farzaneh Milani has provided an extensive list of Parsipur's influences. Please see Farzaneh Milani, *Words, Not Swords*: *Iranian Women Writers and the Freedom of Movement* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse UP, 2011), 188–189.

11) Appleton, *An Interview with Shahrnush Parsipur*, 23.

12) Houra Yavari, "Nāhamzamānī-yi insān o dāstān," *Irān Nāmih* 9.4 (1991): 634–643.

13) Salman Rushdie may also have been an important influence in framing magical realism in Iran, but even his work was only available in translation after the Iranian Revolution. See Franklin Lewis and Farzin Yasdanfar's introduction to *A Voice of Their Own*: *A Collection of Stories by Iranian Women Written Since the Revolution of 1979* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 1996), xxii.

*The Blind Owl* (first published in Persian in 1941).[14] I will point out key structural, thematic, and plot-related similarities between Hedayat's novel and Parsipur's stories, thereby also proposing that *The Blind Owl* should be considered a part of the canon of magical realist fiction. Through this paper, I will establish that contrary to widely held perceptions about Parsipur's solely Western influences, her affinity towards magical realism predates her exposure to Western literature, specifically works that are considered to be exemplary of magical realism, such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

A Note on Magical Realism

For the purpose of this paper, I will be relying on the definition of magical realism provided by Wendy Faris in her essay "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction."[15] Faris is considered to be the foremost authority on magical realism studies, and her seminal essay contains a comprehensive list of what she considers to be the primary characteristics of the genre. These are as follows:

(1) The text must contain an "irreducible element of magic, something we cannot explain according to the laws of the universe as we know them."[16]

(2) The text must contain descriptions that "detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world—this is the realism in magical realism, distinguishing it from fantasy and allegory."[17] In effect, these descriptive details contribute to the magical nature of the story, even though they describe real states of being. Faris comments on how it is common for the writer to temper a character's existential angst by creating "a more playful mood of surrealism,"[18] but she makes a clear distinction between the two genres, claiming that magical realism is, in fact, a major legacy of surrealism.[19] She argues that surrealism can be inherently absurd, and serves only to create a certain mood in a text, whereas magical realism has a larger underlying meaning to its use.[20]

(3) There is an element of Todorovian "hesitation" involved.[21] This refers to a gradual build-up of uncertainty and anticipation on the reader's part, specifically creating an aura of hesitation at the feasibility of the narrative. Faris distinguishes between fantastic literature and magical realism, arguing that the "magic" in magical

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14) For this paper I will be referring to D. P. Costello's 1957 translation of *The Blind Owl*, and will occasionally suggest my own translations where I disagree with Costello. See Sadegh Hedayat, *The Blind Owl,* Trans. D. P. Costello (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1994).

15) Wendy B. Faris, "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction" in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy P. Faris (Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 1995), 163–190.

16) Ibid, 167.

17) Ibid, 169.

18) Ibid, 168.

19) For further discussion on the distinction between surrealism and magical realism, see footnote 50.

20) Faris develops this point by stating that the magical images constructed by surrealism out of ordinary objects "aim to appear virtually unmotivated and thus programmatically resist interpretation." Ibid, 171.

21) Tzvetan Todorov's definition of fantastic literature centers on the existence of a feeling of hesitation. According to him, the fantastic is "that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event." Please see Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: a Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1975) 25.

realist texts may initially cause readers to hesitate, but its primary function is not to terrorize or disorient; it is, in fact, to essentially highlight the realism of the characters' predicaments.

(4) The reader experiences "the closeness or near-merging of two realms," and "the magical realist vision exists at the intersection of these two worlds."[22] Here, Faris refers to the fluidity that exists between two opposite poles or categories, and between the boundaries of different worlds in the text—the fluidity between life and death, or men and women, for example.

(5) Magical realist fiction always questions ordinary conceptions of time, space and identity.

Faris also identifies nine secondary characteristics, which serve more of a descriptive function that a distinguishing one; some of these characteristics will be outlined when deemed relevant in the paper.[23]

Sources on Parsipur

Despite the fact that Parsipur has been writing for nearly five decades, scholarship about her work, especially in English, is limited. Kamran Talatoff has translated two of her most famous novels, *Women Without Men* (first published in Persian in 1990) and *Touba and the Meaning of Night* (first published in Persian in 1989),[24] and provides detailed introductions that highlight her biography and key elements of her writing style and concerns. Talatoff traces the development of feminist literary voices in the backdrop of changing political conditions in *Iranian Women's Literature: From Pre-Revolutionary Social Discourse to Post-Revolutionary Feminism*,[25] in which he discusses how Parsipur's work radically confronted literary conventions at the time, challenging the existent tenets of the state by exposing the harsh realities of the social conditions of Iranian women. He concludes by commenting on how contemporary female prose writers are breaking away from pre-established patterns of literary expression in order to further extend their presence as literary figures in Iran,[26] but does not elaborate further. I will expand on Talatoff's point by highlighting the use of magical realism in Parsipur's early short stories.

Like Talatoff, Fatemeh Keshavarz[27] and Farzaneh Milani[28] also write mainly about Parsipur's work published after the Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979, with a

22) Faris, *Scheherazade's Children*, 172.

23) For a more complete list of these characteristics, please see Faris, *Scheherazade's Children,* 175–185.

24) See Shahrnush Parsipur's *Women Without Men.* trans. Kamran Talattof and Jocelyn Sharlet (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse UP, 1998) and *Touba and the Meaning of Night*, trans. Havva Houshmand and Kamran Talattof (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2008).

25) Kamran Talattof, "Iranian Women's Literature: From Pre-Revolutionary Social Discourse to Post-Revolutionary Feminism," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 29.4 (1997): 531–558.

26) For a concise yet detailed overview of the history of Persian women writers, please see the Introduction to *A Voice of Their Own*: *A Collection of Stories by Iranian Women Written Since the Revolution of 1979*, edited by Franklin Lewis and Farzin Yazdanfar (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 1996) ix–liv.

27) Fatemeh Keshavarz, *Jasmine and Stars: Reading More than Lolita in Tehran* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2007).

28) Milani, *Words, Not Swords*.

particular focus on *Women Without Men.* While their commentary and analysis of this work is no doubt extensive, it is demonstrative of most scholars' tendency to overlook Parsipur's short stories in their evaluations of her work. Some commentary in Persian however, does exist; Nargis Baqiri reviews the highlights of Parsipur's short stories and novels, and provides summaries of their plots in *Zanān dar dāstān: qahramānān-i zan dar dāstān'hā-yi zanān-i dāstān'nivīs-i Īrān,*[29] but she does not delve deeper into their themes, concerns or potential sources of inspiration. Hasan Abedini[30] provides plot summaries of some of the stories from Parsipur's anthologies, but focuses mainly on analyzing her first novella, *Trial Offers*, which, until very recently, was her only piece of writing published before the Revolution that had been translated into English.[31]

Many scholars have pointed to Parsipur's use of magical realism, but only in her post-revolution works. Keshavarz maintains that while *Women Without Men* "has a strong flavor of magical realism…[it] is not an entirely representative work for [Parsipur]."[32] Safawi and Dehlvi argue that after the Islamic Revolution of 1979, female writers employed techniques such as magical realism "as an assertion and affirmation of their literary independence, and as a tool to discover, explore and expose the emotional, ideological, and social layers of human existence."[33] Their argument relies on the Revolution having pushed writers like Parsipur to experiment with different styles, whereas I argue that Parsipur was already writing magical realist fiction as a young adult. In fact, she herself claims that "there is an innate tendency in [her] towards magical realism,"[34] which suggests that this was not a style she adopted simply as a result of the Revolution.

In December 2011, most of her short stories, written originally in the late 1960s, were translated into English by Steve Macdowell and Afshin Nassiri,[35] and were published under the title *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf.* Previously untranslated and released only in the United States, this publication also contains articles and essays by Parsipur, as well as an extensive forward by Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak (that remains untranslated.) He coins the term "dāstān pardāzī-yi afsūnkhiyālī"[36] to describe Parsipur's "magical" style of writing, claiming that her literature disturbs the natural order of the reader's mind.[37] These observations are among the few made in

29) Nargis Baqiri, *Zanān dar dāstān: qahramānān-i zan dar dāstān'hā-yi zanān-i dāstān'nivīs-i Īrān*, (Tihrān: Intishārāt-i Murvārīd, 1387 [2008 or 2009]).

30) Hasan Abedini "*Ṣad sāl dāstān nivīsī dar Īrān* 2 (Tihrān: Tandar, 1366 [1987]), 328–332.

31) Shahrnush Parsipur, "Trial Offers" in *Stories from Iran 1921-1991: A Chicago Anthology 1921-1991*, ed. Heshmat Moayyad, trans. Paul Sprachman (Washington, D.C.: Mage, 1991), 485–529.

32) Keshavarz, *Jasmine and Stars*, 92.

33) Azarmi Dukht Safawi and A. W. Azhar Dehlvi, *Revolution and Creativity: A Survey of Iranian Literature, Films, and Art in the Post Revolutionary Era* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2006), 97.

34) Appleton, *An Interview with Shahrnush Parsipur*, 23.

35) I refer to their translation in this paper, and point out discrepancies where I disagree with their interpretation of the Persian original. Please see Shahrnush Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of Wolves*, trans. Steve Macdowell and Afshin Nassiri (Portland, OR: Nur, 2011).

36) I translate this roughly as "fantastical story writing." Please see Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, "Pīshgoftār," *Ādāb-i ṣarf-i chāy dar ḥuẓūr-i gurg: majmū'ah-'i dāstān va maqālah*, by Shahrnush Parsipur (San Jose, CA : Nashr-i Zamānih, 1993), 19.

37) This is my translation of the phrase "…sāmān-i ḥakim bar ẕihan-i khwānandih rā dar ham mī rīzad…"

an attempt to understand Parsipur's early writing style, and I will extend this line of argument by establishing Parsipur's status as a magical realist writer.

Parsipur frankly acknowledges the extent to which Sadegh Hedayat has impacted her post-revolutionary novels. She mentions *Touba and the Meaning of Night* as an example, claiming that "there seems to have been a constant challenge between [her] and *The Blind Owl*" in her novel.[38] In an attempt to gauge Hedayat's influence on Parsipur, Sepideh Saremi mentions that both writers suffered from depression in an interview, but Parsipur does not comment on this comparison.[39] In this paper, I will demonstrate that Hedayat also influenced Parsipur's early work, despite the fact that she only mentions him as a source of inspiration for *Touba and the Meaning of Night.*

Apart from the shared experience of having suffered from clinical depression, Ramin Tabib accredits both Parsipur and Hedayat with the honor of having "pushed the Persian language forward";[40] they are both perceived as having been trailblazers when they emerged on the Persian literary scene, which makes a careful analysis of Parsipur's early work in light of Hedayat's shadow all the more fascinating. It is important to note, however, that despite his acclaim and the number of studies conducted on his work, no one has commented on his legacy. As Michael Hillman ironically reflects in his introduction to *Hedayat's "The Blind Owl" Forty Years After*, "[*The Blind Owl's*] threatening presence and mystique may have already hindered the critical appreciation of other works in Persian fiction which, perhaps, embody both greater literary value and social relevance."[41] While this paper aims to fill part of this void by embarking upon a close reading of a selection of Parsipur's short stories, it will do so by exploring how *The Blind Owl's* "threatening presence" continues to haunt its literary descendants.

Sources on Hedayat

Sadegh Hedayat's work has been instrumental in bringing international recognition to Persian prose, which has largely been ignored, especially in comparison to Persian poetry. Indeed, as Heshmat Moayyad remarks, "Persian prose and Persian women have one bitter experience in common: they have both been suppressed for many centuries, women by men, prose by poetry."[42] Hedayat played a seminal role in lifting this oppression, heralding a new era of experimenting with different modes of expression in Persian prose. It is no surprise that he is considered "the father of Persian modernist fiction."[43]

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See ibid, 19.

38) Bashi, The Proper Etiquette of Meeting Shahrnush Parsipur in the United States.

39) Sepideh Saremi, "Interview with Shahrnush Parsipur*," Author,* 2008.

40) Ramin Tabib, "Perfectly Flawed," *Iranian.com*, July 10, 2007.

41) Michael Craig Hillmann, introduction to *Hedayat's "The Blind Owl" Forty Years After*, ed. Michael Craig Hillmann (Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, 1978), 2.

42) Heshmat Moayyad, *Stories from Iran: A Chicago Anthology 1921-1991* (Washington, D.C.: Mage, 1991), 9.

43) Porochista Khakpour, *This Book Will End Your Life: The Greatest Modern Persian Novel Ever Written*. *The Rumpus.net,* 2010.

In his introduction to *Sadeq Hedayat: An Anthology*,[44] Ehsan Yarshater provides a brief biography of Hedayat's life, outline's his key thematic concerns, and situates him as "a thoroughly genuine Persian writer" who "while breaking with the tradition in genre, technique and style, reflects the basic sentiments of that tradition."[45] Other than this allusion to Hedayat's unique literary style, Yarshater does not further classify or analyze Hedayat's writing style, or refer to how he has influenced other writers.

Some scholars have made the attempt. Michael M. J. Fischer writes about surrealism[46] in Iran during the twentieth century, and refers to *The Blind Owl* as an example of surrealist art in Iran in his book *Mute Dreams, Blind Owls, and Dispersed Knowledges: Persian Poesis in the Transnational Circuit.*[47] He writes that twentieth century Persian literature is suffused with modern and abstract literary techniques that highlight the transitional phase that Iran has been undergoing in the past few decades, specifically in terms of cultural and religious identity. While he briefly acknowledges Hedayat's legacy by pointing out that many Iranian writers "continued to use his devices,"[48] he does not elaborate with any examples of his influence on other writers. In his essay, William Kay Archer also observes that *The Blind Owl* "is quite surrealistic," but does not provide any further details to substantiate this claim.[49] In fact, Janette Johnson argues that despite the fact that Hedayat is associated with surrealism, his actual familiarity with it is in dispute. She claims that "the extent of Hedayat's relationship with the surrealists and his degree of involvement in surrealist activities are not documented,"[50] hence preferring to use the term "affinity" in her study of surrealist threads in his work. Given the problematic nature of associating Hedayat with a particular cultural movement that was flourishing during his time as a writer without solid evidence, I propose that while some aspects of the work can be viewed as surrealistic,[51] it would be more accurate to consider *The Blind Owl* a magical

44) Ehsan Yarshater, introduction to *Sadeq Hedayat: An Anthology,* ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1979).

45) Yarshater, *Sadeq Hedayat: An Anthology,* xiii.

46) I distinguish between surrealism and magical realism, according to the definition provided by Wendy B. Faris in the essay "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction," in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy P. Faris (Durham, N.C., 1995),171.  I will expand upon this distinction below.

47) Michael M. J.  Fischer, *Mute Dreams, Blind Owls, and Dispersed Knowledges: Persian Poesis in the Transnational Circuitry* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2004).

48) Ibid, 181.

49) William Kay Archer, "The Terrible Awareness of Time," in *Hedayat's "The Blind Owl" Forty Years After*, ed. Michael Craig Hillmann (Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, 1978), 12.

50) Janette S. Johnson, "The Blind Owl, Nerval, Kafka, Poe and the Surrealists: Affinities," in *Hedayat's "The Blind Owl" Forty Years After*, ed. Michael Craig Hillmann (Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, 1978), 125–141.

51) It is relevant to note that most scholars writing in the mid-twentieth century use the word "surrealist" to refer to qualities heralded by the movement launched by André Breton in the 1920s. This describes literature in which there is a breakdown of "the boundaries between rationality and irrationality, exploring the resources and revolutionary energies of dreams, hallucinations, and sexual desire." The term "magical realism," while more pertinent to Hedayat's work, did not gain recognition until after writers such as Marquez garnered international acclaim in the late twentieth century. This may perhaps explain why Hedayat's work may have been understood in light of the Surrealist movement, although I argue its historical proximity to him does not necessitate their association. For a definition of surrealism, see "Surrealism," *The Oxford*

realist work, as this particular understanding of his work is more useful in tracing his influence on the following generation of Iranian writers, Shahrnush Parsipur being a prime example.

Jalal Al-e-Ahmad's essay on *The Blind Owl* briefly touches upon Hedayat's tendency to "escape from realism."[52] Al-e-Ahmad realizes that in *The Blind Owl,* Hedayat largely steps out of conventional literary notions of time and place to create a novel where "realism appears in the form of fantasy."[53] Further, Mohammad Ghanoonparvar describes the first part of *The Blind Owl* as "a fantastic tale in the tradition of romanticism."[54] However, according to Tzvetan Todorov,[55] an exposition of what constitutes fantastic literature, and why, is considered seminal to understanding the various aspects of the genre. Fantastic literature and surrealism are among the closely related yet distinct counterparts[56] to magical realism. Through an analysis of *The Blind Owl's* presence in Parsipir's early tales, I will frequently expand on the subtle but key differences between the two literary genres and magical realism in what follows.

Unlike the case of Parsipur, there is no dearth of scholarship on Hedayat's own influences. From Bahram Meghdadi's paper comparing Hedayat to Faulkner[57], to Nasrin Rahimieh's study of Hedayat's interest in Kafka,[58] many scholars have explored what they claim are the Western roots of Hedayat's work. In fact, in *Hedayat's Blind Owl as a Western Novel*, Michael Beard (1990) provides a detailed textual analysis of the novel, highlighting a number of influences, including Kafka, Poe, Rilke, and Sartre.[59] He explains his fascination with Hedayat's sources of inspiration by writing that "*The Blind Owl* can serve as a test to examine more closely what literary influence might be."[60] I will expand on this statement by exploring Hedayat's own sphere of influence upon the subsequent generation of Iranian writers, specifically how Parsipur's early short stories clearly reflect aspects of *The Blind Owl*.[61]

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*Dictionary of Literary Terms,* ed. Chris Baldick (Oxford University Press, 2008).

52) Jalal Al-e-Ahmad, "The Hedayat of The Blind Owl," trans. Ali A. Eftekhary, in *Hedayat's "The Blind Owl" Forty Years After*, ed. Michael Craig Hillmann (Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, 1978), 31.

53) Ibid, 31.

54) Mohammad Ghanoonparvar, "The Blind Owl," in vol. 1 of *The Novel*, ed. Franco Moretti, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2006), 794–801.

55) Todorov, *The Fantastic: a Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1975).

56) Shadi Gholizadeh also argues that *The Blind Owl* can be seen as an expressionistic work, and Deirdre Lashgari considers *The Blind Owl* to be an example of absurdist art. While it is not in the scope of this paper to assess these claims, for further reading please see Shadi Gholizadeh, "Longing to Touch the Untouchable: On Sadegh Hedayat's The Blind Owl," *Iranian.com*, September 14, 2006, and Deirdre Lashgari, "Absurdity and Creation in the Work of Sadeq Hedayat," *Iranian Studies* 15.1 (1982): 31–52.

57) Behram Meghdadi, "The Blind Owl and The Sound and the Fury," in *Sadeq Hedayat: His Work and His Wondrous World*, ed. Homa Katouzian (London: Routledge, 2007) 72–88.

58) Nasrin Rahimieh, "Hedayat's Translations of Kafka and the Logic of Iranian Modernity," in *Sadeq Hedayat: His Work and His Wondrous World*, ed. Homa Katouzian (London: Routledge, 2007), 124–135.

59) Michael Beard, *Hedayat's Blind Owl as a Western Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1990).

60) Michael Beard, "The Blind Owl in the Literary Marketplace, in" *Sadeq Hedayat: His Work and His Wondrous World*, ed. Homa Katouzian (London: Routledge, 2007), 59–71.

61) Mahnoosh Nik-Ahd's compares *The Blind Owl* to J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* in an enlightening paper that deserves mention here. It is important to note, however, that although *Catcher in the Rye* was written almost two decades after *The Blind Owl,* it is highly unlikely that Salinger was aware of Hedayat's

This is not to say that Hedayat disregarded Eastern influences; on the contrary, much like Parsipur, Hedayat was also fascinated by Eastern mysticism and philosophy. The presence of Hindu imagery in *The Blind Owl* is widely acknowledged, and David Champagne traces these images carefully.[62] However, he disputes the claim Iraj Bashiri makes that *The Blind Owl* is merely a reworking of the Buddhacarita, a Sanskrit epic poem about the life of the Buddha,[63] which is a hypothesis that Hassan Kamshad also supports.[64] In fact, Bashiri goes so far as to say that *The Blind Owl* "conveys a strong plagiaristic impression,"[65] and that Hedayat "imitates" fellow Persian writer Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh.[66] These claims have not seemed to make a significant impact on fellow Hedayat scholars, such as Homa Katouzian,[67] who also argues that despite Hedayat's affinity for Hinduism, he was, in fact, largely unfamiliar with Indian culture, and that this is evident from his "colorful" use of Hindu images in *The Blind Owl*.[68]

Katouzian has also written comprehensively on Hedayat's life and works. He provides a detailed biography of Hedayat, and comments extensively on his influences from within the Persian nationalist tradition of poets,[69] writers and revolutionaries of the 1920s in *Sadeq Hedayat, The Life and Legend of an Iranian Writer*.[70] Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi expands on Katouzian's work by exploring the extent to which Hedayat's works reflects his nationalist pride and his predilection towards the culture of pre-Islamic Persia as the idealized embodiment of what it means to be Iranian.[71]

Katouzian does, however, refer to Hedayat's work as being "psycho-fictional", which is a term that Katouzian coined himself in the 1970s to describe what he calls "the subjective nature of his stories, which brings together the psychological,

work, since the first English translation of *The Blind Owl* was published in 1957, the year that *Catcher in the Rye* was published. Please see Mahnoosh Nik-Ahd, "Catching The Blind Owl: J.D. Salinger's 'The Catcher in the Rye' and Sadegh Hedayat's 'The Blind Owl,'" *Iranian.com*, 31 Jan, 2006.

62) David C. Champagne, "Hindu Imagery in The Blind Owl," in *Hedayat's "The Blind Owl" Forty Years After*. Ed. Michael Craig Hillmann (Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, 1978), 108–117.

63) Iraj Bashiri, *Hedayat's Ivory Tower: Structural Analysis of The Blind Owl* (Michigan: Manor House, 1974), 49.

64) Hassan Kamshad, "Hysterical Self-Analysis," in *Hedayat's "The Blind Owl" Forty Years After*, ed. Michael Craig Hillmann (Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, 1978), 21.

65) Bashiri, *Hedayat's Ivory Tower*, 215.

66) Bashiri, *Hedayat's Ivory Tower*, 49.

67) Homa Katouzian is critical of Bashiri's scholarship on Hedayat, arguing that both he and Kamshad do not fully understand the structure of *The Blind Owl*. See *Sadeq Hedayat: The Life and Legend of an Iranian Writer*. London: I. B. Tauris, 1999: 134.

68) Homa Katouzian, *Sadeq Hedayat: The Life and Legend of an Iranian Writer* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999).

69) There is limited scholarship on Hedayat's influence by medieval Persian poets, although Leonard Bogle detects overtones of Omar Khayyam in *The Blind Owl*. See Leonard Bogle, "The Khayyamic Influence in The Blind Owl," in *Hedayat's "The Blind Owl" Forty Years After*, ed. Michael Craig Hillmann (Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, 1978), 87–98.

70) Katouzian. *Sadeq Hedayat*, 1999.

71) Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, "Narrative Identity in the Works of Hedayat and His Contemporaries," in *Sadeq Hedayat: His Work and His Wondrous World*, ed. Homa Katouzian (London: Routledge, 2007), 107–23.

the ontological and the metaphysical in an indivisible whole."[72] While he elaborates further upon Hedayat's ability to expose the harsh and painful realities of ordinary people by putting them through extraordinary situations, he does not consider the possibility that this may be an aspect of magical realism.

Story Synopses

As mentioned earlier, I will be considering five short stories from Parsipur's 1977 anthology, *Āvīzih'hā-yi bulūr* (Crystal Pendant Earrings). *The Blue Spring of Kathmandu*[73] revolves around an unnamed narrator, who spends her day confined to her house while taking care of a mysterious man in her bed, who happens to be dead. Her only means of escape from her banal life is reading the newspaper and imagining herself in foreign lands. She briefly interacts with the newspaper boy once, but he runs away once he realizes that she has a corpse in her apartment. In *Heat in the Year of Zero,*[74] the protagonist is a young girl who must bear the oppressive summer heat of Iran while pondering the circumstances of her life and her increasingly strained relationship with her brother. The story chronicles her thoughts and observations, and reflects her passivity in her approach to life. *A Decent Place*[75] tells the story of a woman named Qashangeh, who falls in love with a man across the street. She must forget him, however, when he murders his baby by throwing it out of the window, because she refuses to take responsibility for it. The smell of the baby's rotting corpse plagues Qashangeh throughout the story, even though she manages to engage herself in other romantic relationships. *The Double*[76] is a richly metaphysical story of an old man leading his younger companion to the forest in order to bury him alive. While walking to their destination, they share their thoughts on friendship, loneliness and death. *Sara*[77] is the story of a young girl who is mysteriously pregnant, and has been for many years. The story is in the form of a conversation between a doctor, Mr. Bahari, and Sara's father, where we learn about how perplexed he is at her daughter's predicament.

I argue that the themes that these stories share clearly reflect a young Parsipur's fascination and subsequent engagement with *The Blind Owl*. In many ways, she challenges Hedayat's presentation of these themes by her use of female protagonists, thereby highlighting her own personal preoccupation with issues pertaining to gender. Parsipur responds to *The Blind Owl* through these stories, by subtly exploring her characters' inability to grapple with the subject of death, their loneliness and emotional detachment, their unmet desire for escape, and their troubled

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72) Katouzian, *Sadeq Hedayat: His Work and His Wondrous World*, 10.

73) Shahrnush Parsipur, "The Blue Spring of Kathmandu," in *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, trans. Steve Macdowell and Afshin Nassiri (Portland, OR: Nur, 2011), 20–25.

74) Shahrnush Parsipur, "Heat in the Year of Zero," in *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, trans. Steve Macdowell and Afshin Nassiri (Portland, OR: Nur, 2011), 44–48.

75) Shahrnush Parsipur, "A Decent Place," in *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, trans. Steve Macdowell and Afshin Nassiri (Portland, OR: Nur, 2011), 31–35.

76) Shahrnush Parsipur, "The Double," in *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, trans. Steve Macdowell and Afshin Nassiri (Portland, OR: Nur, 2011), 27–29.

77) Shahrnush Parsipur, "Heat in the Year of Zero," in *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, trans. Steve Macdowell and Afshin Nassiri (Portland, OR: Nur, 2011), 50–54.

personal relationships.

Analysis

In *The Blue Spring of Kathmandu,* the narrator mentions the dead body in her bed for the first time nonchalantly in her detailed description of her room—when she describes her bed, she merely states that "there's a corpse in it."[78] The way in which she coddles the corpse, taking caution to be quiet around it and hemming the holes in his robe, reminds us of how the narrator treats the ethereal girl's corpse in *The Blind Owl*.[79] Parsipur's narrator tiptoes around her bedroom in the same way that Hedayat's narrator tiptoes around the ethereal girl's dead body, as if both narrators share a common fear that they could somehow disturb the dead's peaceful sleep. Both narrators even lie next to their respective corpses in bed, in what can be described as both a display of affection and a cry for companionship.

The presence of dead bodies in both stories demonstrates both writers' preoccupation with death. Hedayat's fixation with the subject is made clear from the very first page of *The Blind Owl*, when he describes his current mental state as one precariously straddling the boundary "between death and resurrection."[80] He frequently uses the metaphor of death while describing ordinary things and actions, such as when his uncle who was visiting disappears, leaving the door "agape like the mouth of a dead man,"[81] or when he describes his love for wine, "that elixir of death which would bestow everlasting peace."[82] From being soothed with the thought of death, to being "aroused with a particular sense of delight"[83] at the fact that there is a dead woman on his bed, Hedayat's narrator gradually comes to be obsessed with the idea of death. The smell of the decomposing corpse "pervades him, body and soul,"[84] and after this incident he finds himself being beckoned by death, swaying almost gleefully when it "murmurs his song in [his] ear."[85] Towards the end, he likens himself to "a living corpse," frustrated that he is "deprived of [it's] oblivion and peace."[86] Indeed, he treats mortality like an unwanted burden, and welcomes death as "the last refuge of hopelessness, repulsions, disappointments, and 'impotence.'"[87]

Parsipur's characters display the same self-consciousness that Hedayat's narrator does in the way they introspect and reveal their deepest thoughts about death and despair. The young woman in *The Blue Spring of Kathmandu* feels an ineffable connection with the man in her bed who "has been dead ever since [she] can

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78) Parsipur, *The Blue Spring of Kathmandu*, 21. This matter-of-fact way of introducing an unusual element of the narrative to the reader is typical of magical realist texts, and fulfills one of Faris' secondary conditions. Please see Faris, *Scheherazade's Children*, 177.

79) For a brief synopsis of *The Blind Owl*, please see the Appendix.

80) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 1.

81) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 10.

82) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 62.

83) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 24.

84) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 39.

85) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 124.

86) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 90.

87) Al-e-Ahmad, *The Hedayat of The Blind Owl,* 40.

remember."[88] The sheer normalcy of this connection only comes into question when the newspaper boy "recoils in horror"[89] after noticing the corpse in her bed. Until this happens, Parsipur's narrator is content watching the cockroaches flock towards the decomposing corpse, and "disappear inside the man's robe,"[90] and spends her free time daydreaming about travelling around the world by means of the newspaper articles she reads.

Throughout *Heat in the Year of Zero*, the protagonist struggles to pass time and avoid boredom during the hot summer months. She often watches herself "decompose" in front of the mirror, which echoes the moment in *The Blind Owl* when Hedayat's narrator looks in the mirror and realizes that "the old ["him"] has rotted away."[91] When Parsipur's narrator in *Heat in the Year of Zero* watches the nearby dock workers at their job, she has the sense that "someone was dying…or had already died…or together, all the men, the river, the earth and [she] [was] disintegrating."[92]

Similarly in *A Decent Place*, the smell of the baby's decomposing body continues to plague Qashangeh, lasting for what seems to be a number of years. It haunts her into her next romantic relationship, and she eventually accepts the fact that "nothing can be done about it now,"[93] hoping that perhaps, someday, she would learn to bear it and proceed normally with her life.

In all of the above cases, the presence of death overwhelms the protagonists. Indeed, they are almost suffocated by its prevalence, having to bear with the stench of the decomposition of both their own bodies and the corpses they encounter, both theoretically and literally. However, it is necessary to note that neither Parsipur nor Hedayat seem to be concerned with how these deaths occur, or why. These deaths never lead to whodunit mysteries that call for a gathering of clues and an eventual solution; in fact, they are never explained. Instead, death is a ubiquitous part of these characters' subjective realities.[94] Its omnipresence points to deeper concerns, concerns that reveal both the characters' and the writers' anxieties about life.

What is most striking, is the key difference between how Parsipur's characters deal with death and how Hedayat's narrator does—Hedayat's narrator experiences a significantly heightened sense of torment, while Parsipur's narrators simply reflect passively on death and its effect on their lives and thoughts. Hedayat's narrator's agony is more visceral, whereas Parsipur's narrators silently bear the burden of life

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88) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 21.

89) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 24.

90) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 22.

91) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 52.

92) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 46. Perhaps a better rendition of the word "tajzīyih shudan" (*Āvīzah'hā-yi bulūr*, Tihrān: Raz, 1536, 47) is "decomposing," which Lewis and Yazdanfar use in their translation of the story. See "The Heat of the Year Zero," in *A Voice of Their Own*: *A Collection of Stories by Iranian Women Written Since the Revolution of 1979* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 1996), 44.

93) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 35.

94) Bruce Holland Rogers argues that magical realism "tells its stories from the perspective of people who live in our world and experience a different reality from the one we call objective." Please see Bruce Holland Rogers, "What is Magical Realism, Really?" *Writing-world.com*, 2002.

by "thinking of death."[95] Nevertheless, it bears mentioning that the natural, matter-of-fact way in which both Hedayat's narrator and the protagonist of *The Blue Spring of Kathmandu* treat the dead bodies in their beds is typical of magical realist fiction, where their aloofness is somewhat jarring, and points to deeper truths regarding their psychological states. Indeed, their nonchalant attitude to death reveals that their inner despair is inconsolable, and highlights the detachment with which they continue to lead their lives.

What binds them and the other characters together is a shared psychological experience, and the key clue pointing to this connection lies in *Heat in the Year of Zero*. The story essentially ends with the narrator winding down after a night of gloomy reflection by reading. Indeed, I propose that Parsipur leaves us with the notion that her narrator, much like herself, reads as a means of escaping the monotony of her life, and what better novel to seek solace in than *The Blind Owl*? Parsipur's characters relate to Hedayat's narrator in their struggle to come to terms with their environments, and recognize that death is the ultimate "dead end," both a culmination and revelation of the absurdity, the emptiness, of the life which had gone before.[96] Her characters have, as it were, absorbed Hedayat's message, and are, indeed, "the children of death, and it is death that rescues [them] from the deceptions of life."[97]

Sometimes Parsipur's characters must bear the pain of actual wounds and illnesses, as a symbol for their suffering souls, much like Hedayat's narrator does in *The Blind Owl*. Although he refers to a disease at the very beginning of the novel, he laments that "mankind has not yet discovered a cure for [it],"[98] perhaps suggesting that he may not have a medical disease.[99] Although it seems to be incomprehensible by reference merely to everyday consciousness,[100] he continues to suffer from it, as it eats away at his soul. His psychological condition worsens throughout the novel, and frequently cites "pustule-like"[101] images that reflect the deteriorating state of his health and mind. What starts as "a mere sore," eventually "erodes the narrator's mind like a kind of canker,"[102] both reflecting his deeper, more psychological pain and foreshadowing later developments in the novel.

Parsipur creates a similar environment in *The Double*. Much like the odds-and-ends seller in *The Blind Owl*, the old man in Parsipur's story represents both the wisdom and weariness of old age, as he engages his young companion in a highly

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95) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 96.

96) Lashgari, *Absurdity and Creation in the Work of Sadeq Hedayat*, 40.

97) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 100.

98) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 1.

99) Leonardo P. Alishan, however, argues that "some of his morbidity and dark view of the world stems from the fact that he is suffering from tuberculosis," which he claims is something that readers often forget. There is, however, no direct reference to tuberculosis in the text, which makes his claim implausible. Please see "The Ménage à Trois of The Blind Owl," in *Hedayat's "The Blind Owl" Forty Years After*, ed. Michael Craig Hillmann (Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, 1978), 178.

100) Fischer, *Mute Dreams, Blind Owls, and Dispersed Knowledges*, 184.

101) Hedayat uses the word "chirk" or "chirki," which Costello mistranslates as "dirty;" a more apt translation would be "pustule-like," as it retains the explicit, septic nature of the dirt. For reference to the original use of the word, see Sadegh Hedayat, *Būf-i kūr* (Tihrān: Sipihr, 1351 [1972]), 25.

102) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 1.

abstract conversation about friendship, happiness, and loneliness. They try to avoid the cold air as they walk through the forest; this foreshadows the young man's impending fate, as in *The Blind Owl*, where the narrator frequently associates feeling cold with thoughts of the grave.[103] As they walk through the forest, the young man's hands "[brushes] against the infected abscesses growing out of the trees."[104] I argue that this unusual image and Parsipur's particular use of this phrase is a clear reference to *The Blind Owl*, and pays homage to the disease that both Hedayat's and Parsipur's narrators share: A disease that takes over not just their bodies, but their minds, their souls and their collective spirit.[105]

While it has been established that both Parsipur and Hedayat's narrators share the same bleak outlook to their lives and circumstances, this begs the following question: What exactly is it that these characters suffer from? Both writers display their sentimentality and tendency to despair in creating characters whose cynicism, resignation and despondence set the mood and tone of their stories. These characters are melancholy, their outlooks are grim, and their natures depressive. As mentioned earlier, it is well known that Hedayat suffered from clinical depression,[106] and Parsipur was to develop a similar condition in her forties.[107] But as a young girl absorbing the "black pessimism"[108] of *The Blind Owl*, I argue that Parsipur became a part of a new generation of writers, "who saw in his nostalgic melancholy and pessimism an expression of [their] own thwarted hopes and aspirations."[109]

This is most evident in Parsipur's characterization of the protagonist of *Heat in the Year of Zero*, who lounges around aimlessly on the rooftop of her house, watching her life pass by and wondering if it will ever amount to anything. Constantly aware of her isolation and detachment, she tries but cannot muster any "vivid or childlike feelings" for anything.[110] Similarly, the protagonists of *The Blue Spring of Kathmandu* and *A Decent Place* both seem to float through life, alienated from those they interact with, and oblivious to their external surroundings. The narrator of *The Blue Spring of Kathmandu* wonders aloud why "[she] gets so lonely,"[111] and Qashangeh from *A Decent Place* spends her evenings eating dinner "in lonely silence."[112] In *The Double*, the old man tells his young companion how he can hear "the sound of loneliness clapping" outside his door, and realizes that even the young man has "brought loneliness as guest

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103) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 97.

104) "…damalhāyi chirkīn-i dirakht ra… lams kardam." Shahrnush Parsipur, *Āvīzah'hā-yi bulūr*, 16. All translations referring back to the original Persian were rendered by me.

105) Mohammad Ghanoonparvar provides a more accurate description by referring to it as a disease of the '"rūḥ." Please see Ghanoonparvar, *The Blind Owl*, 799.

106) Yarshater, *Sadeq Hedayat*, xii. For further details about the circumstances under which Hedayat develops this condition, please refer to the documentary by Sam Kalantari and Mohsen Shahrnazdar, *Az Khaneh Shomareh 37* (Iran: Pendar Artistic Group, 2011).

107) Bashi, *The Proper Etiquette of Meeting Shahrnush Parsipur in the United States.*

108) Kamshad, *Hysterical Self-Analysis*, 16.

109) Yarshater, *Sadeq Hedayat*, viii.

110) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 46.

111) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 24.

112) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 33.

to [his] little room."[113] Even in this rare case where Parsipur's characters attempt to seek solace in one other, the young man eventually tells his older friend that "[he] is tired,"[114] and the old man understands that he wishes to end his life.

Her emotionally disconnected characters reflect Parsipur's own sense of estrangement from her conditions at the time,[115] and she channels this into creating her characters, whose desires, longings and disappointments match those of a younger Parsipur. She shares with Hedayat the same melancholy tenor that Ehsan Yarshater argues is common to both Persian music and medieval Persian poetry, suggesting that perhaps Hedayat was subconsciously inhabiting "a genuine and widely shared Persian feeling,"[116] despite his Western influences. This is complemented by Faris' view that "ancient systems of belief and local lore often underlie the text"[117] in magical realist fiction, thus making it more pertinent for *The Blind Owl* to be considered an example of such.

In a sense, for both Parsipur's narrators and Hedayat's, the room is a metaphor for living within their own heads; the images of walls and barriers highlights the disconnect between them and the outside world, the intimacy of their private thoughts, and the immense loneliness that they feel, despite their decision to remain indoors out of choice. Many of Parsipur's characters, much like Hedayat's narrator, spend most, if not all of their time indoors, enclosed in a room with a single window that provide them with their only outlet to the outside world. The narrator of *The Blue Spring of Kathmandu* begins the story by describing what she sees out of her window. She describes in detail all the varieties of flowers she observes, what her neighbor wears when he pulls the weeds, and what the nearby pond looks like as well. She mentions having another window that overlooks the street, but she never opens it; she only wonders whether she might possibly see "lovers pass by hand in hand"[118] through it. She does, however, sit by the garden window a total of six times in the story, either with her morning tea, or with her knitting. Similarly, *Heat in the Year Zero* also begins with the narrator recounting what she does on a typical summer day, which includes lying in bed, "looking through the window at the heat" and struggling to decipher sounds from outside "[that] [could] barely be heard."[119]

Conversely, we never interact directly with the title character from *Sara*. She appears only once in the story as an image through her bedroom window, and we learn that Mr. Bahari has spent eight years staring at her through her window from the porch without ever having talked to her. Unlike the other stories, *Sara* is told in the third person, which, compared to Parsipur's other stories, allows us to observe her the way others do. We see a detached, silent woman, secluded and almost impenetrable by others, alone in her thoughts and distant from the rest of the world, only to be seen

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113) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 27-28.
114) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 29.
115) Azarmi Dukht Safawi and A. W. Azhar. Dehlvi, *Revolution and Creativity,* 99.
116) Yarshater, *Sadeq Hedayat*, xii.
117) Faris, *Scheherazade's Children*, 182.
118) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 23.
119) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 45.

briefly by means of a window.[120]

This window image intensifies the characters' isolation, and is also present in *The Blind Owl*, where the narrator describes his window as "[his] links with the outside world."[121] When he is not lying in bed (much like the narrator of *Heat in the Year of Zero,*) he looks out of this window, and observes the outside world from within the walls of his room, which represent the margin between this world and his own. It is ironic that even when he does venture outside of his room, "he finds himself in the same prison, only larger in space and varied in context,"[122] and he has no choice but to return back to the room he refers to as his coffin.[123]

We also see some of Parsipur's characters interact with others through windows, thereby traversing into the realm of the public; this, however, usually ends tragically, and further highlights their deep isolation from those around them. For instance, the only conversation that Qashangeh has in *A Decent Place* is with the man she falls in love with through the window of her apartment, and their brief love story ends with him throwing his baby (assumedly from a previous marriage) out of his window. After that incident, "she [does] not dare look through her window again,"[124] and only once stares at the closed window, "wishing she could curse [the man] using all the profanities of the world."[125] As a result, Qashangeh feels better, and she retreats back into her world,[126] trying to avoid the stench of the decomposing baby's corpse. For it is only when she is alone that she can develop her own thoughts and process her feelings about the outside world.[127]

As we have seen, both Hedayat and Parsipur create characters whose source of anguish and solitude are never clear and subject to interpretation. [128] But it is precisely

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120) It is pertinent to note that, by means of highlighting the female gaze in contrast to that of the male, Parsipur is arguably in the developmental stages of fleshing out what would become a clearly feminist literary voice. This may be said to have heralded a new trope within feminist literature written by Iranian women. See, for example, a short story written in 1990 by Moniru Ravanipur, "We Only Fear the Future," in *A Voice of Their Own*: *A Collection of Stories by Iranian Women Written Since the Revolution of 1979* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 1996), 55–61.

121) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 55.

122) For a more detailed treatment of the juxtaposition between the world in the narrator's head and his external environment, please see Daryush Mehjooi, "Sadeq Hedayat's The Blind Owl," in *Hedayat's "The Blind Owl" Forty Years After*, ed. Michael Craig Hillmann (Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, 1978), 178.

123) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 97.

124) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 33.

125) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 34.

126) Iraj Bashiri develops the significance of the window as an intermediary between two worlds in his attempt to explain Rilke's influence on Hedayat in *The Blind Owl*. Please see Iraj Bashiri, *Hedayat's Ivory Tower*, 77.

127) Here, we see the clear making of a feminist writer in Parsipur, as her characters mirror the predicament that Virginia Woolf famously wrote about in her essay "A Room of One's Own" (first published in 1929). Whether or not Parsipur had read Woolf as a young girl is unclear, but Parsipur certainly seems to respond to her reading of *The Blind Owl* in her depiction of her characters' alienation and isolation. It is also relevant to note Erika Friedl's observation that even in the Persian folktale, "women develop a certain character of their own when they are "alone." See Erika Friedl, "Women in Contemporary Persian Folktales," in *Women in the Muslim World*, eds. Lois Beck and Nikki Keddi (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1978), 634–635.

128) Michael Beard writes about "the fundamental ambiguity of character" present in the *The Blind Owl*,

for this reason that they are so compelling to the reader—these usually nameless,[129] virtually anonymous characters constitute ideas and points of views that challenge their surroundings, and how they appear to the world is not as important as how the world appears to them.[130] For Parsipur, this worldview will specifically entail criticizing a society in which women are relatively immobile and disenfranchised; but in her early writings, which resemble vignettes or mood pieces rather than fully formulated stories, this is not necessarily the case. Instead, we merely see the workings of a young mind, attempting to reach beyond the field of literary expressions, designations and classifications that are common in Persian literature at the time, especially in her use of magical realism. In doing so, she cannot help but reflect the same kind of stubborn indifference that Hedayat's narrator also reflects in *The Blind Owl,* which camouflages their deep sense of disappointment and disillusionment.[131]

Both Parsipur and Hedayat's narrators need a method to cope with their disillusionment with life; indeed, even their self-elected isolation is a burden that they must somehow endure. For the protagonist in *The Blue Spring of Kathmandu*, the newspaper is her means of escape. For her, "if the paper didn't exist…then neither did the whole world;"[132] she travels the world through the paper, and uses her imagination to transport herself into the places she reads about. In fact, Parsipur purposely blurs the line between her imagination and reality by describing how the narrator would protect herself from pests and mosquitoes in Bolivia by "[lying] down on it, [spreading] the paper on the ground, and [watching] the sweaty green trees overhead with the yellow sap flowing down their trunks and becoming brown at the bottom."[133] The narrator "[swims] through the Suez Canal simply by "[holding] the paper in [her] hand…[plays] in Siberia…and [dresses] the wounds of the injured in Vietnam."[134] She eventually decides to travel to Kathmandu in her thoughts, where she finds a peaceful spot and falls asleep, retreating ultimately to her dreams where she can cope with her sad existence.

In much the same way, Qashangeh from *A Decent Place* makes her best effort to escape "the disgusting smell" of the baby's corpse outside her window by "[escaping] to the street"[135] and eventually gets romantically involved with someone else. However, "the smell [follows] her; she [runs] to get away, but then she [starts sweating] in the warm weather, and the smell [sticks] to her body like glue."[136] In the

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arguing that it makes the reader "see [the narrator] as insane." (Beard, *The Blind Owl as a Western Novel*, 157) I will argue, however, that there is method to his madness, and that the root cause of both his and Parsipur's character's suffering lies in an inability to forge successful relationships with people, specifically romantic relationships.

129) Michael Beard points out that both Dante and Hedayat tend not to name their characters, which "suggests an inward focus." Please see Beard, *The Blind Owl as a Western Novel*, 53.

130) Khatereh Sheibani, "Without Men: Parsipur's Polyphonic Novel," *Iranian.com*, 2003.

131) Hassan Kamshad argues that Hedayat's narrator is socially maladjusted and hence is purposely isolated from the rest of the world. Please see Kamshad, *Hysterical Self-Analysis*, 18.

132) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 23.

133) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 23.

134) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 23.

135) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 34.

136) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 34.

end, she even resorts to sleep, hoping that the smell recedes eventually.

The fact that Parsipur's characters always resort to sleep, even after struggling to escape their realities in other ways, is significant. Indeed, the idea of retreating to sleep and entering a world of dreams to be able to bear being awake also recurs frequently in *The Blind Owl*. By means of consuming opium, the narrator finds relief "in the artificial sleep induced by opium and similar narcotics."[137] He frequently sinks into "a condition between sleep and coma,"[138] and desires to surrender [himself] to the sleep of oblivion."[139] He relishes the chance for his imagination to run wild in his vivid dreams, "his sickly deliriums,"[140] when "in the course of a single second, [he] [lives] a life which [is] entirely distinct from [his] waking life."[141] He admits that through sleep, "[he] wishes to escape from [himself] and to change [his] destiny,"[142] much like Parsipur's characters do.

Through these dreams, Hedayat's narrator often retreats to his childhood memories, similar to the narrator's tendency to daydream about travelling abroad in *The Blue Spring of Kathmandu*. Hedayat's narrator's frequently dreams about his youth highlights the importance of nostalgia as a coping mechanism in the novel:

> "I often used to recall the days of my childhood in order to forget the present, in order to escape from myself. I tried to feel as I did in the days before I fell ill. Then I would have the sensation that I was still a child and that inside me there was a second self which felt sorry for this child who was about to die."[143]

Here, we see the narrator almost leading two lives; his real life is full of misery and loneliness, whereas his "dream life"[144] is his means of escape. Hedayat weaves both lives together, and fluidly depicts the narrator's wanderings between the two worlds of reality and dreams; he does this to the extent that we are never sure which realm the narrator is in at any given point. As Faris argues, it is this fluidity between boundaries in a work of literature that makes it magical realist.

As mentioned earlier, one of the ways in which the narrator of *Heat in the Year of Zero* escapes the boredom and dissatisfaction of her life is by reading. She ends her reminiscences about that hot summer night by going to the roof, where she "[counts] the stars…and [she] [reads]."[145] Even the narrator of *The Blue Spring of Kathmandu* reads (albeit the newspaper) in order to escape from her surroundings. Conversely, the narrator of *The Blind Owl* writes in order to overcome "the overmastering need… more urgent than ever it was in the past, to create a channel between [his] thoughts and

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137) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 61.
138) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 43.
139) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 44.
140) Al-e-Ahmad, *The Hedayat of The Blind Owl,* 34.
141) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 69.
142) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 69.
143) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 83.
144) Kamshad, *Hysterical Self-Analysis*, 17.
145) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 48.

[his] unsubstantial self, [his] shadow."[146] Indeed, as Al-e-Ahmad points out, the entire text of *The Blind Owl* is meant to be "a refuge from the narrator's disappointments, rejections, sighs, sorrows, and hopes."[147] He writes for his shadow, and while many have interpreted this to be merely an extension of himself, others, like Beard, have argued that for him, writing is therapeutic, a means by which he can make sense of his feelings, and share them with the world somehow.[148] Indeed, it is through writing that he is able to converse with his inner self (for no one else is listening), and access the memories he needs in order to bear his life's sorrows.  Hedayat compares the narrator's shadow to the shape of an owl, "leaning forward, read intently every word [he] [writes]."[149] The owl's active posture suggests that the narrator is indeed writing for an audience; Beard extends this audience to include all readers of *The Blind Owl*, involving us in "one of those disturbing moments in literature when the fictional creation seems almost to look out and see the reader's eye peering in at him."[150]

It is, therefore, not coincidental, that the narrator's mother in *Heat in the Year of Zero* comments on how her daughter "[looks] like an owl."[151] Having read *The Blind Owl's* narrator's emotionally purgative treatise on loneliness and despair, she responds to it in her own attitude to life. In this way, Parsipur responds to *The Blind Owl*, by creating characters that descend from its shadow.

The fundamental problem that Parsipur's characters and Hedayat's narrator share is their unfulfilled desire for companionship and sexual fulfillment. In fact, Beard claims that despite appearances to the contrary, *The Blind Owl* is essentially "a highly conventional love story."[152] In the first half of the story, the narrator is besotted with a girl he sees through his window; she appears to him as "a passing gleam, a falling star...in the form of a woman--or of an angel."[153] She is the ideal woman; in fact, she "transcends reality."[154] He glorifies her seemingly perfect features in detail, [155] and is thrilled when she comes back to his room with him, but things turn sour when he realizes that he has unintentionally killed her by feeding her poison kept in a wine bottle. Perhaps in denial of what has just occurred, he undresses and lies down next

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146) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 50.
147) Al-e-Ahmad, *The Hedayat of The Blind Owl,* 29.
148) Leonardo P. Alishan argues that the main motive for narrating *The Blind Owl* is to tell his story in the form of a confession. Please see Alishan, *The Ménage à Trois of The Blind Owl*, 168–169.
149) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 123.
150) Beard also criticizes the notion that the narrator writes only for himself, and also disproves the claim that the owl of the title represents the speaker himself, and not his audience. Please see Beard, *The Blind Owl as a Western Novel*, 91.
151) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 45. Incidentally, Parsipur uses the word "joghd" instead of "būf" for the word "owl," but as Beard points out, Hedayat himself never uses the word "būf" in the actual text of the novel, even though he uses it in the title (Beard, *The Blind Owl as a Western Novel*, 91). Perhaps Parsipur pays homage to this idiosyncrasy?
152) Beard, *The Blind Owl as a Western Novel*, 42.
153) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 4.
154) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 19.
155) Homa Katouzian argues that this description reflects Hedayat's inevitable influence by "the culture and literature in which he has steeped himself," namely, the Persian poetic tradition of glorifying the lover's features (Katouzian, *Sadeq Hedayat*, 136.) For a detailed analysis of the woman's description, please see Mehrjooi, *Sadeq Hedayat's The Blind Owl*, 187.

to her body, hoping that "[he] might be able to warm her with the heat of [his] own body," and their bodies are "locked together."[156]

It seems quite clear that this scene is Parsipur's source of inspiration for *The Blue Spring of Kathmandu*, in which the narrator sleeps next to a dead man, whose "regal countenance" and "graceful moustache"[157] are among the many features that she describes in fond detail. Both of these stories' narrators yearn to be close to their beloveds, and experience a certain kind of freedom and exhilaration at being able to observe them at such close quarters. The narrators feel empowered, and it seems as though they are only able to display their vulnerability to their beloveds because they are dead.

The only difference between the two cases is, in fact, the switch in gender roles,[158] and here we see a young Parsipur developing her thoughts on feminism in response to Hedayat's representation of the ethereal girl in *The Blind Owl*. The narrator idealizes his beloved on purely physical grounds and takes control of her lifeless body, reveling in both the impossibility of her perfection, and the opportunity for him to exert his masculinity upon her; a masculinity which, as Milani argues, is clearly in crisis.[159] She comments on the treatment of women (such as the ethereal girl) in Hedayat's stories, arguing that they are always flat and uni-dimensional characters that are "either angelic or demonic."[160] Katouzian supports this argument, claiming that for the narrator in *The Blind Owl*, to love a woman is "to love an ideal image which exists in the man's mind, not the real-life woman, who, however attractive she may be, is bound to be an imperfect human being."[161] The narrator demonstrates his ultimate power over the corpse by chopping her body into pieces and putting them in suitcase, in an ultimate display of male supremacy.[162]

In a way, Parsipur 'responds' to Hedayat's portrayal of the ethereal girl in *The Blind Owl* by replicating the bedroom scene and making the corpse male, with no choice but to fully succumb to the female narrator's fantasies. In *The Blue Spring of Kathmandu,* the narrator is a deep-thinking, multi-faceted character, who experiences many of the same emotions as *The Blind Owl's* narrator does, and defies the Hedayat's flat characterization of the ethereal girl. Nevertheless, both narrators are desperately lonely and sexually frustrated, eager to break out of their shells of self-deprecation, but unable to gather the courage to step out of their confinement. In her brief and

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156) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 22.

157) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 45.

158) For some political and historical background on the significance of this switch, please see Janet Afary, "Steering Between Scylla and Charybdis: Shifting Gender Roles in Twentieth Century Iran," *NWSA Journal* 8.1 (1996): 28–49.

159) Milani, *Words, Not Swords*, 18.

160) For Milani, Hedayat exemplifies the sexist Iranian writer, whose female characters "sink into anonymity, disappears in her own shadow, fades into the background, remains silent, becomes generic." Please see Milani, *Words, Not Swords*, 55–56; 62–64.

161) Katouzian, *Sadeq Hedayat: The Life and Legend of an Iranian Writer*, 87.

162) It is fascinating to note that despite Bashiri's claim that the woman's body represents Hedayat's influence by Rilke's *Notebooks* (See Bashiri, *The Ivory Tower*, 182), this image of a dismembered woman's body in a suitcase is also seen in a story in *The Arabian Nights*. Please see "The Story of The Three Apples," in *The Arabian Nights*, trans. Husain Haddawy, ed. Muhsin Mahdi (New York, NY: Norton, 1990), 150–57.

only exchange with the boy who delivers her newspaper, Parsipur's narrator insists on inviting him inside, offering him freshly washed cherries with "droplets of water rolling down [them];" this emphases her desire for sexual contact. Unfortunately, he runs away without trying them because he sees the corpse, and leaves the narrator alone in her house. As a result, she feels even more isolated than before, and even more hopeless at the prospect of ever having a real relationship with a man.

I argue that we see Parsipur respond similarly to Hedayat's portrayal of the narrator's wife in the second part of *The Blind Owl*. He refers to her as "the bitch" in the novel, because "no other name suits her so well."[163] He loathes her, and we find out that this is because she does not sleep with him, and this frustrates him. She is "a sorceress who pours into [his] soul some poison which not only made [him] want her but made every single atom in [his] body desire the atoms of hers and shriek aloud its desire."[164] We also learn through him that she has been pregnant for an indefinite amount of time, and he insists that the baby is not his, even though he did sleep with her once. While he accuses her of being sexually promiscuous with other men, he also admits that his is "still shy of [his] wife,"[165] which calls his grudge against her into question.[166] Janette Johnson points out that in his contradictory feelings towards his wife, the narrator "maintains an ambiguous attitude towards sexuality."[167] What is clear, however, is that he views female sexuality as obscene, and hides behind "male codes of purity and honor as justifications for his failures and dilemmas."[168]

Similarly, I propose that we see the narrator's wife resurface in Parsipur's work in *Sara*, where the title character is a woman who has been pregnant for several years, and is the subject of a drawing-room discussion between her father and his friend, Dr. Bahari. After observing Sara through her window, Dr. Bahari realizes that Sara is most likely an unwed mother, and thinks about how "he [knows] such women very well…they all [smell] like sweat and dirty woolens."[169] He suddenly comments on how people say that "black-haired women are horny,"[170] and he immediately regrets his inappropriate behavior. It is clear that he is referring to Sara, and is trying to understand how she could have wound up in her position, concluding that it must be because of some arbitrary factor, like her hair color. And yet, despite being judgmental about Sara, he cannot help but be drawn to her, and stares at her constantly. Indeed, he tells Sara's father, "All I want in life is a bowl of borscht, a couple of slices of cutlet and a wife," and then mutters to himself, "Sara."[171] This mirrors Hedayat's narrator's ambivalence towards his wife, whom he curses for being too promiscuous, but also cannot bear to live without. At the end of *Sara*, we learn that she in fact wishes to

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163) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 71.
164) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 64.
165) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 82.
166) Kamshad interprets the narrator's behavior towards his wife as the frustrated ramblings of a sexually impotent man. He refers to the narrator being "unable to share normal physical pleasure," and claims that he has a "physical defect." Please see Kamshad, *Hysterical Self-Analysis*, 18.
167) Johnson, *The Blind Owl, Nerval, Kafka, Poe and the Surrealists: Affinities,* 139.
168) Fischer, *Mute Dreams, Blind Owls, and Dispersed Knowledges*, 183.
169) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 51.
170) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 52.
171) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 54.

give birth to a martyr, and her father tells Dr. Bahari that she seems to have willed her pregnancy; this makes Dr. Bahari "[take] a deep breath of relief and [sit] back in his chair," since now "[he] can deal with her,"[172] perhaps simply because she is a virgin, and this does not offend his sensibilities any more.

By means of Sara, Parsipur may be said to use her creative license to give the wife of Hedayat's narrator in *The Blind Owl* much more of a complex and interesting personality. Although we also never hear directly from Sara (much like in the case of the narrator's wife), we feel her presence in the distance as she looks upon everyone from her window, and she is the center of the discussion during the entire conversation. In a way, Parsipur forces both her male characters and the reader to confront our preconceived notions about her, especially without having heard from her directly, which is something that Hedayat never does. In fact, as Azar Nafisi argues, "the narrator's impotence in confronting the women in his life is symbolic of his inability to confront the reality of his life. Women become the most obvious manifestations of this new, exciting, tempting, and at the same time frightening reality."[173] However, in *Sara*, Dr. Bahari is forced to overcome his suspicion that Sara may be promiscuous and accept that he is attracted to her. In this way, Parsipur pays homage to the narrator's wife in *The Blind Owl*, to whom Hedayat never gives the same opportunity in the narrative space of the novel.

Some Thoughts on Style

Parsipur and Hedayat have received both praise[174] and criticism[175] regarding their particular style of writing Persian prose. Where the rhetoric of *The Blind Owl* is simple, informal, and even conversational, the tone of Parsipur's stories is similarly casual, and has the same element of ethereality that Hedayat's prose in *The Blind Owl* has. Both writers demonstrate that simple Persian is capable of describing the most novel sensual states of a writer, and can also be employed for introspection.[176] At a deeper level, both writers also employ a technique that Beard refers to as "creating a textual gap on a syntactic level;"[177] this creates the impression that their protagonists are flowing passively with what they feel compelled to do, as opposed to making active decisions. The narrator of *The Blue Spring of Kathmandu* "[finds] herself close to the man with [her] hand on his chest,"[178] and thoughts "occur" to the narrator of

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172) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 54.

173) Nafisi argues that the novel "offers many remarkable insights into the cultural assumptions underlying male-female relations in Iran, relations that symbolize the breakdown of dialogue between the public and private world." Please see Azar Nafisi, "The Quest for the "Real" Woman in the Iranian Novel," *Social Research* 70.3 (2003): 989–990.

174) Ramin Tabib argues that Persian is an inherently "prohibitive and complex" language, and writers such as Parsipur and Hedayat have "bled some of the decay out." Please see Tabib, *Perfectly Flawed*.

175) Ehsan Yarshater argues that Hedayat is "an uneven writer" and "a sophomoric novice," and criticizes his prose for being "awkward" and for "[lacking] the elegance and musicality of the best Persian literary style. Please see Yarshater, *Sadeq Hedayat*, xi. Abdul Karimi-Hakkak has criticized Parsipur on similar grounds as well. Please see Karimi-Hakkak, *Pīshgoftār*, 39.

176) Al-e-Ahmad, *The Hedayat of The Blind Owl,* 30.

177) Beard, *The Blind Owl as a Western Novel*, 150.

178) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 22.

*Heat in the Year Zero* unusually frequently.[179] We observe the same phenomenon in *The Blind Owl*, and this suggests "a fragmented self…a conception of mental life in which the speaker witnesses his own mind as an object…separate from his own identity."[180]This, along with their use of stream-of-consciousness writing, renders the impression that the characters are aimlessly floating through their lives, and adds a sense of poetry to their situations.[181]

According to Faris' categorization of magical realist texts, Hedayat and Parsipur's presentation of time as a non-linear, psychologically revelatory factor for their characters is one of the key aspects defining the genre. Indeed, their use of this stylistic device demonstrates the importance of permanence and transience in their work, and how the past indelibly haunts their characters' present.[182] Furthermore, this structural split observed in both *The Blind Owl* and *A Decent Place* emphasizes the characters' own fragmented selves, increasing the sense of emptiness in their lives. Both writers have been noted for their ability to structurally depict the fragmentation of Iranian society, and the timeless prevalence of the issues it faces. Indeed, Hedayat's episodic narrative in *The Blind Owl*[183] mirrors Parsipur's rejection of temporal absolutes[184] in her early short stories, supporting the notion that her influence from Hedayat transcends merely the thematic realm.

This effect of increasing the distance between the characters and their phenomenal worlds is further emphasized by Hedayat and Parsipur's treatment of time in their work. In *The Blind Owl*, the narrator simultaneously wishes "to kill time,"[185] and "[does] not notice the passage of time."[186] He reflects on how "past, future, hour, day month, year—these things are all the same to [him]…but [his] life has always known only one season and one state of being."[187] This is despite the clear disparity in time between the first and second part of the novel, where the second part seems to be set in an ancient civilization—this is evident in the different forms of currency that are mentioned in the novel.[188] And yet, the narrator and his thoughts do not change; his

179) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 46.

180) Beard explains this by citing specific examples, such as Hedayat's use of "bi fikram risīd ki" and "bi nazaram risīd ki" instead of "fikr kardam." Please see Beard, *The Blind Owl as a Western Novel*, 60.

181) Iraj Bashiri likens *The Blind Owl* to "a curious song devoid of meter," that displays the poetic aspects of modern Persian poetry. Please see Bashiri, *The Ivory Tower*, 202.

182) Elton Daniel argues that this makes *The Blind Owl* a kind of *bildungsroman*, in which "the narrator comes to accept the limitations of time and place forged upon him by his own mortality." Please see Elton Daniel, "History of a Theme of The Blind Owl," in *Hedayat's "The Blind Owl" Forty Years After*, ed. Michael Craig Hillmann (Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin, 1978), 84.

183) Houra Yavari writes about how Hedayat embraces fragmentation, self-division, and self-alienation by dividing the narrative into two parts in *The Blind Owl*, using it as "a mirror in which the split-in-two Iranian self of the period looks and recognizes himself." Please see Houra Yavari, "The Blind Owl: Present in the Past or the Story of a Dream," in *Sadeq Hedayat: His Work and His Wondrous World*, ed. Homa Katouzian (London: Routledge, 2007), 52.

184) Milani provides more details about Parsipur's "refusal to be confined within the familiar" in terms of structure, especially in her later novels. Please see Milani, *Words, Not Swords*, 189.

185) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 5.

186) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 26.

187) Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, 49.

188) While the term "giran" (31) is used in the first part of the novel as a form of payment, Hedayat uses the term "dirham" (108) in the second part, which is a more ancient type of currency.

are still the wretched thoughts of a self-indulgent man, who just happens to be floating in a "time-space vacuum."[189] Indeed, despite his disregard for time, the narrator is obsessed with measuring it, indicating the significance of *The Blind Owl's* temporal setting.

We observe a similar phenomenon in *Heat in the Year of Zero* and *The Blue Spring of Kathmandu*, where the painfully slow passage of time highlights the narrators' inactivity and isolation. In *A Decent Place*, there is also an interruption in the story's flow of time; after the baby is thrown out of the window and Qashangeh is horrified, we suddenly see her talking to a boy, saying, "Spring is coming."[190] While this appears as a sign of a new beginning for Qashangeh, we eventually learn that the smell of the baby's decomposing corpse continues to haunt her, even though we see her living through changing seasons in the story.

Another stylistic device that Hedayat heavily employs in *The Blind Owl* is his repeated use of the doppelganger. Indeed, not only does the narrator allot exactly the same physical features to the ethereal girl and the wife, he also hints that the old odds-and-ends man is the narrator's double. This is most apparent in the last scene of the novel, where the narrator looks at himself in a mirror and sees "the likeness, no, the exact image of the old odds-and-ends man," and eventually realizes that he has "become the odds-and-ends man."

We observe Parsipur employing this device in *The Double,* in which, again, there is a young man and a much older man, whose purposely vague and indistinct personalities point to them being mirror images of each other, especially when they step into the grave at the end of the story together, holding hands. This eerie similarity and fluidity in identity adds to the mysterious mood present in their narratives, and highlights their characters' lack of individuality in worlds where they collectively represent the universal alienation of human existence. Indeed, the division of The Blind Owl into two narrative sections demonstrated this device of doubling on the level of content.

Conclusion

In her early short stories, we see Parsipur's narrative voice in its initial stages, grappling with the concerns that Hedayat voiced in what is undoubtedly the most influential Persian novel of the 20th century. Where Hedayat "[captures] the mood of a society in transition" and "[gives] vent to the underlying sentiments of a growing generation,"[191] Parsipur gives voice to this generation by demonstrating how it has engaged with the core message of *The Blind Owl*. Indeed, the fact that *The Blind Owl* lacks a particular social context makes it an even more potent source of inspiration for Parsipur, who not only extends Hedayat's themes and motifs, but also often subverts them, especially in the context of her feminist voice.

Parsipur also absorbs his dynamic new writing style; one that I argue is

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189) Katouzian, *Sadeq Hedayat,* 120.
190) Parsipur, *Tea Ceremony in the Presence of the Wolf*, 33.
191) Yarshater, *Sadeq Hedayat*, vii.

distinctively magical realist, especially in its ability to highlight tragic truths about the human condition by inserting 'magical' elements into the narrative. Indeed, through Parsipur's engagement with *The Blind Owl* in her early short stories, she continues to develops her own unique style; one that, like *The Blind Owl* did, continues to contribute to the rich and growing canon of magical realist fiction.

Appendix: Summary of *The Blind Owl*[192]

    *The Blind Owl* is a first-person narrative with a simple plot. The unnamed narrator and protagonist is a lonely young man who lives alone outside the city of Tehran. He begins with the description of what he terms an incurable disease, which we soon learn is his obsessive love for a beautiful woman whom he has seen only once through a window in his room. This "ethereal girl" appears to him in a series of visions reminiscent of scenes frequently depicted in Persian miniature paintings. He then resolves to go outside his house looking for this girl, searching for her for many days until finally, upon returning home from one of his nocturnal walks in quest of his beloved, he finds her waiting by the door of his house. Without uttering a word, she walks into the narrator's room and lies down on his bed. In a state of stupor and disbelief in his good fortune he tries to be hospitable, but instead, he inadvertently kills her with poisoned wine. Fearing the consequences of the murder, he cuts the body into pieces, places it in a suitcase, and buries her in an isolated spot on the outskirts of the city.

    At this point in the story, a change occurs in the setting and characters. We find that the narrator is married and lives in a house with his old nanny. But the narrator's wife, whom he refers to as "the bitch," has the same physical appearance as the ethereal girl in the earlier part of the novel. We learn that the narrator despises his wife for not sleeping with him, convinced that she has all sorts of lovers among "the rabble." One night, he decides to disguise himself as one of her lovers, and it is implied that his sexual desires are fulfilled. However, the sexual act functions to transform him physically and emotionally; as he looks at himself in the mirror, he finds that he has ironically become one of "the rabble," the rest of the human race that he despises. Much like in the end of the first part of the story, the narrator inadvertently murders his wife, upon attaining the object of his desire.

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192) This summary is a modified version of the summary provided by Ghanoonparvar in "The Blind Owl," in vol. 1 of *The Novel*, ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2006), 795-796.

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**Kateland Haas**

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## Branding a Country and Constructing an Alternative Modernity with Muslim Women

## A Content Analysis of the United Arab Emirates

By Kateland Haas

The small Gulf country of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) received a great deal of international media attention during the first decade of the 21st century. This increased media attention coincided with the political aftermath of the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks and related military engagements, rising Islamophobia in both the US and Europe, and the UAE's growing and diversifying economy. A great deal of dialogue concerned with whether or not Islam is compatible with "modernity" involves utilizing Muslim women as a symbol of the differences or similarities between what is increasingly cast as oppositional cultures. In this larger context, the UAE government and the English-language Emirati news media utilized the 'Muslim woman' as a tool to paint the UAE as both modern and non-threatening while the country became more economically and politically powerful, and strove toward cultural importance within and outside the region.

Muslim women in the UAE have become an incredibly flexible symbol to reassure potential investors, expatriate workers, and tourists who may be nervous about post-2001 security. Beyond 2001, reassurance campaigns resurfaced in response to incidences like the 2006 failed US port management deal. This 2006 event centers on an American backlash against the Dubai-held management firm, Dubai Ports World; public perception of Arab Muslims was so intensely negative and tied to the threat of terrorism that when the port-contract story broke in mid-February it sparked a flurry of criticism hurled by numerous pundits and politicians.[1] All of the criticism centered

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1) Prior to Dubai Ports World, the British-owned Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company held the contract for these ports' security.  Therefore, the backlash against DPW is not a simple exercise in American concern over American infrastructure being secured by any sort of foreigner.  The ethnicity and religion of these foreigners (Arab Muslims) is key to understanding the political panic.  In late 2005, early

on the notion that Arabs and/or Muslims were automatically suspect regardless of *any* other mitigating factors.[2] Due to the attention paid to this contract, and the inability of both the firm and the Bush administration to alter public perception, the Dubai-based firm backed out of the deal by the month's end. So, while the events of 2001 cast a great shadow of concern over Muslims and the Middle East generally, this 2006 event demonstrated beyond any doubt that although the UAE was an ally of the United States and the Bush administration had approved of the contract, the UAE would have to concern itself with the public's prejudices in order to effectively conduct business. Although concern over the UAE was intensely connected to security, the language of security rarely featured in speeches or interviews given by government officials or in the English-language Emirati news media. One possible explanation of this glaring absence may be that addressing the security question head on would only draw more attention to the perceived issue and reinforce it as a serious concern worth addressing. On the other hand, Muslim women as a point of interest and discussion allow for ample space to discuss and illustrate development and thus safety and security.

To better understand how Muslim women can be short-hand for development, modernity, safety, and security, basic orientalism and post-colonial relations should be at least briefly examined. The role of orientalism in the colonial and post-colonial framing of countries, regions, and cultures is well articulated by Edward Said, and further developed and applied by other scholars.[3] Douglas Little's *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* thoroughly details how Americans (and American foreign policy in particular) have conceived of Arabs and the wider Third World as, "backward, exotic, and occasionally dangerous folk who have needed and will continue to need US help and guidance if they are successfully to undergo political and cultural modernization."[4] This helping hand of both American and European powers manifested itself through international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the international development programs of the 1960s, '70s, '80, and '90s. Such organizations and programs aimed to promote "industrialization, urbanization and the growth of capitalism, or the greater social transformation" in "lesser developed" states.[5] Beyond being couched in the lan-

2006, Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company was purchased by the government of Dubai.
"P&O Shareholders Back Dubai Bid," *BBC*, February 13, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/4709782.stm.
2) Patrick McGeehan, "2 Senators Seek to Stop Ports Deal, Citing Security," *The New York Times*, February 18, 2006, sec. B2.
Anne Kornblut, "Scramble to Back Port Deal: Making of Political Disaster: High-Powered Friends Worked Phones," *The New York Times*, February 25, 2006, sec. A10.
Joyce Purnick, "A Tempest in a Seaport, And Politics," *The New York Times*, February 23, 2006, sec. B1.
Patrick McGeehan, "Port Agency to Break Lease in Bid to Block Dubai Sale," *The New York Times*, February 24, 2006, sec. A16.
3) Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).
David Weir, *American Orient: Imagining the East From the Colonial Era Through the Twentieth Century* (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011).
Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
4) Little, 10-11.
5) John Craig, "Development," in *The Impact of Feminism on Political Concepts and Debates,*" eds.

guage of development and humanitarianism, these schemes played into the containment policies of the Cold War and served to foster and protect American and European economic and political interests.[6]  After September 2001, Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* thesis was adopted, popularized, and fit into this existing orientalist and developmentalist frame with the unique spin that civilizations/cultures are fixed, irreconcilable, and *isolated* entities.[7]  Therefore, the threat that an Other represents is not entirely manifest as a government.  The thinking goes that at least a government can be negotiated with or overcome by traditional military means, but an immutable culture or civilization cannot be so easily dealt with.[8]  This perceived monolith is both vast and immensely threatening.  By the logic of a Huntington-esque spin on the orientalist schema, if the culture itself is the root of the problem, then the UAE must present itself as more than just a political ally in a region wracked by military intervention.  The UAE needs to navigate the perceived divide between its Arab, Islamic identity and compatibility with "modern Western" governments *and* culture; Muslim women as a symbol is deployed again and again to do this work.

The portrayal of the United Arab Emirates' culture as compatible with "modernity," and as a vision of a successful "alternative modernity" that fits Islam perfectly and provides for more secure freedoms than the secular West, directly addresses the image of the fanatical, threatening Muslim-Arab state. The symbol of the 'Muslim woman' plays an exceptionally large role in combating the objections commonly raised about the nature of Islam's (in)compatibility with development and modernity. 'Muslim women' are also given great consideration in the aforementioned alternative vision of modernity. Not only are Muslim women a flexible symbol in that they can be a small detail in a larger story or be the primary feature of the story, they pair easily with a wide variety of other markers of  "progress and modernity:" education, technology, political participation, health care, standard of living, economic diversity, and so on – all the while being explicitly identified as Muslim or Emirati in text, or by having their religious or national identity implied through descriptions culture and/or nation-specific dress (in this case the black *ʿabāyah* and veil common to Gulf Arabs).[9]

Utilizing the image of a "modern" and "liberated" Emirati Muslim woman in the English-language Emirates-based news media is one of many avenues that the

Georgina Blakeley and Valerie Bryson (New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 110-11.

6) Tariq Ramadan, Glenn Greenwald, M. Cherif Bassiouni, and Jennifer Pitts, "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Empire: Humanitarian Intervention and Neo-Orientalism," (panel discussion, The University of Chicago, Chicago, Il, April 14, 2012).

Video of the panel discussion has been posted online by the University of Chicago.

7) Although Huntington developed and originally published this thesis in 1993, the academic and non-academic world "[generally] dismissed it as somewhat strange if not downright wrong" at that time.

Ervand Abrahamian, "The US Media, Huntington, and September 11," in *Third World Quarterly* 24, no 3 (2003), 529.

8) So not only is the culture of the Middle East widely perceived as inherently backward, but as posing a real, imminent, and violent threat to the security, interests, and sovereignty of "modern Western" states as dramatically illustrated by the events of September 2001.

9) Emirati women can be identified as Muslim implicitly as 99% of the country is Muslim and the constitution cites Islam as the official religion.

Miriam Cooke, "The Muslim woman," in *Contemporary Islam* 1, no. 2: 139-154.

UAE has explored in order to combat concerns over how "modern" or "civilized" the country may be.[10]  It is not my intention to forward a definition of modernity, western culture, or Islamic and Arab culture, but to better understand how these ideas are represented in mass media with an explicitly international audience in the age of the internet. This is an examination of the official culture as produced by a set of elites, those that run these newspapers and the government of the UAE that plays a role in shaping the content of said papers.  As such, my sources of data are the three largest English-language newspapers in the UAE: the *Khaleej Times, Gulf News,* and *The National.* To better frame and uncover important symbols beyond a survey of these newspapers, I also utilized an interview given by the ruler of Dubai, Muḥammad bin Rāshid al Maktūm, from an October 2007 episode of *60 Minutes*, to guide what image the government of the UAE may have wanted to impart to an international audience.[11] I have divided this corpus into three significant domains; the articles are primarily concerned with: Muslim women in the "Western" states of Western Europe and North America, Muslim women in Muslim-majority states, and Emirati Muslim women.

The Muslim women of the "West" are largely portrayed as having access to education, opportunities for economic advancement, and a higher standard of living. At the same time, these Muslim women in the "West" are described as disadvantaged because they are discriminated against on account of their Muslim identity.[12] This discrimination is often in reference to the negative reactions of non-Muslims to the practice of *ḥijāb*.  Oppressive and discriminatory demands for assimilation and the abandonment of religious identity persist as popular topics, and both France and the United Kingdom feature heavily in this domain. The second domain is that of the Muslim women in other Muslim-majority states. These women are portrayed as being restricted in terms of education and economic opportunities due to low levels of development, conflict, and ineffective leadership and governance.  Discrimination against Muslim women is still a persistent theme in this domain, but the sort of oppression and discrimination are of a different variety. Often, the news articles concerned with Muslim women in these other Muslim-majority states depict unnecessary and/or harmful restrictions on women, such as the ban on women driving in Saudi Arabia or clothing restrictions in Iran, in order to play up negative stereotypes of a backward, silly, and fanatical Islamic society seemingly incoherent to a Western audience and irreconcilable with modernity.[13]  The image of the "modern" Emirati state is crafted

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10) Other avenues include: infrastructure and transportation projects; impressive building projects like the Burj Kahlifa or the man-made islands in the Persian Gulf; sporting events; cultural forums like film festivals; domestic and international business investments by Emirates-based companies.

11) Although this is only one interview, it acts as a supplement to the newspaper articles that largely focus on (negative) stories outside of the UAE.  This is one of very few interviews with high-ranking leaders and government officials, and provides an incredibly valuable window into the way that the leadership (without the filter of the newspapers) hoped to "sell" or "brand" the country to an international audience which is the Sheik's primary concern throughout.

12) When Muslim men of the "West" are the primary feature of an article Muslim women play an auxiliary role in the article, and are often primarily described as suffering as the result of their male family members suspected or accused of being a threat to peace and security.

13) That this particular set of negative stereotypes get so much traction likely reflects the English-speaking, largely European and American, audience of the newspapers.

in opposition to these negative news stories that co-opt and feature some version of the violent, uncivilized, and actively anti-modern Arab and/or Muslim stereotype. So in *contrast*, the third and final domain addressed in my analysis concerns Emirati women; the UAE is portrayed and sold as the best of all possible worlds. Collectively, the argument made by these news sources is that Emirati Muslim women have a high standard of living, educational and economic opportunities, while not facing discrimination if they are 'too Muslim' by Western standards (i.e. practicing ḥijāb) or being unduly restricted or impeded in the name of Islam (i.e. Emirati women can drive and are not as dramatically subject to strict legally-enforced dress codes). Not only does the UAE boast about its successful navigation of some of the major categories concerning development and women in development,[14] but an underlying message exists that the country has found a meaningful and successful model for development while retaining its Muslim identity and without declaring itself a secular state.[15] Simply, that the UAE has done the 'impossible' is the brand of exceptionalism being disseminated by the figure of the Muslim woman in this corpus.

Although there are many symbols to choose from when creating and disseminating a national narrative of success and exceptionalism, women provide for and are often used as a multivalent symbol. This mixture of women as symbols of the nation who combine traditional markers of cultural identity, like the *ʿabāyah*, and "markers of the modern" is well represented in Middle East studies and the study of post-colonial societies generally. Women in post-colonial national narratives and imagery are often theorized to be symbols of the 'traditional' essence of a culture as in Anne McClintock's and Nira Yuval-Davis's work.[16] Partha Chatterjee highlights the fact that even these markers of 'traditional' femininity and culture are selectively picked and utilized for specific political aims, and often painted on the canvas of the education of upper and middle class women.[17] On the other hand, women as a symbol of modernity in these post-colonial contexts are usually analyzed as the representative embrace of Western ideals as illustrated through gender roles. For example, they sustain an active resistance to traditional markers of Islamic identity like the practice of ḥijāb (modesty, often symbolized by the veil). This has played out quite dramatically in the events tak-

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14) See the United Nation's *Arab Human Development Reports* from 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2009 for more detail; the 2005 report paid special attention to women. The United Arab Emirates is consistently ranked as one of the most developed countries in the region in each report. All of the reports are accessible online at: http://www.arab-hdr.org/reports/regionalarab.aspx.

15) This is in contrast to Turkey, which is a Muslim-majority state, but has wrestled in recent years with its secular policies and the growing desire of some politicians and leaders to renew a stronger Muslim identity. Kim Shively, "Religious Bodies and the Secular State: The Merve Kavakci Affair," in *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 1, no.3 (Fall 2005): 46-72.

16) Anne McClintock, "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family," *Feminist Review* 44 (Summer 1993): 61-80.
Anne McClintock, "'No Longer in a Future Heaven': Women and Nationalism in South Africa," *Transition* 51 (1991): 104-123.
Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Ltd, 1997).
For more on invented tradition, please see *The Invention of Tradition* edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge University Press, 1992).

17) Partha Chatterjee, "The Nation and Its Women" and "Women and the Nation" in *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

ing place in Turkey and scholarship thereof, where the practice of ḥijāb in parliament has become a contentious issue in the explicitly secular state.  Similarly, the story of women in Turkish nationalism often highlights what Western practices women engaged in to build nationalist sentiments, like American-style beauty contests.[18]

This is what anthropologist Saba Mahmood might characterize as a false dichotomy of resistance or submission to tradition that is present in much of the discussion and study of Muslim women.[19] Influenced by the work of Talal Asad on the position of secularism and religion as important categories that continue to help create what is perceived to be modern in *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, Mahmood and fellow anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod have highlighted women as an especially rich point of study. They argue that Muslim women are most often portrayed as the symbol of, the victims of, or the valiant opposition to everything oppressive about Islam.  Negative depictions of Islam and Muslim women are often framed in contrast to an ideal of secular modernity. The multitude of ways in which 'Muslim women' are used as a favorite pivot point for a binary of *oppression : liberation :: traditional culture : modernity* means that Muslim women are made into one of the most often utilized symbols in the critique of Islam as inherently anti-modern and further utilized to justify intervention in Islamic societies. In Abu-Lughod's "The Active Social Life of 'Muslim Women's Rights': A Plea for Ethnography, Not Polemic, with Cases from Egypt and Palestine," she makes the case that:

> "We might learn a great deal if we stepped back from the usual terms of debate and instead followed 'Muslim women's rights' as they travel through various worlds and projects, circulate through debates and documents, organize women's activism, and mediate women's lives in various places. The questions then become: In what debates and institutions do 'Muslim women's rights' partake? What work do the practices organized in its terms do in various places, for various women? How, in fact, do 'Muslim women's rights' produce our contemporary world?"[20]

In that light, I seek to reflect this openness to the blending of the markers of traditional

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18) Kim Shively, "Religious Bodies and the Secular State: The Merve Kavakci Affair," in *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 1, no.3 (Fall 2005): 46-72.
A. Holly Shissler, "Beauty is Nothing to Be Ashamed of: Beauty Contests as Tools of Women's Liberation in Early Republican Turkey," in *Comparative Studies In South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East 24 (2003)*.
19) Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005).
Frantz Fanon noted that these supposedly stable categories of defiance or submission to tradition were actually incredibly fluid (i.e. not at all inherent, and did not operate on some unresponsive, stationary binary) in his own observations on gender and the nature of resistance surrounding the Algerian Revolution. Please see: Frantz Fanon, "Algeria Unveiled," in *Decolonization: Perspectives from Now and Then*, edited by Prasenjit Duara (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).
20) Lila Abu-Lughod, "The Active Social Life of "Muslim Women's Rights": A Plea for Ethnography, Not Polemic, with Cases from Egypt and Palestine," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 6,no. 1 (Winter 2010): 2.

identity and of modernity and to better understand the uses of the language of Muslim women's rights and opportunities in my own survey of 'Muslim women' in the English-language Emirati news media.

Data and Methodology

I have limited my data to what is available on the internet and is produced in, or translated to English, because my assumption is that these texts were written for an expatriate and international audience due to the chosen language and their wide availability.  I work with 380 newspaper articles gathered from *The National*, *The Khaleej Times, Gulf News,* and a 2007 *60 Minutes* interview conducted with the ruler of Dubai, Muḥammad bin Rāshid al Maktūm.  My periodization begins in January 2003 and ends in December 2008.  Not only is 2003 the first year of the Iraq war, which helped to refocus the attention of western news media on the Arab Gulf, but it is also the year in which Dubai began overtaking the UAE in terms of being cited more frequently in English language publications.[21]  2003 is also a few years after the start of the massive building and tourist-targeted projects in Dubai, so travel literature regarding the Dubai was becoming well circulated.[22]  With the 380 individual articles collected, I conclude my study in 2008, before a new set of stories and contexts were ushered in during the global financial collapse became the dominant international story and before a wave of articles and books were published on the 'dark side of Dubai'.[23]

I took a largely qualitative approach to these texts, manually coding them along the way. I have collected the articles for this study by using each newspaper's electronic archive of their articles. I preformed a simple search for "Muslim women." This ensures that the identity as Muslim is explicit and that the women at hand are likely meaningfully identified as Muslim for some purpose which I seek to identify. Because of the sheer number of articles I collected I sampled every 5th article (arranged by date) after the articles have been amassed according to each publishing newspaper; this ensures that each newspaper is given the same amount of attention. I have split this smaller sample of texts in half (by choosing every other article to get an even distribution across time and newspapers), developed a code based on one half of

21) See Appendix I.

Jean-Baptiste Michel, Yuan Kui Shen, Aviva Presser Aiden, Adrian Veres, Matthew K. Gray, William Brockman, The Google Books Team, Joseph P. Pickett, Dale Hoiberg, Dan Clancy, Peter Norvig, Jon Orwant, Steven Pinker, Martin A. Nowak, and Erez Lieberman Aiden, "Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books," *Science,* December 16, 2010.

See attached image of the n-gram chart at the end of the paper.

22) James Bennet, "A Modern Oasis Stands Apart in the Mideast," *The New York Times*, February 15, 2004, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/15/travel/a-modern-oasis-stands-apart-in-the-mideast.html.

23) Johann Hari, "The Dark Side of Dubai," in *The Independent*, April 7, 2009, http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/johann-hari/the-dark-side-of-dubai-1664368.html.

Andrew Higgins, "As Dubai's Glitter Fades, Foreigners See Dark Side," in *The Washington Post*, August 10, 2009, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/09/AR2009080902421.html.

Syed Ali, *Dubai: Gilded Cage* (Yale University Press, 2010).

Pardis Mahdavi, *Gridlock: Labor, Migration, and Human Trafficking in Dubai* (Stanford University Press, 2011).

Herve Jaubert, *Escape From Dubai* (Headline Books, Inc, 2009).

the texts, and tested out my assumptions on the second half.  My overall assumption was that reports of hardships endured by, and discrimination or oppression of, Muslim women would almost always be present in articles about people and places not directly connected to the UAE; in contrast, stories of Muslim women in the UAE would be generally far more positive than stories set in other locations, playing primarily on themes and language of freedom, success, and opportunity. The chief categories organizing the code were devised on the basis of whether or not the Muslim women in question are living in the Emirates, in a Western state, in a self-identified secular Muslim-majority state, or in a self-identified Islamic Muslim-majority state. During my study of the first set of articles, these four major divisions became the primary high-level categories I expect to see the different attitudes about what makes a Muslim woman oppressed or liberated to fall along, with the Emirati Muslim women being positioned as having the most freedom.[24] This basic categorization scheme held up when applied to my test texts.

My quantitative approach to these texts is a fairly simple collection and analysis of semantic lists of high-frequency two, three, and four word phrases compiled from all 380 articles in this study. This approach has provided me with a way to identify what other concepts, with the consistent phrasing, are being repeated in the data beyond and including the articles I have sampled for a qualitative analysis. I have also examined the frequency of named entities that appear in the entire corpus in order to get a better sense of important individual and institutional actors that feature more broadly across these texts.  The sorting of named entities allowed me to easily view what countries appeared in the corpus, how many times a particular country was mentioned, and what percentage of the articles a country appeared in; this informed which countries I focused on in my analysis. I have utilized *AutoMap* for these tasks. *AutoMap* is text mining tool developed by the Center for Computational Analysis of Social and Organizational Systems at Carnegie Mellon University. Not only does this software allow me to view high-frequency semantic pairings, but it also has valuable spelling standardization features to help with the variances between British and American English that appear across the corpus.[25] Although these quantitative approaches are fairly coarse, they go a long way to help reveal large-scale patterns that will check, supplement, and support what I have found in my manual qualitative coding.

In my analysis of these texts I intend to describe how 'Muslim women' are utilized as a symbol of a constructed alternative modernity and were woven into a myriad of news articles.  With relatively few outliers, the bulk of the mentions of 'Muslim women' are positioned to make the UAE look like an ideal society in juxtaposition to the articles detailing the failures of both Western and other Muslim-majority states who do not live up to the rhetoric of development, religious toleration or multiculturalism, or women's self-determination. By randomly sampling the corpus, I attempt to reveal that these large categories are fairly consistent regardless of

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24) This is a multi-faceted concept that I will address later on in my analysis.

25) More information about AutoMap can be found online at: http://www.casos.cs.cmu.edu/projects/automap/.

which UAE newspaper the story appears in, the gender or publishing-affiliations of the individual author, or connections to specific events between 2003 and 2008. While the articles do refer to specific events in and outside of the United Arab Emirates, this broader pattern is not wholly wedded to responses to significant events in any one country; events large and small, from a dozen or so countries, hold this pattern.

Brief Historical Contextualization of Data Sources

Although the timeline I have chosen for my project is from 2003 to 2008, it is important to take stock of the history and relationship between the three English-language newspapers that provide the bulk of the text for my study. The two oldest, the *Khaleej Times* and *Gulf News,* have been in competition with each other since the late 1970s  before the rush towards economic diversity and development that took place in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, with *Khaleej* being the most financially stable and self-reporting the highest number of physical newspapers.[26] Both newspapers are owned by Emiratis and have become established enough to report wide distribution of physical newspapers and a high rate of unique hits to their online publications.[27] Both papers target a similar audience, English-speaking Arabs and English-speaking European and American expatriates living in the UAE and in the Gulf region, with some consideration to audiences based in the US and Europe. In both cases, the primary emphasis is on regional readership and news coverage; *Khaleej* has branches throughout the Arab Gulf.[28]  Although now both papers are online, and, thus, wider international readership is likely taken into account, their missions statements still reflect the initial period when the papers' roots did not have to reach out to that audience. While not directly owned by the federal government of the UAE, or the local Emirate-level government of Dubai where both papers are based, there is reason to believe that they are subject to at least a soft form of censorship in that the UAE is generally not the subject of negative or overly critical reporting by local newspapers. For example, although in 2007 the Prime Minister decreed "that no journalist would be arrested for their work,"[29] five bloggers were arrested in 2011 after "calling for democracy and criticizing the government."[30] If imprisonment has been utilized as a means of silencing journalists with viewpoints contrary to, or critical of, the Emirati government's preferred narrative, then it is perfectly reasonable to suspect that the UAE-based media has had an incentive to publish articles in line with the rhetoric and perspectives preferred by the government. This reality for Emirati journalism must be taken into account when reviewing the texts in my own study.

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26) *Gulf News* struggled financially in the mid-1980s when it sold to its current owners, Al Nisr Publishing LLC, who also produce a mixture of smaller, specialty publications: alpha; Aquarius; Campus Notes; Friday; Inside Out; Scene; tabloid!; tabloid! on Saturday; Weekend Review; Wheels; XPRESS.

27) *Gulf News* claims to distribute 111,825 print copies per week, and receive so many unique visitors to their website that they "[reach] more readers than all the other English dailies, combined."
The *Khaleej Times* claims to have 450,000 print copies circulating per week.

28) The branches are in Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar.

29) Matthew Cassel, "Trial of the UAE Bloggers Set to Resume," in *Al Jazeera English*, July 18, 2011, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/07/2011717213325459958.html.

30) The Guardian Staff, "The UAE Five: Amnesty Urgent Action," in The Guardian, September 10, 2011, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/sep/11/amnesty-urgent-action-uae-five.

In contrast, *The National* is incredibly new to the scene as it was first published in early 2008. Although I will only utilize a year's worth of news articles published by *The National*, it is unique in that it best reveals the way in which the government would prefer to present itself to an international audience; the reason for this being that it is a government-owned news outlet headquartered in the capital, Abu Dhabi. As opposed to the regional focus of *Khaleej* and *Gulf*, *The National*'s stated mission is to "[tell] the story of the Middle East as seen through the region's eyes," and so the relevant texts are specifically geared towards those unfamiliar with the region. That *The National* widely trumpeted employing journalists from *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal* is indicative of the paper's attempt to ground itself as a legitimate source of information, particularly to American and British readers, even if it is owned by the ruling family.[31] At first glance, *The National* seems to be the UAE's answer to the success and impact of *Al Jazeera*'s Arabic and English broadcasts based in the neighboring Gulf state of Qatar. While there is likely some competition with *Al Jazeera*, *The National* also competes with the Dubai-based newspapers at a time when Dubai's notoriety as a West-friendly playground for the very rich and contact with Westerners (more generally in terms of name recognition) seemed much more prevalent. Therefore, the content of *The National*, including its use of women in its articles, may be viewed as playing a subtle role in the internal battle over the question of who controls and what factors into the presentation of Emirati culture to a global audience. It is highly relevant to my study that while *Khaleej* and *Gulf* do report on Muslim women at home and abroad, *The National* does this as well *and* has an organized section on their website solely dedicated to "Women in the UAE".[32] The mere fact that this exists illustrates that attention paid to 'women' as a subject to report on and as an audience are given a fair amount of consideration and weight. Despite the fact that *The National* has a section dedicated to Emirati women, there was no discernible difference between the types of stories each newspaper carried. The three high level categories (Muslim women in the West, Muslim women in other Muslim-majority states, and Muslim women in the UAE) remains the basis for my analysis.

Integration and Discrimination: Muslim Women in the West

Europe has experienced a surge in Muslim emigration from North Africa, Turkey, and Arabia, and the degrees to which these immigrants and their children should be integrated or assimilated into the existing culture has been a flashpoint for the past decade or two. In the time frame I examine several notable events took place in Europe: the Danish *Jyllands-Posten* Muhammad cartoons in 2005 and the following boycott of Danish goods and accompanying protests, the anti-Islam Dutch film *Submission* that premiered in 2004 and was shortly followed by the assassination of the director, France's ongoing concern with immigration and with the practice of ḥijāb

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31) The National, "Our Journalists," *The National*, http://www.thenational.ae/authors?type=journalists/.
32) The National, "Topic: Women in the UAE," *The National*, http://www.thenational.ae/topic/subjects/women-in-the-uae.

among French Muslims, as well as the United Kingdom's concern with Muslim immigrants generally and with the practice of ḥijāb in particular.[33]  Both *Submission* and the various legislation aimed at restricting ḥijāb thrust Muslim women to the center of the European assimilation debate.  The articles I review are responses to these events, particularly to the European concern over ḥijāb. Therefore, it is not solely the Emirati papers that are intently focused on what Muslim women represent in the West (with special emphasis placed on ḥijāb); the importance of Muslim women is co-created by multiple outlets in multiple countries.

Across Europe, ḥijāb features prominently in reports on the position of Muslim women in the West in these articles and Muslim women feature as central figures in about half of the articles. The other half of the articles focus on broader issues, like terrorism, the perception of widespread religious extremism among Muslims, immigration, assimilation, civil law proceedings in Western states, and so on. Muslim women are mentioned, but are not the primary focus of these articles. They often serve as a short reference to the various debates over ḥijāb to illustrate that the concern over Muslim identity has several avenues. The central theme of particular articles is often discriminatory practices, policies, or speech aimed at Muslim immigrants more generally and in a largely gender-neutral sense.[34] These perceived discriminatory legislative actions, practices, and attitudes against Muslims have called the West's tolerance of non-Christian religions into question, and this questioning is both explicit and implicit in these texts.[35] With that, secularism as a necessary requirement of a modern society is also implicitly questioned.  From this vantage point, Western secularism looks to be oppressive and intolerant, going so far as to victimize women, strip them of their *choice* to practice ḥijāb.  It is from this platform that the UAE can attempt to claim that they have succeeded where the West has failed – in supporting religious tolerance and emphasizing that women are free to choose their style of dress in accordance with their personal beliefs. "Tolerance" appears in 28 articles; assuming that religious tolerance, secularism, and discrimination are not features of every single article in this corpus, it is a moderately high frequency term.

Of the articles sampled, the United Kingdom and France were the two European countries who received the bulk of the attention across all three newspapers. This is not to say that other countries such as Denmark, the Netherlands, the United States, and Germany did not receive any attention in the entire corpus, but that the UK and France were prominent Western actors in both the build and test samples. After assessing all 380 articles in *Automap*, the UK was the subject of 62 articles, and France

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33) *ḥijāb* is the term for dressing modestly – the practice varies widely, reflecting personal belief or culture-specific forms.

John Bowen, *Can Islam Be French? Pluralism and Pragmatism in a Secularist State* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

Jesper, Stromback, Adam Shehata, and Danile Dimitrova. "Framing the Mohammad Cartoon Issues: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Swedish and US Press," in *Global Media and Communication* 4, no.2 (2008): 117-119.

34) Reuters, "Councils to Help Combat Threat of Extremism," in *Gulf News* January 8, 2007.

35) Gulf News Staff, "Paranoia in Paris – All Points West".

was the subject of 45 articles.[36] The United Kingdom may rank so high in terms of mentions because the UAE was a British colony up until 1971, English is a dominant language in the UAE, second only to Arabic, mentions of the UK in this sample often include references to the strain on, or the failure of multiculturalism in the context of the UK, and often to contrast the UK policies with French policies concerning Muslims. These quotes are illustrative examples:

1) "France has long insisted that its immigrants conform to French ways while Britain has traditionally followed a more flexible multicultural policy."[37]

2) "Blair further wants to make the glorifying of terrorism an offence, plans to ban several Islamic organisations and intends to set up a commission that will focus on the future of multiculturalism.

   Britain's former Foreign Minister Jack Straw sparked the debate in Britain earlier this month by saying Muslim women who wore full veils made community relations harder. Prime Minister Tony Blair later called the veil 'a mark of separation'."[38]

The second quote above reminds the reader that the UK is to be thought of as striving toward multicultural, but failing at even high levels of government. Implied is a break between professed ideals and actual practice, the revealed 'truth' beyond pronouncements.

Many stories that report on the conditions and experiences of Muslims in the West suggest that Muslims are the victims of intense discrimination. These articles warn that Muslims are being unfairly painted as extremists, suspected terrorists, or as an obstinate population unwilling to adapt to the surrounding European culture (and are therefore being forcibly stripped of their religious or cultural identity).[39] As discrimination extends to Muslim women explicitly, gender specific discrimination is illustrated through restrictions on a Muslim woman's ability to engage with educational and employment opportunities while practicing ḥijāb – which is an *easily recognizable*, physical symbol of their Muslim identity.  For example, one article reports that the head of the Muslim college in London, has gone as far as to ask Muslim women to forgo practicing ḥijāb if they are fearful.

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36) The "West" appears in 68 articles, and Europe appears in 48.  These terms are likely to have significant overlap with the UK and France though.  The only country to beat France and the UK in terms of frequency is the UAE itself, mentioned in 120 articles.

37) Agencies, "French PM Welcomes Debate about Veil," in *Gulf News: World – Other World Stories*, October 26, 2006.

38) Linda Heard, "Do Not Stir the Volatile Pot," in *Gulf News: UAE – General*, August 9, 2005.

39) Najla Al Awadhi, "The Hijab is a Widely Misunderstood Symbol," in *Gulf News*, July 21, 2007.

Reuters Staff, "Councils to Help Combat Threat of Extremism," in *Reuters* and *Gulf News: World – UK*, January 8, 2007.

> "A recent Guardian/ICM poll suggested one in five British Muslims
> has been on the receiving end of Islamophobic abuse or hostility
> since the London bombings, while statistics indicating religion hate
> attacks have risen 600 per cent since July 7, support this.
> Head of the Muslim College in London Professor Zaki Badawi has
> controversially advised Muslim women to remove their hijabs if
> they fear victimisation."[40]

The tone of the entire piece, exemplified in this short quote, stresses that things must be desperate and frightening for Muslims, Muslim women especially, in the UK. Other articles focusing on the UK also report that Muslim teachers and students who practice ḥijāb are at risk of having their employment terminated or being subject to expulsion from school.[41] What is notable about these school-related stories is that an underlying message is that employment and education are being disrupted by discriminatory attitudes and practices. This is important to note because education and employment for women are a hallmark of women's rights and advancement in developing and developed countries.[42] With stories like these, the country in question in a particular news story may begin to lose ground on claims of tolerance and the promotion of women's status and advancement across religious and ethnic lines.

Beyond individual 'everyman' cases of such discrimination, government officials and institutions are important and consistently reported on actors. That focus drives the point home that this is a wide spread and institutionalized problem. For example, former Prime Minister Tony Blair waffled on whether or not ḥijāb was even appropriate for British Muslims. While Blair expressed his opposition to the legislation banning the veil in France, he also stated that the veil is a "mark of separation."[43] This "mark of separation" phrasing can imply that the veil is a negative or unproductive symbol in a society struggling with balancing multiculturalism and assimilation concerns. Blair's wife, Cherie, also received attention for her concerns about the practice of ḥijāb in 2007. Mrs. Blair is quoted in a *Gulf News* article as saying that she is,

> "happy to honour people's religious beliefs, provided they are freely
> undertaken. When you get to the stage where a woman is not able
> to express her personality because we cannot see her face, then we
> do start to have to ask whether this is something that is actually
> acknowledging the woman's right to be a person in her own right."[44]

Immediately after this quote, Mrs. Blair's experience as a human rights lawyer is noted, and her speaking engagements on the subject of women's human rights are briefly described. The only detail of the speaking engagements pursued at length was

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40) Linda Heard, "Do Not Stir the Volatile Pot," in *Gulf News*, August 9, 2005.
41) Agencies, "Blair Says Veils Are Mark of Separation," in *Gulf News: World – UK*, October 17, 2006.
42) Molyneux, Maxine and Shahra Razavi Eds. *Gender Justice, Development, and Rights*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, 212 and 92.
43) Agencies, "Blair Says Veils Are Mark of Separation".
44) Agencies, "Cherie Blair Raises Veil Questions," in *Gulf News: World – UK*, November 1, 2007.

that Mrs. Blair expressed concern for the unfairness of Sharia or Sharia-inspired divorce laws in Muslim-majority countries where she believes that women, "are treated in almost every respect as men's property".[45] Mrs. Blair is positioned as an educated, experienced authority concerned with and well versed in human rights, but still sits in opposition to some expressions of Muslim identity.

The portrayal of educated, experienced authority figures in Western states as perpetuating discrimination against Muslims expands beyond Prime Ministers and their wives. A news article from 2008 featuring Britain's Justice Secretary Jack Straw features the same concern. This *Gulf News* story centered primarily on Straw's education, family, and professional background, and was mostly devoid of how this man's politics affected Muslims in the UK. Toward the end of the article however, this sentence was inserted almost as if it was an afterthought: "Anyways, Straw had stirred criticism by Muslims when he called on Muslim women to abandon their veil suggesting that women who wear veil over their face could make community relations harder."[46]

While the UK is described as a conflicted state, trying to live up to its multi-cultural ideals and unease with terrorism and Muslim immigrants, France is portrayed in these texts as being fairly hard-line on demanding that immigrants assimilate to French culture. This means that French Muslim women are encouraged to abandon the veil among other symbols that would define them as a non-French Other. Although former President Nicolas Sarkozy received some attention for appointing cabinet members from the minority North African and Arab Muslim communities, this is drawn out as a mixed bag. They may be North African and Arab Muslims in a position of authority, but they are also described as "militant Muslims[, feminists]," suggesting that these junior ministers agree with Sarkozy's stance on the veil as an obstacle for assimilation and a form of gender-specific oppression.[47] The French policies against the veil had been presented as a form of oppression by forcing young French Muslim women to either abandon their studies, transfer to private religious schools or study abroad (with the burden of cost largely on immigrant families), or be forced to remove the veil against their wishes.[48] The French position on the veil is presented in these

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45) Ibid.

46) Abdul-Hadi Al-Timimi, "Jack Straw - A Jewish Prime Minister?" in *Gulf News: World – UK*, July 27, 2008.

Straw's fellow members of the Labour Party were reported as "[distancing] themselves" from him after his "veil comments". This does not provide redemption of the Labour Party or authorities in the UK in this newspaper though. While the politicians "[distanced] themselves," this article makes it clear it is not because they do not share his views, but because the Labour Party "'[does] not have a policy' on veiled women." The suggested implication here is that the distancing is notable, but likely political and meaningless.

Tom Clifford, "Labour Silent of Straw's Veil View," in *Gulf News: World – UK*, October 7, 2006.

47) Reuters, "Sarkozy Reshuffles Cabinet After Polls," in *Reuters* and *Gulf News: World – Other World Stories*, June 18, 2007.

Gulf News Staff, "Paranoia in Paris – All Points West," in *Gulf News*, November 3, 2006.

48) Agence France-Presse Staff, "French Headscarf Ban Angers Al Qaeda, but Accepted at Home," in *Agence France-Presse* and *Khaleej Times*, September 16, 2006.

Agencies, "French PM Welcomes Debate about Veil," in *Gulf News: World – Other World Stori*es, October

texts as the ultimate expression of an oppressive form of secularism.[49] By linking secularism and the oppression of minorities in these texts, with France as the leading example, religious toleration as practiced by Islam may be interpreted as more humane and respectful of cultural and religious differences – as illustrated by articles expounding this value in the UAE:

> "The hijab is a religious observance set out in the Holy Quran, points out Radwan Al Sayeed in Al Ittihad (UAE). When French and German officials insist that young Muslim women take off the veil in school and at work, they are in fact challenging the right to religious freedom and also encroaching on human rights."[50]

This is a perfect example of how the critique of other regions of the world is easily brought back for the purpose of exalting the successes of the UAE in light of the failure of others. In this case it is explicit, but it is often only implied, and with each new report published, builds toward this grander narrative.

Oppression and Conflict: Muslim Women in Muslim-Majority States

The Emirati English-language news media interacts with Western portrayals of Arabs. These content producers have also been the consumers of Western news media for the last two decades or so and have in part "learn[ed] *about [themselves]* by means of images, histories, and information manufactured in the West."[51] This deluge of orientalist caricatures *informs,* but does not wholly *direct,* the cultural exchange that takes place partially through news media. In other words, the image of the "modern" Emirati is in part being crafted in opposition to negative news stories that feature some version of the violent, uncivilized, and actively anti-modern Arab and/or Muslim stereotype. This point is evident in the vast majority of the articles pertaining to Muslim women in other Muslim-majority states in my random sample.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia [KSA] is the leading Muslim majority state in both my smaller qualitative sample and quantitative analysis of the entire corpus, appearing in 46 articles of the 380 total. Although the UAE shares the vast majority of its border with the KSA, shares a great deal of cultural similarities, and are frequently political allies, the KSA is still the subject of negative reporting in my sampled text. I suggest that the attention, time, and effort spent to illustrate the differences between the UAE and the KSA may be related to the frequency with which European and

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26, 2006.

Marwan Asmar, "Arab Perspective: French Ruling Against the Hijab Opens New Debate," in *Gulf News: UAE – General*, January 2, 2004.

49) "'I'm glad to see France's secular demands are now being discussed seriously abroad,' [former French Prime Minister] Villepin said at his monthly news conference."

Agencies, "French PM Welcomes Debate About Veil," in *Gulf News: World – Other World Stori*es.

50) Marwan Asmar, "Arab Perspective: French Ruling Against the Hijab Opens New Debate".

51) Edward Said, *Covering Islam* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 56.

American news outlets report negative stories about the KSA.[52]  Important to note though is the fact that reports about the KSA carried in Emirates-based newspapers are more likely to come from outside content producers, like the *Telegraph*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *Reuters*. This may be because the newspapers and the government are better able to shift the blame for such a negative stories to an outside source, although the fact remains that the negative reports are run in an Emirates-based newspaper anyway. The newspapers also pull stories from outside content produces for articles on Iran, but it is far less frequently. Due to the political tension between Arab Gulf states and Iran, open criticism of Iran may be less politically risky. Iran appears in 38 of the 380 articles, and so it is also a Muslim-majority state that appears with elevated frequency across the entire corpus.

The KSA is depicted as an oppressive place, stifling progress and growth despite their oil-wealth; this is in contrast to the UAE, that is largely heralded as using their oil wealth for modernizing development projects.[53] A widely reported story in connection to Muslim women in the KSA is the battle over the right to drive.[54] A possible reason for focusing on the women's right to drive issue again and again is that it this restriction may sound particularly strange to a Western audience. It is also a quick and efficient way to compare and contrast the KSA with the UAE – the UAE allows women to drive, to go out without a male-relative as a chaperone, and so on. The KSA and the UAE are so close in terms of geography, dress, food, and language that it is likely that these exercises in highlighting (negative) difference is intended to keep the Western reader from confusing the two, or assuming all countries in the Gulf are ion lock-step with each other.

Another illustrative example of the KSA being depicted in a negative light is the public outrage over a Muslim woman leading the Friday prayer in New York in 2005. *Gulf News* reported that the organizers of this event said, "It was intended to draw attention to the inequality faced by Muslim women."[55]  The article then shifts to

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52) Ali Shahzad and Khalid, "US Mass Media and Muslim World: Portrayal of Muslim by "News Week" and "Time" (1991-2001)," in *European Journal of Scientific Research* 21, no. 4 (August 2008), 565-566.
For example, an analysis of how Middle Eastern countries were covered in *News Week* and *Time Magazine* from 1991 to 2001 reveals that the vast majority of the reporting on the KSA was neutral (66.8%).  What's more telling is that 27.9% of reporting was found to be negative, and only 5.2% was considered positive. "The proportion of positive coverage (6.12) of Saudi Arabia was surprisingly smaller than the pro-proportion of negative coverage in the both magazines. Because the relations between the Saudi and United States are cordial and friendly, yet ratio of negative coverage is indicating different state of relations between the both countries. The both magazines have highlighted grave concern over the issue of Islamic groups, point of view/ displeasure of Saudi regarding presence of allied forces in the country. Saudi royal family supported the Taliban regime, their stance towards Israel occupations of Palestine's territory were the factors, due to this, ratio of negative coverage was greater than positive coverage."
53) Thomas Friedman, "The Battle of the Pump," in *The New York Times* October 7, 2004, A35.
Thomas Friedman, "Cursed by Oil," in *The New York Times* May 9, 2004, WK13.
Michelle Wallin, "Some Big Winners From Costly Oil: Surging Prices Bring Boom Times to the Persian Gulf States," in *The New York Times,* October 7, 2004, W1.
54) Damien McElroy, "Saudi Arabia to Lift Driving Ban on Women," in *Gulf News*, January 21, 2008.
55) Mariam Al Hakeen, "A Wrong Thing to Do," in *Gulf News*, March 23, 2005.
Associated Press, "Many Outraged and See Conspiracy in NY Mixed Gender Prayer," in *Khaleej Times*,

primarily explore the reactions of irate Saudi scholars, who are quoted at length; the scholar's very negative reactions to the prayer are the meat of this report. The phrase "enemies of Islam" appears twice, highlighting the idea that there is conflict and perceived irreconcilable difference on both sides of the 'Western and Islamic divide.' Chairman of the Supreme Ulema Council, Abdullah ibn Muhammad al ash Sheikh, is quoted at length:

> "All Islamic schools agree that women do not lead men in performing religious duties. This issue is intended to weaken the nation. Our enemies are trying to corrupt Muslim women and hurt their dignity by making false calls."[56]

In quoting al ash Sheikh, and highlighting conspiratorial and combative language such as this, the report furthers the notion that Saudi officials and experts are both combative and single-minded in their conservatism. Furthermore, that *scholars* are actively fighting against and/or are suspicious of "women's issues" implies that the leaders of the KSA are immensely recalcitrant when it comes to the promotion of women's rights and development. Drumming on the scholars' anger over a prayer in New York is even more telling – the implication is that these Saudi conservative religious authorities want their opinions and influence to extend well beyond the borders of their own nation-state and into the West, which is likely a threatening prospect for the general readership made up of Westerners.

Iran is similarly described as a needlessly oppressive place for Muslim women, and described as a country whose leaders are combative and single-minded in their conservatism. In 2007, Iran began a campaign of addressing the "un-Islamic" standards of dress of the women in Tehran.[57] The title of the article is fairly flippant and does not at all imply that the new campaign, or the police enforcing the dress code, to be taken very seriously, "Fashion Police Deploy in Iran." The article describes the campaign as largely aimed at female university students who wear

> "sleeveless shirts, tight pants, shorts and tank tops in school premises. Police said they stopped more than 3,000 women for dressing immodestly on the first day of the campaign in Tehran on Monday. Nearly 300 women were arrested, some for wearing tight overcoat or letting too much hair peek out from under their veil, said police spokesperson Colonel Mahi Ahmadi."

In turn, students are protesting the "crackdown":

> "Many conservatives applauded the crackdown, which is gaining growing unpopularity, especially among young Iranians. 'What

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March 21, 2005.

56) Ibid.

57) Agencies, "Fashion Police Deploy in Iran," in *Gulf News,* April 24, 2007.

they do is really insulting. You simply can't tell people what to wear,' said Elham Mohammadi, a 23-year-old student.

Defending the campaign, lawmaker Mohammad Taqi Rahbar said, 'Men see models in the streets and ignore their own wives at home. This weakens the pillars of family.'

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's dress code campaign was the toughest such crackdown in nearly two decades."[58]

Important to note is that while the article acknowledges support for the campaign, it is not described as popular support. No numbers are given for either side, how many people are protesting or supporting the campaign, but the reader is left with the impression that this was not a popular policy decision, and it is becoming less popular by the day. In turn this makes the government look ineffective in that it cannot rally the support of its people. So although on the surface this article concerns the dress of Iranian woman, the underlying message is that the Iranian government is struggling with legitimating, supporting, and implementing government policies that are perceived to be needlessly oppressive by an active part of the population.

Violence toward Muslim women in Muslim majority states is another important node in this category. Articles describe rampant domestic violence and state-imposed punishment for Muslim women failing to abide by relatively strict religious codes of conduct. Reports of violence against women in the KSA appear several times in my qualitative sample. The case of a Saudi TV host, "brutally beat[en]" by her husband serves as the spark for an essay about Muslim women's equal rights and dignity published in *Gulf News* in 2004.[59] The article describes the "second-class" status of women in neighboring Kuwait and honor killings in rural Jordan; it is a region-wide critique. The author's proposed solution is to take another look at Islam, one that understands Islam's role in "honour[ing] women" and that the Quran "that repeatedly emphasises equality between the sexes, stating '[…] for women are rights over men similar to those of men over women.'"[60] The author laments that this violence and discrimination against women is a sign that "parts of the Middle East have regressed to pre-Islamic times".[61] In essence, religion is not the problem and does not need to be cast aside on the march toward modernization; it is ineffective and/or authoritative governments that are problematic. This essay was originally produced for the *Christian Science Monitor*, and does not at all address the UAE as a positive or negative location for Muslim women, but that it was reprinted in *Gulf News* is telling. The author makes an enormous effort to note that Muslim identity, modernity, and development for women are not mutually exclusive. Secularism is not presented as a cure-all or an obvious strategy for progress; embracing Islam as a model for gender equality and

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58) Ibid.
59) Souheila Al Jadda, "Muslim Women Have Equal Rights Too," in *Gulf News*, May 13, 2004.
60) Ibid.
61) Ibid.

liberation is a viable path forward.  Underscored is that the aspects of women's lives that reflect development and the workings of a modern state are: education, employment, legal protections from abuse and unfair divorce.[62]  These are among the pillars on which the UAE makes its case that it is the best of all possible worlds.

Development, Wealth, Tolerance, and Alternative Modernity: Muslim Women in the UAE

In contrast to the regional, co-religionist states, and the West, the UAE is presented to the audience of these newspapers as a hopeful demonstration of "Muslim self-determination" and modernization that grew organically from the gift of oil wealth and good government.[63]  This is positioned to be in direct contrast to Western interest in promoting "secular authoritarian leaders and regimes that suppress all opposition" in a decidedly anti-democratic fashion.[64]  In essence, the UAE achieved its alternative modernity through its own ingenuity and luck, swapping out the demand for whole-sale secularization and westernization in the fashion of Turkey (described as a special case of a Muslim-majority state oppressive toward Muslim women) for a tolerant Islamic state.[65] Muslim women's roles in these news articles highlight this aspect of the UAE's brand of modernity. Hijāb features front and center again in many of the articles in this category, as do markers of development like education and employment opportunities previously expounded upon. Some of the articles in this category do not explicitly discuss the UAE, but are educational reports for expatriates or op-eds by Emiratis with a message that they would like the English-language audience to be made aware of.

Many of the educational articles are written by Dr. John Esposito, a Georgetown Professor of Religion and International Affairs. That *Gulf News* regularly published Espositio's work demonstrates that they have some significant agreement with his expressed views, and that his role as an outside expert/scholar is still perceived to be immensely useful in convincing the readership of the legitimacy of these view points. Esposito's "Who Speaks for Islam?" series made its way into the texts that I collected by referring to Muslim women, although the series was a much more general take on the history of Islam, the realities of Muslim communities in the Middle East, and the ways in which Westerns perceive Islamic societies. For example, Esposito tackles the tendency of Westerners to assume that Islam is the sole source of gender inequality in Muslim-majority states:

> "Blaming Islam for women's mistreatment is a losing strategy that alienates those who would otherwise support an end to violence and women's oppression and empowers those who oppose women's rights in the name of defending Islam against a West who hates and

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62) Ibid.
63) John Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, "Who speaks for Islam: Part V," in *Gulf News*, October 3, 2008.
64) Ibid. Husain Haqqani, "In Democracy's Name, Dictators Rule," *Gulf News*, November 16th, 2005.
65) Al Awadhi. Kim Shively, "Religious Bodies and the Secular State: The Merve Kavakci Affair," in *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 1, no.3 (Fall 2005): 46-72.

wants to destroy the faith."[66]

"Some in the West counsel that Islam is the problem and that the West needs to fight it or create a 'moderate Islam' to defeat anti-Americanism, overcome resistance to modernisation, and promote democracy and human rights."[67]

Over and over again in his writing is his call for the orientalist *us : them : modernity : Islam* world view to be dismantled as it is ineffective. That the Emirati news media would give this perspective so much space suggests that Esposito's work and his *explicit* worldview laid out in these articles lends legitimacy to the heavily *implied* theme running through the other two major categories: European secularism is not the only road forward, nor is a Saudi-style reactionary conservatism, no strict and insurmountable binary exists as the only paths forward. The UAE is well positioned to be imagined as the right balance of Islam, tolerance of other religions, and development/modernity.

Esposito does not cite the UAE as the answer to this question of 'secularism being a necessary component of modernity,' but he does highlight things that the UAE has touted as achievements:

"The twenty-first century has brought numerous significant reforms for women's rights in both the public and private spheres. In many Muslim countries, women have the right to public education, including at the college level. In many countries, they also have the right to work outside of the home, vote, and hold public office."[68]

Although Esposito speaks in general terms (any Muslim country could improve these things and many have), the placement of this article in a Emirates-based paper that has a demonstrated incentive to parrot the glowing narratives of the government implies that these articles are seated in this specific context to bolster the projects, statistics, and other news stories concerning Emirati Muslim women. For example, the *Khaleej Times* carried a story about the Director of the Dubai Medical District urging Emirati women to become educated as nurses to help improve the country's healthcare system heavily reliant on expatriate workers.[69] Within that relatively short report, education and professional careers for Emirati women are detailed and Esposito's generalized statements are given results specific to the UAE.

Other authorities like Najla Al Awadhi, indentified as a female member of the UAE's parliament and CEO of Dubai Media Incorporated and general manager of Dubai One TV publish essays and op-eds to reach the English-speaking readership.

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66) Esposito and Mogahed.
67) Esposito and Mogahed.
68) John Esposito, "The Position of Women in Islam," in *Gulf News*, August 22, 2003.
69) Hani Bathish, "Ministry Urges Nationals to Join Nursing Profession," in *Khaleej Times*, May 18, 2003.

Al Awadhi's "The Hijab is a Widely Misunderstood Symbol," appeared in *Gulf News* in July of 2007. Not only is Al Awadhi using the Arabic terms *ḥijāb*, *shaylah*, and *abāyah* to describe her specific mode of dress, as opposed to key terms like "veil" and "headscarf" (often used in European and American discussions of Muslim women's dress), these terms are almost always paired within the same sentence or paragraph with words like "freedom" and "choice." She addresses the notion that "hijab is oppressive and that Muslim women want to remove it to dress in Western clothing" by stating that, "this is an arrogant assumption."[70]  She describes her personal practice of ḥijāb as a voluntary and proud identification practice, and details her interactions with Turkish members of the Development Party in Turkey, who advocate for banning the "hijab in public buildings which is currently the official practice in Turkey."[71] In this way, the article explains to the reader that *ḥijāb* is a bit more complicated than one style of head covering agreed upon by all Muslims.  Furthermore, this serves as a perfect illustration that the UAE is a *different* sort of Muslim majority state – in accepting *ḥijāb*, but in not demanding that it be compulsory. In fact, Turkey's laws against *ḥijāb* are described as simply "trivial, ignorant, and discriminatory," and Turkey is lumped together with Britain and France's tendency to discriminate against Muslim women.[72]

Conclusion

Al Awadhi is not the only Emirati Muslim woman who is involved with politics or business that appears in my sample of articles.  An article about Shaikha Lubna al Qāsimī, who is the Minister of Foreign Trade, plays on the same message that Emirati women reside in most preferable of circumstances. The article details *international recognition* for the UAE's decision to put a woman in a high-level political and finance-related position, and the country's role as a leader in development; al Qāsimī was recognized by the Indian Chapter of Commerce and the Industry's Ladies Organization "for her role in development of women in the UAE and the world."[73] The UAE-specific vision of development for Muslim women does not just play out on a national level, it has a global audience as evidenced by the multitude of easily accessible, multi-lingual sources of information about the country and its brand of exceptionalism. The UAE strives to be a global leader and hub in many respects, and also seeks to be a viable alternative to a secularist vision of modernity. Beyond the English-language news media, the country garners attention and boosts its status and legitimacy by funding international sporting events, hosting art and culture festivals and forums on development and technology, and providing disaster relief aid to other countries (including the US).[74] During an interview that the Sheikh of Dubai,

70) Al Awadhi.
71) Ibid.
72) Ibid.
73) "Lubna gets 'Special Woman' Reward," in *Gulf News*, May 4, 2008.
74) After the tornado that destroyed the town of Joplin, Missouri in the spring of 2011, the government of the UAE gave approximately half a million dollars in aid to the Joplin school system.  In May of 2012, the UAE pledged five million dollars to help fund the reconstruction of Joplin's hospital; the funding was primarily pledged toward a children's wing.
Alan Zagier, "Joplin Tornado: United Arab Emirates To Donate Up To $1 Million To Schools," in *The Huffington Post*, August 9, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/10/united-arab-emirates-

Muḥammad bin Rāshid al Maktūm, gave to *60 Minutes,* he highlighted these things as well as the country's rapid growth and its large-scale infrastructure projects.[75]  The position of women and the Sheikh's desire to sustain a *tolerant* (not secular) Arab Muslim-majority state received a great deal of attention in this interview.  The impression was given that women's participation was not only encouraged, but a key to the success of the state:

> "But the sheikh is also trying to construct a new society based on religious tolerance and gender equality, at least in the work place. He has made recruiting and promoting women a priority.
>
> 'I think we, the government, we are doing all that we can to really make of you a leader and we are concentrating on the woman,' the sheikh remarked at a meeting.
>
> That's a significant change for women from a conservative Muslim culture."[76]

Religious tolerance as a broad and abstract idea is distilled into the Emirati Muslim woman.

Further analysis on media framing concerned with the religious identity of women and its compliance with and/or co-option of the language of development/modernity across the Middle East could be performed. A comparative study of the Emirates-based news produced in English and in Arabic may reveal a significant break with the rhetorical structure I have revealed here. An even richer site for exploration could be an interview-based study with Emirati women – how aware are Emirati women of this portrayal of their lives, and how have they interpreted these messages into their perceptions of themselves and their role as Emirati citizens?  Where do Emirati men fit into this scheme?  On the subject of selling modernity as a brand, the UAE's lack of national elections could be a rich site to explore how a state's perceived responsiveness to the needs of the citizenry may be partially assuaged on the international stage by providing a high standard of living and pledging certain rights and freedoms such as the relative freedom of journalists to work without fear of retaliation by powerful people which, as discussed earlier, is not necessarily a reality on the ground.

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joplin_n_922590.html.

"United Arab Emirates donates $500,000 to Joplin schools," in *Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington DC*, August 9, 2011, http://www.uae-embassy.org/media/pressreleases/9-august-2011.

"UAE Continues its Support of Joplin, Missouri Rebuilding Effort," in *Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington DC*, May 29, 2012, http://www.uae-embassy.org/http%3A/%252Fwww.uae-embassy.org/media/press-releases/19-May-2012_Mercy_Joplin_Grant.

Associated Press, "United Arab Emirates gives $5M to Joplin hospital" in *Fox News*, May 18, 2012, http://www.foxnews.com/us/2012/05/18/united-arab-emirates-gives-5m-to-joplin-hospital/#ixzz22jqPqBpw".

75) "A Visit to Dubai Inc." 60 Minutes. Originally aired October 14, 2007.

http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-18560_162-3361753.html?pageNum=1&tag=contentMain;contentBody.

76) Ibid.

In sum, the United Arab Emirates utilizes women to negotiate a new space and demonstrate an alternative model of modernity that negotiates around "Western" secularism, "failing" multiculturalism, demands for assimilation, and the negative stereotypes attached to Muslim-majority states and Islam as illustrated by popularly-held notions of women's poor circumstances in Iran and the KSA. For economic and political reasons, it benefits the government of the UAE to press on depictions of Muslim women in the UAE as liberated and truly free. According to the media analyzed here, the message is that the UAE has succeeded in ways that other Muslim-majority states have failed, and succeeded in ways that the West has failed. To this end, Muslim women who practice *ḥijāb* are the ideal meta-symbol of this alternative modernity, and it appears over and over again in the corpus. In the West, ḥijāb is depicted as a liability and an obstinate affront to assimilation, as demonstrated by Tony Blair's remark that British Muslim women who practice ḥijāb are engaging in a "mark of separation."[77] In these texts, ḥijāb is also presented as a tool of oppression when enforced by the wrong people, as evidenced by the mocking tone saturating the reports of Iran's dress policy crackdown.  In this arena, these news outlet co-opt the language of prejudice against ḥijāb when it serves them well.  Relative to these two major domains ḥijāb in the UAE becomes a symbol of balance.  It denotes a traditional marker of religious and cultural identity that will not bow to the demands and norms of the West, which serves to bolster the legitimacy of the state in a region of the world with a colonial past. This grand rhetorical framing effectively blends the powerful, previously oppositional, symbols of religion and modernity into one agile, brand-friendly image.

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77) Agencies, "Blair Says Veils Are Mark of Separation".

**Appendix I**

A Google Ngram comparison of "UAE," "United Arab Emirates," and "Dubai" from 1960 to 2008, constructed from Google's large English-language corpus.
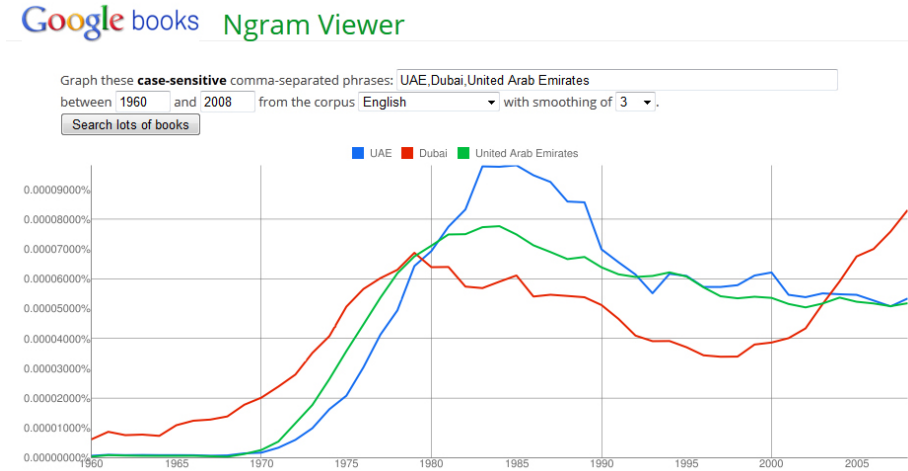


All three terms come to prominence in the 1970s following the country's independence from the United Kingdom in 1971. Throughout the 1980s, the appreciated UAE receives the lion's share of attention, likely in relation to the country's involvement in Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). In approximately 2003, Dubai as an individual Emirate overtakes mentions of the country as a whole.

**Appendix II**

Sampled Articles for Qualitative Analysis; Entries with an asterisk were used to construct the code. Entries without an asterisk had the developed coded tested on it to verify the hypothesized pattern.

**60 Minutes Transcript:**

*"A Visit to Dubai Inc." 60 Minutes. Originally aired October 14, 2007.

http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-18560_162-3361753.html?pageNum=1&tag=content
        Main;contentBody.

**Gulf News:**

*Agencies. "Blair Says Veil Are Mark of Separation." In *Gulf News: World – UK*. October 17, 2006.

------- "Cherie Blair Raises Veil Questions." In *Gulf News: World – UK*. November 1, 2007.

-------- "Fashion Police Deploy in Iran." In *Gulf News: Region – Iran*. April 24, 2007.

-------- "French PM Welcomes Debate About Veil." In *Gulf News: World – Other World Stories*. October 26, 2006.

------- "Somali Forces Crack Down on Veils." In *Gulf News: Region – Somalia*. May 9, 2007.

*Al Awadhi, Najla. "The Hijab is a Widely Misunderstood Symbol." In *Gulf News: Opinion*. July 21, 2007.

*Al Hakeem, Mariam. "A Wrong Thing to Do." In *Gulf News: UAE – General*. March 23, 2005.

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Al Sayegh. "Empires Rise and Fall." In *Gulf News: UAE – General*. April 4, 2003.

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Al-Timimi, Abdul-Hadi. "Jack Straw - A Jewish Prime Minister?" In *Gulf News: World – UK*. July 27, 2008.

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Asmar, Marwan. "Arab Perspective: French Ruling Against the Hijab Opens New Debate." In *Gulf News: UAE – General*. January 2, 2004.

*Associated Press Staff. "Muslim Leader Attacks 'Ridiculous' Burqa Ban." In *Associated Press* and *Gulf News: World – Other World Stories*. December 23, 2005.

*Benador, Eliana. "Iran War 'Would be a Tragedy for World'." In *Gulf News: World – Other World Stories*. March 2, 2007.

Clifford, Tom. "Labour Silent of Straw's Veil View." In *Gulf News: World – UK*. October 7, 2006.

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Gulf News Staff. "Amir Taheri: Muslim Women Play Only an Incidental Part in the Olympics." In *Gulf News: UAE – General*. August 18, 2004.

-------- "Khatami Hails Bahrain for Boosting Women's Image." In *Gulf News: UAE – General*. October 21, 2003.

*-------- "Lubna Gets 'Special Woman' Award." In *Gulf News: Business*. May 4, 2008.

*-------- "M. J. Akbar: Privatisation of Census Will Erase Misrepresentation of Facts." In *Gulf News: UAE – General.* September 27, 2004.

*-------- "Paranoia in Paris – All Points West." In *Gulf News: Opinion*. November 3, 2006.

*-------- "Souheila Al Jadda: Muslim Women Have Equal Rights Too." In *Gulf News: UAE – General*. May 13, 2004.

*Haqqani, Sain. "In Democracy's Name, Dictators Rule." In *Gulf News: UAE – General*. November 16, 2005.

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*Nikam, Girish.  "Uma Changes Garb after Rehabilitation in BJP." In *Gulf News: World – India.*  June 1, 2005.

Raha, Sonali. "'Every Woman Should Have the Right to Choose'." In *Gulf News: UAE – General*.  March 8, 2004.

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*Saberi, Mahmood.  "A Slice of Tamil Nadu Hidden in Dubai." In *Gulf News: UAE – General.* July 9, 2004.

Salama, Samir. "FNC in Heated Debate on Bill Regulating IVF Centres." In *Gulf News: UAE –Government.*  July 4, 2007.

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Abdulla, Afkar and Amira Agarib. "Rising Prices Drive Shoppers to Look for Cheap Bargains." In *Khaleej Times*. December 18, 2007.

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**Nathan Hardy**

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# Mystery and Memory

## St. Mark, Alexandrian Christianity, and the Evidence Shrouded in Mystery

By Nathan Hardy

Navigating issues concerning historical claims in hagiographical tradition is always tricky. Whether the text is embedded in an ostensibly historical narrative such as Eusebius' *History of the Church* or existing individually, the scholar must always resist the impulse to either take the account at face value or throw the text out as ahistorical without considering what it can tell us about the time, place, people, and historical memory of its context. When scholars have examined the traditions around St. Mark's status as founder of the Church in Egypt, the impulse has generally been to disregard any historicity or, more recently, to at least choose to remain agnostic. While Scholarly agnosticism is in some ways admirable for its honesty, it often does too little to consider what the tradition means to Christians in Egypt and amounts to an implicit and effective dismissal of St. Mark's status as founder. With these ideas in mind, this article will further explore the problem, show that certain dismissals of St. Mark's status overstate the evidence in their conclusions, and argue that the available evidence makes St. Mark's status as founder at the very least plausible and in some ways preferable.

Coptic tradition holds that St. Mark (John Mark in the New Testament) was a Cyrenacian Jew who moved with his Levite parents to Jerusalem when barbarians took their land. Mark was the cousin of Barnabas, his father the cousin of St. Peter, and the upper room of his mother's house is where Jesus first celebrated the Eucharist the night before his crucifixion. After traveling with Peter, Paul, and Barnabas as one of the 70, Mark entered Alexandria through the eastern gate. When he arrived, he sought out a cobbler to fix his broken sandal. Upon piercing his hand, the cobbler,

named Ananias, screamed out "εἰς θεός!" (God is One). Seeing this exclamation as a sign, Mark healed Ananias's hand and began to preach to him, eventually baptizing him and many others.

As was often the case in early Christianity, Mark sensed persecution coming from the non-Christians in the area, ordained Ananias as bishop along with three deacons and seven priests, and fled to Rome to be with Peter and Paul until their deaths in 64 CE. He returned to Egypt the following year, delighted to see the church he founded thriving, and continued to preach, perform miracles, and minister the church for several more years. In 68 CE, Easter Sunday fell on the same day as the Egyptian feast of Serapis. Egyptians seized Mark and dragged him through the streets with a rope and threw him in prison, where he was visited by a vision of Jesus, who said to him "Peace be to you, Mark, my disciple and evangelist!" The next day, those celebrating the Serapis feast dragged Mark through the streets again until, his flesh bruised and bloodied, he was martyred.[1] Again, this is all according to tradition.

While interesting, many of the details in this tradition can be shown to come from the hagiographical *Acts of Mark.* Versions of this narrative have been picked up by (mostly Coptic) historians through the Middle Ages, perhaps most importantly by Sawiris ibn Muqaffa—the 10th century Egyptian historian who composed the *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria.*[2] The exact composition date of this extra-canonical work is unknown (our manuscripts date to the 11th century), but it appears that the martyrdom tradition, at least, can be externally traced back to the late fourth century, when a Latin monk, Paulinas of Nola, referred to Mark's problems with the Serapisian cult in Alexandria.[3] This date is clearly well after the events themselves would have happened and although this is not enough to inherently rule out the historicity of the narrative, when this concern is combined with the hagiographical nature,[4] it is enough to become skeptical.

What seems more likely is that this text wove together several oral traditions which, sought to fill in the gaps in accounts of Mark's activity in Egypt, and also "serve[d] as a 'foundation legend' that helped the late antique Egyptian church make

1) Tadrous Y. Malaty, *Introduction to the Coptic Orthodox Church* (Sporting, Alexandria, Egypt: St. George's Coptic Orthodox Church, 1993), 18-21.

2) Allen Dwight Callahan, "The Acts of Saint Mark: an introduction and translation," *Coptic Church Review 14* (1993), 3. Intriguingly, despite all subsequent interpretations conflating the Mark of this narrative with John Mark in Acts and Mark of the Pauline epistles, the *Acts of Mark* does not explicitly conflate these figures, nor does it report the connection between Mark and Peter. Since the figures are traditionally conflated, however, and since there are plenty of other reasons to question the details in this document, I will be assuming they are the same. If it could be shown that the Mark traditionally said to be founder of the Coptic Church and the Mark of the New Testament were not the same person, it would invalidate this study, but would also lead to an extremely interesting—and fairly scandalous—new study.

3) Stephen J. Davis, "The Succession of St. Mark: Apostolic Traditions and the Origins of the Egyptian Church (St. Mark to Demetrius)," in *The Early Coptic Papacy: The Egyptian Church and Its Leadership in Late Antiquity,* (Cairo and New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2004) 10, note 37.

4) Not only are there visions of angels and Jesus, but also explicit connections between Mark's miracles and Jesus's. For instance, when Mark heals Ananias, he does so by spitting on the ground to make mud from spittle and anoints Ananias's hand—an explicit reference to John 9:1-7. Callahan, 5.

sense of its own (apostolic) history and leadership," thus reflecting an emerging Coptic self-identity as the "Church of the Martyrs,"[5] This does not mean that there is no historical basis to the narrative—there are later references to both the tomb and the throne of St. Mark indicating that he may have died there, and the narrative probably preserves at least the social context of earliest Egyptian Christianity (one couched in Hellenistic Judaism)[6]—it simply means that as Christians, in Egypt especially, searched for meaning in aftermath of the early fourth century Diocletian persecution, traditions began to appear which linked their own collective suffering with that of their traditional founder, St. Mark.[7] There is also intriguing evidence that the Markan martyrdom narrative is directly connected to that of Pope Peter of Alexandria, the Coptic pope during the worst of the persecution, thereby connecting the "First Martyr" of Egypt with the "Last (or Perfect) of the Martyrs."[8] While a full explication of all the historical problems with the *Acts of Mark* is unnecessary, what I have presented here is sufficient to establish that the details of Mark's martyrdom in the *Acts* are probably not strictly historical.

Some scholars, however, such as Walter Bauer and Hans Leitzmann, have gone farther—so far, in fact, as to argue that the entire historical connection between St. Mark and the Alexandrian Church was completely fabricated in the late second century.[9] While perhaps appearing overly incredulous, these scholars and their arguments are not entirely unconvincing and have influenced at least a generation of scholars. In response to these arguments, I will argue that Bauer's argument overstates

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5) Davis, 12.

6) Ibid. For more on early Egyptian Christianity as an offshoot of Hellenistic Judaism, see Birger A. Pearson, "Earliest Christianity in Egypt: Some Observations," in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity,* ed. Birger A Pearson and James E. Goehring, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 131-56.

7) The Diocletian Persecution lasted from 302-313. Diocletian was technically only alive and in power for the first years of the Persecution, but his successors and those he put in charge of various lands carried on with seeming enthusiasm and killed, maimed, or tortured countless thousands. Malady, 30, puts the number at 800,000 dead, and though this is almost surely high, Malady, a Coptic Priest, uses the number to show how eager the Copts were to profess their faith as martyrs. For more on the Diocletian persecution, see Henry Chadwick, "Diocletian and the Great Persecution; Rise of Constantine" in *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 176-189, and Giuseppe Ricciotti, *The Age of Martyrs: Christianity from Diocletian to Constantine,* Trans. Rev. Anthony Bull, C.R.L, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1959).

8) Pearson, 143-4. Also see Stephen J. Davis, "Bishops, Teachers, and Martyrs: The Shaping of Episcopal Authority in an Age of Persecution (Demetrius to Peter 1)," in *The Early Coptic Papacy: The Egyptian Church and Its Leadership in Late Antiquity* (Cairo and New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2004), 20-42. In short, *The Martyrdom of St. Peter*, which explicitly connects St. Peter of Alexandria with St. Mark and marks him as worthy of fulfilling the line of St. Mark, probably emerged as something of a polemic against Bishop Meletus in Upper Egypt. Meletus was claiming his own supremacy during and after the Diocletian persecution when he held liturgical services and Peter was in hiding, thus giving him more right to lead a church of martyrs. By connecting Peter with St. Mark and giving him a selfless martyr's death, they not only reminded Egyptian Christians of the importance of apostolic succession (the line handed down through the patriarchate of Alexandria), but also established Peter, and the entire Alexandrian patriarchate, as the true Church of Martyrs.

9) Walter Bauer, "Egypt," in *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity,* ed. David Hay, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 44-60, and Hans Lietzmann, "Egypt," in *The Founding of the Church Universal: Volume II of A History of the Early Churc,* (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, 1953), 275-317. As Leitzmann appears to be following Bauer's conclusions, I will be concerned only with Bauer's argument.

the evidence, that a Markan connection—possibly as apostolic founder—is very plausible, and conclude that regardless of historicity, Mark's status as founder of the Coptic Church (and his martyrdom narrative) deserves to be studied in its own right, as it has shaped two millennia of Coptic Christianity.

Bauer's seminal study examined the development of Christianity in various geographical areas and concluded that what later came to be called "heresies" were often the original or primary forms of Christianity. Orthodoxy, or rather what became orthodoxy, only prevailed due to the later influence of Rome's ecclesiastical establishment.[10] When he comes to his analysis of Egypt, Bauer does not ignore the intellectual and ecclesiastical importance of Christians there, but he does question why our best source, Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History,* tells us so little about the earliest period of Egyptian Christianity. This is a valid question. He notes that while there were probably some proto-orthodox Christians in Egypt from an early time, and that they may have had a leader, the community must have been very small because the first time we really see a description of something like what became orthodox Christianity is when the 11th Bishop of Alexandria (after Mark), Demetrius, assumed the office of bishop in 189, and he was the *only* bishop. By extension then, it would be unlikely that St. Mark was as successful in converting Egyptians as the legend reports.[11]

Bauer also analyzes available Christian literature applicable to Egypt, primarily the *Gospel of the Hebrews, Gospel of the Egyptians,* and the *Epistle of Barnabas,* and concludes that they were essentially, or at least foundationally, Gnostic.[12] Bauer bolsters his argument by correctly noting that the earliest Egyptian Christians we know anything about are the Gnostic teachers Basilides and his son Isidore, Carpocrates, and Valentinus.[13] He extrapolates backward from the presence of these Gnostic leaders and texts, and concludes that the beginnings of these Gnostic systems must have begun much earlier. Finally, after tracing out the development of Demetrius' patriarchate and his growing confidence, Bauer concludes that during this time there was "in Alexandria that branch of theological endeavor which fought and tried to discredit the heretics by appealing to an unbroken succession of orthodox bishops."[14] Therefore, "the first ten names (after Mark, the companion of the apostles) are and remain for us a mere echo and a puff of smoke; and they scarcely could have ever been anything but that."[15] The use of Mark as apostolic founder may have even been provided by the Church in Rome![16]

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10) Birger A. Pearson, "Gnosticism in Early Egyptian Christianity," in *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity*(Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 196.

11) This assertion implicitly references Eusebius's own description of the *Therapeutae,* which will be explained later in this study.

12) Bauer, 50-53.

13) Ibid., 48.

14) Ibid., 55.

15) Ibid., 45.

16) Ibid., 60.

While important and influential, many of Bauer's conclusions and methods have been questioned by subsequent scholars. C.H. Roberts, for one, has criticized Bauer's use of the argument from silence. While agreeing with Bauer that "the obscurity that veils the early history of the Church in Egypt and that does not lift until the beginning of the third century constitutes a conspicuous challenge to the historian of primitive Christianity," Roberts criticizes Bauer's work by noting that of the fourteen extant Christian manuscripts possibly from before 200 C.E., only one of them—the Gospel of Thomas—is debatably Gnostic. The more likely situation is instead a fluid one, he argues, in which various Christian groups coexisted without divisive theological lines.[17]

Pearson, too, has questioned Bauer's characterization of the *Gospel of Hebrews* and *Gospel of the Egyptians* as Gnostic, as well as criticized how little attention Bauer pays to the heresiarchs themselves—Valentinus, Basilides, and Carpocrates. He also states, in direct contrast to Bauer, that we probably know even less about Christian Gnosticism in first-century Egypt than non-Gnostic Christianity.[18] These criticisms are already enough to begin to doubt many of Bauer's general conclusions about Christianity in Egypt. For some reason, though, one part of Bauer's argument—that the attempt of the Alexandrian church to exclude "heretics" by appealing to an unbroken succession of bishops means that the connection to Mark and the list of the next 10 bishops was created by Demetrius himself for this very purpose—goes largely unchallenged. While the paucity of evidence either affirming or denying the historicity, which Bauer himself admits to, makes it impossible to positively prove that the connection to Mark is definitely historical or that Demetrius did *not* fabricate this connection, the evidence that *is* there does not tell us as much as Bauer asserts.

Bauer's strongest evidence against Mark and the next bishops is more accurately characterized as a *lack* of evidence. Our earliest undisputed and explicit reference to a connection between Mark and Alexandria comes from the fourth century church historian Eusebius, referenced above. He provides this account: "They say that this one [Mark] was the first dispatched upon Egypt to announce the good news, which indeed he also had written, and the first to organize churches in Alexandria herself."[19] I will provide an analysis of this passage and what follows below, but suffice to say this is not much to go on. Eusebius gives us even less information about the next 10 bishops in books two through five—mainly just a name and the year of apostolic succession. It is certainly distressing that we know so little about the early Christians in Egypt, but this in itself does not allow us to conclude anything concrete. We need to remember that we have nothing like a complete preservation of *any* ancient author,

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17) C.H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 1, 13-4, 52-4, 60.

18) Pearson, *Gnosticism,* 197-8. Pearson notes that had Bauer done so, he very well might have come up with "a more nuanced perspective on the position of Gnosticism in early Egyptian Christianity." Other scholars, including Bentley Layton, Michael A. Williams, Karen L. King, and Elaine Pagels have even begun to wonder if the "Gnostic" categorization means anything considering the vast differences in teachings.

19) Eusebius, *History of the Church,* 2:16. Translation my own.

especially in the Alexandrian Church.[20] If this was the whole argument, it would be easy to say that Bauer overstates the evidence.[21] Bauer however, goes further.

The second part of his claim is more nuanced. Ancient teachers and writers often claimed legitimacy through succession lists and this was certainly true among Christians as well. The idea is that as orthodoxy began to become recognizable, Demetrius used his own succession list to discredit the legitimacy of Gnostic teachers. Since Bauer claims that Christianity in Egypt was primarily Gnostic in nature, Demetrius (or even Rome) had to create this list from nothing in order to use it. This is where Bauer oversteps. I certainly agree that Demetrius worked hard to exclude teachers like Basilides and Valentinus from the ecclesiastical circle and that an "impetus toward self-definition and the establishment of more rigid standards of institutional succession seems to have gripped the church" in Egypt.[22] I am even willing to agree with Davis that the succession list of early bishops handed down to Eusebius was probably compiled in this time, and possibly compiled by Demetrius himself,[23] but I see no reason to assume that compilation equals creation.

This "impetus toward more rigid standards of institutional succession" which grasped the Egyptian Christians began in Rome with Irenaeus of Lyons' *Against Heresies*. In this work, Irenaeus worked to define orthodoxy in Rome in order to exclude the very same sorts of teachers present in Egypt (students of Basilides and Valentinus), because they claimed apostolic succession from Peter. As a Roman Christian, Irenaeus felt that he could not allow these teachers to continue preaching such a radically different message from the majority of Christendom, so he systematically laid out why these Gnostic ideas were ridiculous and what Peter 'really' taught. Anyone who taught differently, then, could not claim apostolic succession from Peter, and the ever-so-important succession list could not be used to claim legitimacy. Irenaeus then went on to list the first twelve bishops of Rome, from Peter to Eleutherius, and used this list to show why his theological position was the correct one, saying, "All, therefore, who wish to see the truth can view in the whole Church the tradition of the apostles that has been manifested in the whole world. Further, we are able to enumerate the bishops who were established in the Churches by the apostles, and their successions even to ourselves These neither taught nor knew anything similar to what [the heretics] senselessly prate about."[24] This is exactly the activity Demetrius was engaged in with Gnostic teachers in Egypt.

The appearance of *Against Heresies* among the earliest papyrological evidence of Christianity in Egypt (around 200 CE) tells us that Demetrius was certainly aware of Irenaeus's writings and likely used them as a model for his own work. The

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20) M. Lee, "Eusebius on St. Mark," *Studia Patristica* 12 (TU 115; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1973), 424.
21) After all, it would be laughable to suggest that just because I know absolutely nothing about my grandfather, for instance, he did not exist in reality.
22) Davis, 19.
23) Ibid.
24) Irenaeus, *Against Heresies,* 3.3.1, trans. and ann. Dominic J. Unger, Ancient Christian Writers 64 (New York: The Newman Press, 2012), 32. Passage also cited in Davis, 19.

situation in Egypt was clearly similar to that in Rome and Bauer is right to argue that Demetrius used this clear outline of orthodoxy to remove the legitimacy from Gnostic teachers. Again, however, there is nothing in the evidence to suggest that Demetrius and his circle, possibly with help from Rome, fabricated the Egyptian apostolic succession list to do this. After all, Irenaeus published an Episcopal succession list, and to the best of my knowledge no one questions the legitimacy of the list or of Irenaeus himself to make such a list. So why is the Alexandrian succession list taken to be so obviously fabricated?[25] Bauer can only get away with suggesting this because he holds the proto-orthodox presence in Egypt to such low numbers, and reasons that there could not have been any line of bishops prior to Demetrius. When important pieces of his argument are taken away, such as the Gnostic character of early Egyptian Christianity,[26] the whole edifice begins to crumble and it becomes increasingly clear that Bauer is claiming more than he can support.

In any case, although Bauer overstates the evidence when he claims that the Mark foundation legend was created in the late second century, if there is zero plausibility for any real historical connection between St. Mark and Egypt, then Bauer's explanation—or in this case the assertion he and others of his generation make—still might be the most attractive and coherent. Therefore, the second part of this study will examine what the sources *do* say about St. Mark and determine whether it is at all plausible that St. Mark was the founder of Egyptian Christianity. If it is, then this will be sufficient to realize that we need to at least take the traditional claim seriously, and we may find that it even appears simpler and more likely than Bauer's hypothesis. Again, the lack of information currently makes it impossible to definitively prove that Mark was the historic founder of the Egyptian Church. However, if the narrative is plausible, then we cannot simply argue from silence that the account has no basis in truth.

It will be helpful to begin this part of the study by looking at what the New Testament writings can tell us about Mark. While they do not specifically mention the Alexandrian or African missions, Colossians 4:10 does identify Mark as "the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you received instruction/commandments." The Acts of the Apostles also tells us that "John, whose other name was Mark," joins Barnabas and Saul on the mission to Seleucia and to Cyprus (Acts 12:25-13:5). However, when the group comes to Perga in Pamphilia, in modern southern Turkey, John Mark suddenly departs and returns to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). The final mention of Mark in Acts comes in Acts 15 when Barnabas wishes to take John called Mark with him and Paul on a visit to "every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord," but Paul refuses "to take with them one who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in the work. The disagreement became so sharp that they parted company; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus" (Acts 15:36-40).

25) Thomas Oden, *How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2007) would suggest something like racism, implicit or otherwise, and though the period Bauer developed in is not far from Hegel's famous comment, "Africa has no history," I am not quite inclined to go this far.
26) See the works in the bibliography by Pearson, Davis, Griggs, and Oden for a more complete explication of Bauer's missteps.

It is unclear why Mark left the mission in the first place or precisely why Paul refused to take him along on the return journey, but judging from Paul's request in 2 Timothy 4:11, where Paul commands Timothy to bring Mark to Rome with him, Mark and Paul appear to have reconciled near the end of Paul's life.[27] While these passages do not directly connect Mark with Egypt, they do make it clear that Mark was involved in some of the early missionary activity and was likely an important member, thus establishing a context for his possible later apostolic activity.

Another New Testament work, 1 Peter, also mentions Mark. The thirteenth verse of the fifth chapter of the letter remarks that "She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, greets you; and my son Mark (does as well)" (1 Peter 5:13). The "she" is generally thought to be the feminine article standing for "the Church" (ἡ ἐκκλησία), and given the lack of other characters named Mark in the New Testament writings, the Mark mentioned as the (spiritual) son of Peter is generally accepted as the same Mark in Acts and some of Paul's letters.[28] The location of Babylon, though, has been a matter of some debate among scholars. It seems quite unlikely that Peter and Mark were in Mesopotamia, considering there are no early Christian traditions connecting either man with the Babylon of Mesopotamia, but what of other places called Babylon?

Most scholars tend to opt for Babylon as a metaphor for Rome. *2 Baruch* and *Syballine Oracles* both refer to Rome as Babylon by the end of the first century, and the Revelation of John is rife with visions of the fall of Babylon (Rome) resulting from God's Judgment,[29] so using Babylon as a metaphor for Rome was not uncommon. Interpreting the Babylon in 1 Peter as Rome is strengthened when we consider that Peter may have been using Babylon as an exilic reference to sympathize with the "exiles of the Dispersion" (1 Peter 1:1). These circumstantial reasons, however, do not automatically rule out the possibility of Babylon referring to still another place—perhaps even a place in Egypt.

In 2011, Thomas C. Oden became the most recent of the relatively few scholars who have proposed that Babylon in 1 Peter refers to a place called Babylon of Egypt, located in what is now Old Cairo. Oden connects the passage in 1 Peter with the passage in Acts where Peter is led from prison by an angel of the Lord, connects with the many who "had gathered and were praying" at Mary the mother of John Mark's house, and leaves to go to "another place" (Acts 12: 12-17).[30] He remarks that the fort was first built in the sixth century BCE by Persians, and later used by the

27) 2 Timothy is widely considered to be written by an author other than Paul himself. Pseudipigraphical epistles are not addressed in this study and merit further inquiry, however their authentic authorship is ultimately of little importance to my argument. Even if the letter is not of Pauline origin, it still references Mark as involved in the early Apostolic activity and early Christians accepted his involvement, which is all this section of the argument seeks to do.

28) Davis, 4.

29) Ibid., 5.

30) Oden's evidence and argument for the possibility of either 1 Peter's composition or Babylon of Cairo as Peter's destination when he fled do not necessitate a connection with each other, but they are strengthened by this hypothesis. In any case, necessary or not, Oden draws this connection as a possibility.

Romans before they relocated the fort closer to the Nile during the reign of Trajan (ca 98-117).

He cites Greek geographer Strabo (64 BCE-24 CE) in his *Geographica* (17.1.30), when he states that "Going higher upriver [the Nile], you come to Babylon, a stronghold where a number of Babylonians rebelled and, after negotiations, obtained the kings' permission to settle. Today however it is the garrison town of one of the three legions stationed in Egypt" in order to establish the existence of this site prior to Roman times.[31] This is important because a major criticism against Babylon of Egypt as the location of Mark and Peter in 1 Peter notes that archeological evidence places the construction of the fort in the late third century under Diocletian, therefore discrediting any possibility of Egypt's early importance in this way.[32]

Perhaps more importantly, Oden also argues for the area as a refugee destination, particularly for Jews in this period fleeing persecution.[33] We should remember that Peter and Mark would likely have still considered themselves a part of the Jewish community, or at least still familiar with Judaism and its refugee communities, hoping to convert them to the new religion of Jesus. Even if there were an obvious line drawn between Mark and Peter on one hand, and the Jews in the area on the other, scholarly consensus places the locus of earliest Egyptian Christianity firmly inside Alexandrian Judaism, with Christians and Jews living alongside each other for some time before finally splitting.[34] If Mark and Peter *did* come to Babylon of Egypt when fleeing after Peter's escape from prison, the context of the area makes Babylon of Egypt a not at all unlikely place *in* Egypt for them to come.

Of course, this is all fairly speculative—there is no hard evidence that this fort became Christian within the first few centuries CE—and it does perhaps seem a bit unlikely that a small military fort in Egypt was the location of the writing of a letter to congregations in Asia Minor.[35] Oden does ask why so many churches would later be

31) Thomas C. Oden, *The African Memory of Mark: Reassessing Early Church Tradition,* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2011), 114-116.

32) Davis, 5. Oden reconciles his account of the Roman fort constructed under Trajan with the archaeological evidence done in 1994 by stating that the fort was renovated under the reign of Diocletian, but he doesn't directly reference the archaeological material in any detail. This does undermine Oden's credibility in some way, but he still manages to establish that Babylon of Egypt existed prior to the newer Roman fort.

33) Oden, 116, 119. Oden points to the sudden influx of Jews to the area after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE and the fort's location as a connection between the upper and lower Nile as his most substantial evidence.

34) Pearson, "Earliest Christianity in Egypt: Some Observations," 145-56. For more on Alexandrian Judaism as the locus for early Egyptian Christianity, also see Klijn, A.F.J. "Jewish Christianity in Egypt," in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity,* edited by Birger A Pearson and James E. Goehring (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 161-75. Although Pearson and Klijn are discussing specifically *Alexandrian* Christianity, Oden reveals that the usual refugee route from Palestine for these Jews was to sail to Pelusium in the northeast delta and work down toward Memphis from there, Oden, 120. Despite Alexandria's location in the northwest delta, it seems reasonable to assume that Alexandrian Jews fleeing persecution would take a similar route as refugees. Even if the only Jewish presence in Babylon of Egypt happened to be Palestinian, this would be sufficient context to make Mark and Peter's presence possible.

35) H.I. Bell, "Evidences of Christianity in Egypt during the Roman Period," *Harvard Theological Review 37* (1944), 187-88. Cited in Davis, 5, note 17. Apart from Rome's place as an eventual destination of both Peter and Paul (and Mark), I cannot say it is entirely clear why Rome itself is intrinsically a more likely

built in this area and why the See of St. Mark would move from Alexandria to Babylon of Egypt in the 4th century if there were no apostolic connection,[36] but these questions could be explained in a variety of ways. For instance, the church  most directly related to this fort (indeed, built directly on top of the old fort walls), the Hanging Church or Mu'allaqa, is dedicated to the Virgin Mary and the spot is also the traditional place of refuge for the Holy Family's flight to Egypt mentioned in Matt. 2:15. The See could also have been moved for several reasons, including destruction or persecution in Alexandria. A tenth century patriarchate move even occurred in order to ally the minority Christians with the minority Fatimid rulers.[37] Babylon of Egypt would still be a likely place *in* Egypt, but Oden's questions seem easily answered, thus weakening his claim.

Whatever the answers, neither the Alexandrian church nor the African memory of Mark which Oden seeks to make credible traditionally hold that Mark and Peter were in Egypt at this time—or that Peter was ever in Egypt.[38] Though probably unlikely, it might still be plausible that Mark is connected to Egypt through 1 Peter's reference to "Babylon," until we consider that 1 Peter is almost certainly pseudonymous. This frequently wielded literary device used by ancient authors puts the final nail in the coffin of an Egyptian connection explicitly stated in the New Testament. While we should not automatically assume that every early Christian reference to Babylon means Rome, in this instance it probably is.

In any case, even if 1 Peter was written in Egypt, it would do little to establish Mark's status as father of the Egyptian and Alexandrian church beyond contextualizing Mark's familiarity with Egypt and making it more likely that Mark would be sent to work in Africa later.
What 1 Peter does establish, however, pseudonymity and all, is a connection between Mark and Peter before the end of the first century, later recounted by several church fathers.[39] We also hear from Bishop Papias, the late first-early second century bishop of Hierapolis, that it was the "hearers of Peter" who "in all ways besought Mark… being a follower of Peter, to leave behind a written memory of the teaching of the word given to them, and before he did, they did not let it go; this became the cause of the writing of what is called the Good News according to Mark."[40]

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place for the writing of 1 Peter than Egypt, but I accept the conclusion here.

36) Oden, 119.

37) See Otto F.A. Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity* (Cairo and New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 1999), 55-61 and 64-66 for more on the Coptic Church in the middle ages.

38) Davis, 5, and Oden, 121.

39) It might be argued that the likely pseudonymity of 1 Peter actually undermines any connections that it reports. However, this line of argument does not make much sense. The letter was accepted by the Christian community as containing authentic Christian teaching, and they were probably quite aware that the letter was not from Peter, so why would the author of 1 Peter conclude by reporting a false connection? It is more likely that the connection between Mark and Peter reported by the author of this letter is authentic, even though the authorship itself is not.

40) Eusebius, 2:15. According to Eusebius, Clement of Alexandria also cites this tradition.

Papias also reports that "Mark became Peter's interpreter and wrote accurately all that he remembered, not, indeed, in order of the things said or done by the Lord. For he had not heard the Lord…but followed Peter, who used to give teaching as necessity demanded but not making, as it were, an arrangement of the Lord's oracles, so that Mark did nothing wrong in thus writing down single points as he remembered them."[41] Whether or not the version of Mark's Gospel passed down to our time and the Gospel reported by Papias are in all ways the same is less important than the very firm and very early attestation of a close connection between Peter and Mark.[42] While a few other accounts that Papias gives certainly have their problems, for instance he states that Matthew's gospel was originally written in Hebrew—a finding NOT echoed by modern scholars, it is clear that Papias's report concerning Mark places him close to Peter and firmly in the midst of first century missionary activity, making Mark an increasingly likely candidate for a mission to Egypt.

These accounts by Papias are found in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* (History of the Church) and are immediately followed by our first undisputed witness to Mark's connection to Egypt, referenced earlier and repeated here: "They say that this one [Mark] was the first dispatched upon Egypt to announce the good news, which indeed he also had written, and the first to organize churches in Alexandria herself." Eusebius goes on to state that "the number of men and women who were there converted at the first attempt was so great, and their asceticism was so extraordinarily philosophic, that Philo though it right to describe their…life" in his *On the Contemplative Life*. Eusebius then goes on to report on Philo and his description of these ascetics.[43]

Scholars have tended to discredit Eusebius on this last detail, arguing that Philo was writing about a Jewish ascetic group and that here "Eusebius betrays the limitations of his knowledge."[44] This is probably true, although Eusebius does indicate that he is only drawing on his own inferences here,[45] so perhaps we should not judge him too harshly. However, it is also possible that Eusebius was simply trying to connect what he knew of earliest Egyptian Christianity—namely that the earliest converts and apostolic men were of Hebrew origin—with what few documents survived the Diocletian persecution. This scenario may not seem the most likely at first consideration, but there is as much evidence that this was Eusbius's task as there is for the assertion that Eusebius simply made up a story concerning Mark's Alexandrian

41) Eusebius, 3:39. The reader of this thesis might pause here, and think to themselves, "Hey! I thought that the Gospel of Mark was composed around 70 CE by an anonymous, most likely non Palestinian Christian after years of oral tradition!" This is the conclusion that many modern scholars have adopted and, given that the earliest manuscript traditions do not contain an attribution of authorship, it is entirely plausible. Papias' account of how the Gospel of Mark was composed does not directly contradict the findings of modern scholarship (composed after listening to Peter preach over time), but even if Mark were not the composer of the Gospel according to Mark, it would technically not harm this study as to the plausibility of a connection between John Mark and Egyptian Christianity.
42) Interestingly, Papias also places the composition of 1 Peter in Rome. Eusebius, 2:15.
43) Eusebius, 2:16.
44) Davis, 7.
45) Eusebius, 2:17.

apostolic mission, knowing nothing himself.[46] That said, Eusebius's chronological discrepancy should not automatically disqualify his testimony connecting Mark with Egypt.

Some have also tried to ignore Eusebius's account concerning Mark and Egypt by noting the dates of Mark's arrival in Egypt reported by various sources do not match. Eusebius, in his work titled *Chronicle*, gives us a date of 43 CE (the third year of Claudius), while other sources place his arrival from 39 CE to 50 CE, and the official date of the Coptic church is 48 CE.[47] Any date before 50 CE has to contend with the dating of Barnabas and Mark's split from Paul in Acts 15:39—commonly placed around 49-50 CE. There is, however, some evidence that Peter may have arrived in Rome as early as 42 CE, and if Mark really did accompany Peter on all his journeys as Clement of Alexandria tells us, why could not Mark have arrived in Alexandria in 43 CE or thereabouts?[48] The Eusebian account does not require that Mark stayed in Alexandria, or even Africa, until his death, and in fact the phrase "converted *on the first attempt*" seems to imply that Mark came and went several times throughout his ministry.[49] The varied dates reported by several authors also do not make it any less likely that the *event* of Mark's arrival in Egypt happened historically even if the details of this event are not strengthened by these multiple attestations. Whatever the exact details, it is clear that several important early writers found dating Mark's arrival important enough to give a specific date, and the various dates reported after Eusebius should not disqualify his testimony either.

The last two criticisms are related. Those looking to discredit Eusebius on this issue and remove the possibility of a historical connection between St. Mark and Egyptian Christianity, such as Bauer, point to the apparent lack of a source for Eusebius and how little he tells us about what happened after Mark's arrival. As seen in the Eusebian passage above, Eusebius states that *"They say that…."* The Greek verb used by Eusebius is φασιν, and this verb is often interpreted to indicate that Eusebius was relying on hearsay or some received tradition in lieu of some written source. Prima facie, the use of this verb might seem to indicate that the report is less authentic, that it is simply tradition, or that, as Bauer would argue, Eusebius is simply relying on a list passed down to him from Demetrius through Julius Africanus.

First, even if Eusebius were relying upon oral tradition here, discounting his report for this reason reveals a western bias which judges written sources and culture as the only relevant sources and culture. Second, it is not at all clear that Eusebius was simply relying on oral tradition: G.M. Lee has argued strongly that φασιν can be interpreted as relying on written sources. He believes that Eusebius was clearly relying on an Alexandrian list of bishops; "his φασι is an obvious way of indicating the

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46) Oden, 214-15. Oden also notes that Eusebius could have confused Philo's account with the "proto-Christians" who taught Apollos of Alexandria, simply missing the chronology.
47) Davis, 6 and Pearson, "Earliest Christianity in Egypt," 139, note 30.
48) Oden, 211-3.
49) Pearson, "Earliest Christianity," 139, note 34.

anonymous compilers.[50] Morton Smith, possibly for reasons which will be discussed later, also argues that φασιν should refer to Clement of Alexandria and Papias, the sources of the information immediately prior.[51] Oden, taking a position somewhere between Lee and Smith, argues that the "They" refers to the earliest presbyters, including John the Elder, Aristion, and Polycarp, upon whom Papias, Clement, and Irenaeus rely. Oden particularly notes that huge portions of Eusebius's personal library (largely inherited from Origen) are lost to us, but his reported goal was to report the reliable facts based on the written documents available and there may well have been important written testimonies to the Mark-Egypt connection.[52] It is indeed troubling that Eusebius does not give us an explicitly named source, but it is clear that there are several possible sources referred to by φασιν, and again the Eusebian account cannot be thrown out on this objection.

Perhaps even more troubling is how little the account tells us, especially when we acknowledge the anachronistic comparison Eusebius makes between the *Therapeutae* described by Philo with the early Egyptian Christians. There are again, however, several reasons why Eusebius might not report much about Mark's activity in Egypt. One option is that Eusebius simply does not know much. This is the option that Bauer and, to a lesser extent, scholars like Pearson and Davis would advocate, arguing that Eusebius only has what the Alexandrian Church has passed on through Julius Africanus. It is certainly a possibility, although Eusebius's relative ignorance does not necessarily entail a lack of historical authenticity. Another possibility is that the sources which Eusebius does use only mention Mark and Alexandria in passing, whereas those sources providing more detail were already lost or destroyed in the persecutions of the third century. This option would certainly explain how the tradition was still alive, while still allowing Eusebius to be a bit cautious about what he reported or didn't report.

There is at least one other options as well: Mark simply was not seen as that important. As I have shown above, Mark was certainly involved in the early Christian missions, but he was definitely no apostolic rock star. We can hardly expect Eusebius to have recorded every detail concerning the nearly 300 years before the composition of *Ecclesiastical History,* and it is not too unlikely that Eusebius simply judged further details in Mark's Egyptian ministry to be of minor importance. Eusebius's historical judgments could also explain why the next ten bishops' accounts are so sparse as well: they did not do anything of paramount importance in the early church. Eusebius also seems unaware of the account of Mark's martyrdom in Egypt,[53] supporting the

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50) G.M. Lee, 425-27. The implications of this are interesting; if Eusebius had little idea who compiled the list, it would make it significantly less likely that Demetrius and his circle originally compiled the list, thus striking a blow to Bauer's assumption that the Mark connection is a later creation.

51) Morton Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 27.  Please see the appendix for a discussion of Smith's findings.

52) Oden, 210-11.

53) Pearson, "Earliest Christianity," 140. Eusebius does not mention any specific martyrdom, only that "Annianus was the first after Mark the Evangelist to receive charge of the province of Alexandria" in the eighth year of Nero. Eusebius, 2:24.

claim that the hagiographical *Acts of Mark* may well be filled in or conflated with a later Alexandrian bishop, but this does not suggest that a Mark-Egypt connection, including Mark's status as apostolic founder, is implausible or even unlikely.

What I have shown thus far is only that Bauer's thesis, and those like it, should not be taken as the final word on the matter; though there is too little positive evidence to definitively prove Mark's status, it "should not be ruled out."[54] However, it *is* clear that what scholars do accept as authentic testimony about Mark makes his connection with Egypt a plausible theory at the very least. If we want a strong plausibility or any hint at probability though, there is as of yet very little compelling reason to adopt aspects of the tradition and not assume a conclusion like Bauer's, stating that the connection was later forged by an Orthodoxy eager to establish its foundation with an apostle and line of bishops. There are at least two questions which, if answered by a Bauer-like hypothesis, would lend credence to his claim. However, thus far, these questions cannot be answered without repealing Mark's traditional status.

Alexandria was the world's second largest city, full of messianic Jews and well educated gentiles, and well known in the ancient world;[55] how could there not be an apostle sent to North Africa? If not Mark, then who? Now at first glance, this question might not convince anyone that we should remain open to the traditional account. After all, we know that an Apollos of Alexandria was "instructed in the Way of the Lord" (Acts 18:24), but being from Alexandria does not mean he taught there. In fact, the same verse tells us that Apollos came from Ephesus and Acts 19:1 notes that he was teaching in Corinth. When we also consider that Apollos needed to be corrected by Priscilla and Aquilla, it is somewhat unlikely that Apollos would have been sent back to his homeland to preach. There are other potential "first Egyptian Christians," the Egyptians present at Pentecost for instance (Acts 2:10), but there doesn't seem to be a strong candidate for apostle to Egypt aside from Mark, and there is certainly no consistent evidence for any other apostle. Of course, the fact is that this whole era really is shrouded in mystery and if I were using this argument to say that Mark definitively was the apostle to Egypt, my assertion would be no stronger than Bauer's claim that Mark *didn't* arrive in Egypt. This, though, is not what I am doing. I am simply arguing that Alexandria was too important not to merit an apostle, and if we cannot come up with a better candidate for that job than St. Mark, then why abandon his traditional status—the one we have attestation for?

The second question was alluded to earlier. Why would Demetrius (or even someone before or after him) use Mark, a relatively minor New Testament player, as the apostolic founder of the Egyptian Church? Bauer indicates that he thinks the Church in Rome, much more powerful and episcopally established, provided Demetrius with St. Mark, but Pearson points out that a strong, monarchial episcopacy "was as late

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54) Ibid., 144. Also see Davis, 9, among others.

55) Alexandria's social and political history is interesting and complicated, but unfortunately delving into it goes beyond the abilities of this study. However, looking deeper into first century Alexandrian Judaism and how much was written about major Alexandrian religious figures could further enhance this study.

in developing in Rome (with Bishop Victor, 189-199) as it was in Egypt,"[56] and it's unlikely that Rome had the necessary power to dictate an apostolic founder. So if Demetrius himself was going to forge an apostolic founder, why did he not choose John or Thomas or Matthew, whose Gospels had enormous influence in Egypt? Elaine Pagels has argued that the Gospel of Thomas, with its Gnostic influence, and the Gospel of John were both composed in the midst of a Christological debate. This debate would have had a huge impact in Egypt, where the Gnostic community was large (if not as dominant as Bauer claims).[57] Now it is obvious why the architect of Egyptian orthodoxy would not have chosen an apostle used by Gnostics, but why would Demetrius not use John, the Gospel writer whose account is most lauded by the orthodox faith?

A more obvious candidate for Demetrius to establish as apostolic founder, if Peter and Paul were unavailable, might even have been Matthew. Lee reports that legend takes Matthew to Africa, leading some scholars to argue that Matthew actually composed his Gospel there (although Lee resolutely rejects this second claim).[58] Matthew even places a scene from his Gospel in Egypt (Matthew 2:13-21)! If the general tradition surrounding St. Mark is untrue, then Matthew would have been a much more logical choice for apostolic founder—especially if Demetrius wanted the Alexandrian Christians to accept his creation. A Matthew foundation connection never emerged, though, and there has to be a reason for this. Is it maybe because Mark really *was* the founder of the Alexandrian patriarchate and Alexandrian Christians would have protested against any other apostle being reported as their founder?[59] Again, there is not sufficient evidence to say that he was, but every alternative to historicity in Mark's tradition looks increasingly paltry in comparison.

This study has only sought to establish something very meager in some respects, but very important in others. On the one hand, whether St. Mark founded the Church in Egypt is of relatively little importance. As Lee says, "in defending the tradition, the most that I have to gain is an invitation to dinner from the Coptic Patriarch."[60] On the other hand, though, this study is of immense importance because Coptic Christians, and indeed most Christians in Africa, trace their heritage back to St. Mark and to deny the historicity of that tradition is to deny two-thousand years of self-knowledge and self-definition. That is partially why I have sought to show why the traditional account of Mark as the founder of the Alexandrian See needs to be held onto and not dismissed as worthless hagiography. Whatever elements in a narrative, the martyrdom of Mark for instance, that might be more legend than fact still deserve

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56) Pearson, *Gnosticism,* 209.

57) For more on the impact of these Gospels and the polemic arguments in each, see Elaine Pagels, "Gospels in Conflict: John and Thomas" in *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas,* (New York: Random House, 2003), 30-73.

58) G.M. Lee, 428.

59) Lee correctly notes that Demetrius is said to have ascended to the throne of St. Mark, meaning that by the time of his ascension, only 120 years after Mark's traditional death, the tradition that Mark "had been bishop of Alexandria was already established beyond risk of contradiction," 431.

60) G.M. Lee, 423.

to be studied because they mark the development of a fascinating self-consciousness in the Church in Egypt. However, it is only after we assess the historicity of these traditions that we can begin to understand early Egyptian Christian theology and the importance of apostolic succession in this "Church of Martyrs."

Therefore, I have argued that Bauer overstates the available evidence—we can only say, at most, that Demetrius wielded an Episcopal succession list similar to Irenaeus in order to combat heresy, not that he *created* this list—and that St. Mark's status as founder of the Alexandrian Church is an entirely plausible and in many ways preferable theory. There still is not sufficient historical evidence in the early Egyptian Church to say more than this, but perhaps what I have said is not so little. Perhaps, like St. Mark did almost two-thousand years ago, when we wander into ancient Alexandria looking for an open and receptive audience with whom to share our knowledge, we too will pause and find that an audience has actually come to us. However, this can only happen if we understand the tradition; this is what we must do.

Appendix

Morton Smith and the Secret Gospel of Mark

There is one final piece of evidence, perhaps conspicuous in its absence from my study, which would go a long way toward establishing that St. Mark really was the apostolic founder of Egyptian Christianity: The Secret Gospel of Mark found in an alleged Clementine letter to his disciple, Theodore. In 1973, noted second temple Judaism and early Christianity scholar Morton Smith released two books, one for a popular audience and one filled with detailed paleographic, philological, and historical analysis for other scholars, detailing his discovery of a fragmentary letter from "Clement, author of the *Stromateis,"* found in 1958 at the Mar Saba Monastery. Knowing this was an important discovery, authentic or not, but busy cataloguing the monastery library, he photographed the scribbled letter, written in Greek in the back of a library book, and continued cataloguing. When he examined his photograph, he discovered that the letter's contents were truly remarkable.

As it turned out, not only did the letter addressed to Clement's student Theodore include a commendation for refuting the teachings of the apparently immoral and heretical Carpocratian Gnostic group (they would apparently engage in all sorts of sexual activity in the name of religious worship[61]), but also an account of how these Carpocratians stole and corrupted a so-called "secret" Gospel of Mark from the Alexandrian Church. In the letter, Clement indicates that after Peter's martyrdom, Mark went to Alexandria and composed a second and more spiritual Gospel for those being perfected, which included some of the secret teachings from Jesus to his disciples. The letter even included two exerts from the "Secret Gospel" which come after Mark 10:34 (making sense out of Mark 14:52) and Mark 10:46.[62] I have included the first passage as an example of the literary and thematic flavor of the passages referenced in the fragment.

They came to Bethany, and a woman was there whose brother had died. She came and prostrated herself before Jesus, saying to him, "Son of David, have mercy on me." But his disciples rebuked her. Jesus became angry and went off with her to the garden where the tomb was.

Immediately a loud voice was heard from the tomb. Jesus approached and rolled the stone away from the entrance to the tomb. Immediately he went in where the young man was, stretched out his hand, and raised him by seizing his hand.

The young man looked at him intently and loved him; and he began pleading

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61) See Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 3.2 and Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.25.
62) See Morton Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973) and Morton Smith, *The Secret Gospel: The Discovery and Interpretation of the Secret Gospel According to Mark* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1973) for a full account and argument.

with him that  he might be with him. When they came out of the tomb they went to the young man's house, for he was wealthy.

And after six days Jesus gave him a command. And when it was evening the young man came to him, wearing a linen cloth over his naked body. He stayed with him that night, for Jesus was teaching him the mystery of the Kingdom of God. When he got up from there, he returned to the other side of the Jordan.[63]

The precise implications for Biblical scholarship and Jesus scholarship are beyond the purposes of this study, but it is important to note that Clement places Mark in Alexandria and marks him as an important member in the Alexandrian Church. There are, however, some differences between this account and what Eusebius tells us. For instance, the letter does not say that Mark *founded* the Alexandrian Church, instead seeming to imply that there were already Christians present, and it reports that he *wrote* a Gospel there rather than simply preaching it as in Eusebius,[64] but it does place Mark in Egypt in an important role (still possibly as the first apostolic leader and teacher in Alexandria) far earlier than any other source (Clement was active in Alexandria from about 180 to 203 CE). This would seem to undermine the claim that Demetrius created an Apostolic founder out of Mark as it establishes a connection between Mark and Egypt far earlier than any other source and potentially even before Demetrius himself rose to leadership.

However, almost from the moment of publication, scholars like Quentin Quesnell began to question the authenticity of Morton's find.[65] It is not my intention to decide whether or not Morton Smith forged this Letter to Theodore. Instead, I only want to describe a few of the arguments for and against its authenticity and show why the reference to Mark and his Secret Gospel cannot be used as secure evidence on the basis of historical criteria to establish his status as founder of the Egyptian Church.

After examining the letter and its contents, Smith consulted handwriting experts and established that the letter was probably copied in about 1750 from a loose sheet in the library to the only free space remaining, the blank pages in the back of a 1646 edition by Isaac Voss of the original Greek letters from Ignatius of Antioch. To determine that it was an actual letter from Clement and not an 18th century forgery, Smith showed the letter to Clement experts who determined that the subject matter and writing style were highly Clementine and if someone had forged it, they had certainly done a magnificent job.  Smith then spent the next several years of his life

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63) (Ps-) Mark, trans. Bart Erhman in *Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make It into the New Testament,* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 88. The literary style of this passage is certainly Markan with the characteristic use of "Immediately" and the cluelessness of the disciples, but the homoerotic undertones have been troubling to many Biblical scholars and theologians, to say the least. This account also raises parallels to the raising of Lazarus in John's Gospel, and if authentic, may have served as the template for John's narrative.

64) Davis, 9.

65) Quentin Quesnell, "The Mar Saba Clementine: A Question of Evidence," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly 37* (1975), 48-67.

making a careful comparison of vocabulary, style, modes of expression, and ideas found in the letter with those of known Clementine writings. His conclusion was that the letter is so much like Clement's own writings that it would be nearly impossible that someone else had written it.[66]

Smith had decided that the letter and the new Gospel passages were authentic and imperative to understanding the historical Jesus and though many scholars were convinced that the letter was authentic with a smaller number agreeing that the Gospel passages derived from a version of Mark (probably an Ur-Markan version), there has never been anything near scholarly consensus. Anthony Darby Nock, Smith's own advisor at Harvard and probably one of Smith's few intellectual superiors, was one of the first to doubt the authenticity of Smith's find, trusting his instincts and believing that the letter was forged by someone to see if he or she could get away with it.[67] Others, like Quesnell mentioned earlier and later scholars Stephen Carlson and Craig A. Evans have gone further and argue that not only did someone forge this document to see if they could get away with it, but even alleged that Smith himself was probably the forger![68]

I am not saying that Smith forged this document, but some of the evidence is compellingly suspicious. For instance, since the book in which Smith found the letter belonged to the Mar Saba library, only one other group of scholars has even seen the text itself and no other scholar has been able to carefully it, only the photograph. This is important because the only way scholars can determine whether the letter was copied in the 1700s or in the 1950s by someone writing in a 1700s script is to test the ink and the imperfections in the document.[69] It is certainly suspicious that no other

66) Bart Ehrman, "The Forgery of an Ancient Discovery? Morton Smith and the Secret Gospel of Mark" in *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 78. Ehrman provides the most concise description of Smith's own anecdotes and the surrounding controversy so I am following his model. For Smith's own version, see the above volumes. Ehrman also points out that it would have been nearly impossible to forge this document *before* the publication of *Clemens Alexandrinus* by Otto Stahlin which appeared in 1936 and included indexes of Clementine vocabulary and word frequencies. Ibid.

67) Ehrman, 82.

68) See Scott G. Brown, "Factualizing the Folklore: Stephen Carlson's Case against Morton Smith" in *The Harvard Theological Review 99* (July 2006), 291-327 for a survey of arguments against Smith and refutation of such arguments. Brown concludes, "According to [Carlson's] *The Gospel Hoax,* Morton Smith invented "secret" Mark as a hoax in the 1950s in order to suggest that the authorities who were clamping down on gay sex in public parks were "crucifying Jesus Christ all over again" but then spent years researching his own hoax and developing a different, scholarly interpretation so that he could distract people from its true meaning and thereby successfully dupe his colleagues, using this text as a private test of their competence." (326-7). Suffice to say, Brown does not buy Carlson's argument. Brown, "The question of Motive in the Case against Morton Smith" in *Journal of Biblical Literature 125* (Summer, 2006), 351-83 also takes on other arguments claiming that Smith had some major motivation to forge this document, but concludes that Smith's accusers have as yet still failed to discover any compelling evidence.

69) Ehrman has noted that "someone with skill and patience can learn how to imitate a style of writing" (83), but scholars at the Biblical Archaeology Review magazine consulted handwriting expert Venetia Anastasopoulou, who compared the writing in the letter with Smith's own recorded Greek writing and concluded that if the letter was forged recently, it was probably not by Smith himself. Agamemnon Tselikas, a Greek Paleographer, on the other hand, has noted that the handwriting does not appear to match any scribe at the Mar Saba monastery and notes that the book containing the letter does not appear in the Mar

scholar has been able to carefully analyze the chemical composition of the ink, tiny marks on the page, indentations indicating where the pen started and stopped, and tiny flows of ink over lines, etc which have uncovered various forgeries over the years. One certainly wonders why Smith, extremely knowledgeable in manuscripts, would not go back to the monastery himself to check.[70]

It turns out that one other scholar has seen the letter in the back of Voss's 1646 edition. Hebrew University professor Guy Stroumsa explained to Ehrman once that he had tracked down the book and seen the letter in 1976, but doubts that it will ever be seen again. Stroumsa and his teacher David Flusser, after arguing whether the letter was authentic or forged, decided to drive the forty-five minutes from Jerusalem to Mar Saba with another scholar and a Greek Orthodox monk to try to find the document. As it turns out, after about fifteen minutes of searching, they really did find the book and the handwritten letter. They managed to convince the monks to allow them to take the book the library of the Greek Patriarchate in Jerusalem where they could find a chemical analyst to test the ink, but when they learned that only the Israeli (read: Jewish) police department could do the necessary analysis, the Greek Orthodox monks were not terribly keen to hand over one of their sacred books. When Stroumsa called to ask about the letter some years later, he learned that it had been cut out of the book for "safe keeping" and was now lost. What happened to the letter? No one knows, "and it may be that no one ever will."[71] Again, this doesn't mean that the letter is definitely forged, but it certainly gives one pause.

We also have to wonder why no other ancient writings make reference to this "Secret Gospel." Clement and others often referred to the Carpocratians and their heretical ways, so why do they never mention this Gospel? Of course, we have nothing like a complete collection of Clement or other ancient authors and it could be argued that, as it was a Secret Gospel only referred to in a personal letter, Clement may not have wanted to mention it in his public works, but the conspicuous lack of mention is still suspicious. Some scholars have also questioned why Clement explicitly tells Theodore to deny the existence of a Secret Gospel of Mark, even under oath, a direct contradiction of Clement's prohibition of falsely swearing oaths (*Stromateis* 7.16.105, for instance). Others have even wondered why the letter is "more like Clement than Clement ever is."[72] Again, suspicion arises.

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Saba catalogue prior to 1923. This doesn't necessarily mean the book was not there prior to 1923, but Tselikas concludes that the letter was probably copied elsewhere and brought by Smith to the monastery when he arrived to re-catalogue the monastery library. BAR scholars in general, however, have concluded that Smith was innocent of forgery. Venetia Anastapoulou, "Experts Report Handwriting Examination," *Biblical Archaeology Review Online*, http://www.bib-arch.org/scholars-study/secret-mark-handwriting-analysis.asp (accessed April 26, 2012), Agamemnon Tselikas, "Report on the Letter of Clement," *Biblical Archaeological Review Online*, http://www.bib-arch.org/scholars-study/secret-mark-handwriting-agamemnon.asp (Accessed April 26, 2012), Staff, "Did Morton Smith Forge 'Secret Mark'?" in *Biblical Archeological Review Online*, http://www.bib-arch.org/scholars-study/secret-mark.asp (Accessed April 26, 2012), respectively. The final link also leads to various responses to arguments referenced in this note.
70) Ehrman, 85.
71) Ibid., 83-4.
72) Ibid., 86.

Ehrman also wonders why this text appears to have no copying mistakes over the years,[73] but I want to briefly examine what he views as either marks of forgery, or at least terrific ironies. First, Voss's 1646 edition of Ignatian letters, where the scribbled letter was discovered, is in itself a rare volume. This edition was the "first to remove from the Greek Manuscript tradition of Ignatius the forged Ignatian documents and the interpolations made into Ignatius's text by theologically motivated scribes." How funny is it that we find a new letter from Clement describing forged documents and interpolations into Mark's Gospel by theologically motivated (Carpocratian) scribes? Probably even funnier if this letter itself was forged! Second, Ehrman notices that the page immediately prior to the letter features Voss lambasting scribes who would alter and add to manuscripts of the Epistle of Barnabas and concludes by saying about the scribe who interpolated this false material, "That very impudent fellow filled more pages with these trifles." Is it not ironic that the very next page now contains a possibly forged letter tricking and misleading modern scholars?[74] I daresay that it is.

All of this suspicion is to say that we simply do not know whether Smith, one of the few scholars in twentieth century possibly capable of pulling off such a feat,[75] forged Clement's *Letter to Theodore*. Morton Smith's evidence is certainly compelling, at least prima facie, but the inaccessibility and mystery surrounding the document raise suspicion. In all, scholars who do take sides on this issue tend to fall on which side supports their particular view of Jesus and Scripture and there is no general consensus either way. Unfortunately, this means that Clement's *Letter to Theodore* and its remarkably early reference to Mark's arrival in Alexandria and his activity there (regardless of how sparse even it is) cannot be used with any reliability as a historical source for evaluating Mark's traditional status as founder of the Coptic Church. Maybe this will change, but unless the letter suddenly reappears or other references to Mark's Secret Gospel or his activity in Egypt emerge, we will simply never know.

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73) Ibid.
74) Ibid., 87.
75) Ibid., 89.

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**Michael Nance**

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## The Roots of Combative Zionism

### Israeli Militarism in the Works

By Michael Nance

Palestinian philosopher, professor, prospective peace-maker and part-time politician Sari Nusseibeh is quoted as saying, "Israel often used violence as a tactical step to provoke a violent reaction, which it then used as an excuse for further violence in pursuit of its political end."[1] Although this quote specifically referred to post-1967 Israel and much of his autobiography chronicles the ways in which Israel has used this tactic during the First and Second Intifadas, it can also be applied to the beginnings of Jewish mass settlement in Palestine before the creation of the State of Israel. In fact, a military culture that preferred violent solutions to problems that could be resolved by other means has been inextricably linked with the Zionist Jewish resettlement of Palestine since the late 1930s in a way that seemed rather contradictory to its other performed attributes that seem much more lofty and humanistic.

This contradiction begs the question of how militarism became so prevalent within the Jewish settler communities in Palestine in the first place. Did it develop naturally due to the horrific violence and mistreatment they had experienced in their mostly European expatriate homelands? Was it the result of living in a harsh environment filled with uncooperative Arabs, as the traditional Zionist narrative would have one believe? Or is it possible that this militarism was an ideology carefully cultivated amongst the Jewish population of Palestine by Zionist leaders, realizing that a military culture was a necessary first step to conquering the land completely and establishing a state with their particular political party at its head? If this is the case, it seems that Israel's military culture was one of the many artificial constructs used to create the Israeli nation and state. This construct was particularly alien to the people who fell victim to it, and one that the nation would not necessarily have naturally

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1) Sari Nusseibeh, *Once Upon A Country: A Palestinian Life.* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 206.

cultivated on their own due to the aforementioned lofty and humanist tendencies had it not been forced on them through various means of active and passive nation-building by the Zionist leadership.

I will attempt to demonstrate that in reality, militarism in Israeli society resulted from a mixture of these various factors. The evidence indicates that the main factors which caused the younger generation of Jewish Zionists in Palestine in the 1930s to adopt militarism as a revered tenet included the threat of Nazi Germany, as well as interactions with the British colonial leadership in Palestine and certain Arab Palestinian sects that were perceived as hostile to the eventual creation of a Jewish state. Furthermore, the younger generation's change in attitude marked a significant departure from the traditional Zionist thought of their parents' generation. It was seen as the ultimate flowering of the New Jew, the coming of age of the first generation of mostly Ashkenazi Jews in Palestine not to be born in what they considered to be exile. Their glorification of the use of military force as a means to solve their problems was in fact a way for this generation to distance themselves from the perceived weakness of their ancestors' generations outside the land of Israel. Recognizing this key fact was David Ben-Gurion, who appropriated this rise in militaristic tendencies in order to further the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine with himself, or at least his party, at its head.[2] This thirst for power brings to light another key factor involved in the rise of militarism in Israel, which was a political rivalry within the Yishuv[3] between the political parties Mapai and Hakibbutz Hameuchad. These factors all combined to create the type of militarism that has existed in Israel since before its creation. As the members of the younger generation grew up and had children of their own, they passed along their newly-created ideological perspective to their children. From this moment on, I will refer to this militaristic ideology in Israel as combative Zionism, which is a policy of preferring to use force against whomever would stand opposed to the existence of a Jewish state in Palestine/Israel or to the interests of the leadership of the Israeli state.

In order to understand mainstream Zionism's acceptance of combative Zionism as an ideology intended to transform the Yishuv, it is first necessary to identify a working definition for the term ideology. Looking at ideology in Marxist terms will be particularly helpful in this regard. Louis Althusser, who was heavily influenced by Marxist thought, initially defines ideology as "the system of ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group."[4] Furthermore, it is "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence."[5] That does not mean that ideology creates an artificial reality for its subjects; it merely creates an alternate perception for its subjects regarding the relationship between

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2) David Ben-Gurion was the first Prime Minister of Israel and a very famous Zionist leader. He is widely thought of as one of the most important Founding Fathers of the State of Israel.
3) The Hebrew term for the Jewish community in Palestine before the creation of the State of Israel.
4) Louis Althusser. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)." The Anthropology of the State: A Reader. A. Sharma and A. Gupta, eds. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 98.
5) Ibid, 100.

the subject and his reality. Although, interestingly enough, in his work entitled The Making of Israeli Militarism (which also provides an analysis of the Marxist perspectives regarding ideology), Ben-Eliezer contradicts Althusser by arguing that ideology can in fact affect reality itself, not just perceptions of it, saying that "ideology is itself conceived of today as a material substantiality that can constitute, reproduce, or transfigure reality."[6] Although this could be considered splitting hairs, a general consensus can be formed by saying that ideology is a catalyst force, which, through a process of alternating either reality or the perception thereof, is significant because it affects a person's decision-making process as well as a person's reactions to any change in that reality.

Ben-Eliezer makes another significant point regarding ideology, explaining that "ideology is effective precisely because it becomes embedded in everyday life, part of the 'nature of things' as these are formed by habit and cemented by institutionalization"  because ideology "is created through symbolic practices, organizations, and apparatuses" and regenerates itself over and over again.[7] This last component is also a key component of Althusser's argument, who, in a counter-intuitive fashion, explains that "ideology in general has no history."[8] By this he means that ideology exists as something separate from history, although it does have a history of its own. He backs up this extraordinary claim by later explaining that "ideology has no outside (for itself), but at the same time...it is nothing but outside (for science and reality)."[9] In other words, when looked at from the inside, ideology is all-encompassing, omnipresent and timeless; when looked at from the outside, there is nothing but externalities imposing itself on its victims. It is only logical to understand that according to Althusser's definition of ideology, ideology creates subjects out of those who succumb to the belief in an ideology of any form. Furthermore, it is in this habitual and repetitive nature of ideology that the roots of militarism in Zionism can be viewed. Ben-Eliezer puts it quite simply: "Israeli militarism...emerged neither from abstract systems and general ideas nor from doctrines or formal declarations. Its roots are traceable to concrete practices in the military realm which through the years became normative and habitual".[10]

To further highlight the extent to which Jewish life in Palestine changed so drastically due to combative Zionism, it is essential to understand that mainstream Zionism was not always so glaringly militaristic. Certain Zionist organizations, such as Brit Shalom, which was founded in 1920, believed in coexistence between Jewish settlers in Palestine and their Arab Palestinian neighbors. Its founding was even accredited to "the ethical integrity of the Zionist endeavor."[11] Martin Buber, the great spiritual leader of liberal Judaism and Zionism, "had long advocated a binational

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6) Uri Ben-Eliezer, *The Making of Israeli Militarism.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 8.
7) Ibid, 8.
8) Althusser, *"Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,"* 100.
9) Ibid, 106.
10) Ben-Eliezer, *Israeli Militarism,* 8.
11) Sandy Tolan, *The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East.* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2006), 84.

state" in Palestine, which eventually became the stated goal of the Mapam political party.[12]

As if that weren't enough, much of Zionism, and the kibbutz movement in particular, was based on humanist and socialist values adopted by early Zionists in Europe. Within the kibbutzim, private property was discouraged if not outright forbidden and egalitarianism amongst the members of the kibbutzim was preached and often practiced in a setting that was described by Eyal Ben-Ari as "the communal utopia of socialist Zionism" (Ben-Ari 1998: 98).[13] Sari Nusseibeh acknowledges that especially within the kibbutz movement the average person "was a model humanist and socialist [and he begrudgingly admits] a person [he] had no choice but to admire."[14]

This socialist aspect to Zionism in its early years also meant that there was an inherent connection between Zionism and the labor movement. Shabtai Teveth in his various works about David Ben-Gurion spends pages upon pages describing how Ben-Gurion in his early years in Palestine created various labor organizations and subsequently organized strikes that were used as a basis for spreading the Zionist message. He even describes how various Zionist labor organizations tried to incorporate Arabs into their labor unions, even quoting Ben-Gurion as saying "that no contradiction existed between the aspirations of Labor Zionism and those of the country's Arab inhabitants."[15] Amos Perlmutter best explains how important all of these leftist tendencies were to Zionism by simply saying, "The Socialist-Zionist movement built the nation, mobilized the pioneer revolution, and created a new society."[16]

After understanding the great importance of humanism to the Zionist movement, it leads to the simplistic but inevitable question, "What accounts for Zionism's transformation from all-inclusive humanism to militancy?" But before that question can be truly answered, it should be mentioned that the humanist tendencies of Zionism were only one side of the coin. Humanism existed within Zionist movements in pre-1948 Palestine, but it was not a value that was held by everyone, nor for everyone. For example, only some political parties were in favor of a binational state. While Mapam was in favor of a binational state, Mapai, the party that Ben-Gurion belonged to, did not. In fact, it is not as if Zionism was free of militarist aspirations until the 1930s. There had been various factions within Zionism advocating the build-up of paramilitary forces long before the 1930s. Sometimes, this did not even come from fringe groups. The Histadrut, which was the main Zionist labor organization, recognizing "the need to maintain a permanent defense organization" founded

12) Ibid, 84.
13) Eyal Ben-Ari, *Mastering Soldiers: Conflict, Emotions, and the Enemy in an Israeli Military Unit. (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998)*, 98.
14) Nusseibeh, *Once Upon A Country*, 114.
15) Shabtai Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs: From Peace to War.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 75.
16) Amos Perlmutter, *The Military and Politics in Modern Times.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 253.

the Haganah, "the first Jewish underground in Palestine" on June 25, 1915.[17] The Haganah became the largest Jewish paramilitary organization in Mandatory Palestine, eventually constituting a significant portion of the Israeli Defense Forces, which caused Perlmutter to add that in addition to building the nation, the Socialist-Zionist movement "also founded the Israeli army."[18] But despite these less-than humanist detractions, the nonetheless-humanistic kibbutz movement and those in favor of coexistence with their Arab neighbors were still a substantial force within the Yishuv of the early 20th Century.

The question then becomes, what could have caused the humanist aspects of Zionism to become completely dominated by militaristic tendencies that eventually became a form of ideology? According to Uri Ben-Eliezer, there was a generation gap in the late 1930s between the older Zionists and their children. He further elaborates on a theory originating with Karl Mannheim:

> The *Yishuv's* younger generation interpreted the major historical events to which it was exposed, such as the Arab Revolt and the White Paper, differently from the adult generation...There were buds of a militaristic conception in the youths' new interpretation of reality, which hinted that it was possible and even desirable to solve political problems through organized violence."[19]

These actions, in the eyes of the new generation, "undermined two basic Zionist assumptions," which I would argue are assumptions based on the inherently humanistic nature of Zionism in the early years.[20] These assumptions were "that a Jewish state would be established not only through Jewish action but with British help and that a peaceful agreement with the Palestinians would be possible."[21]

Ben-Eliezer explains that "militarism comes into being only when the use of military force acquires legitimation, is perceived as a positive value and a high principle that is right and desirable, and is routinized and institutionalized within society."[22] He believes that the Yishuv's crises of the late 1930s was the catalyst that did just that. This is when all the other aforementioned factors come into play, including "the Jewish community's impotence in the face of the Arab Revolt, the shift in British Middle East policy and the eruption of the Second World War and the German advance toward Palestine."[23] But there is also another internal factor that comes into play here. Internal politics solidified militaristic tendencies within the younger generation of Jews in the Yishuv. At the time, there was an intense political tug-of-war between the political party Mapai, which was controlled by Ben-Gurion and worked under the

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17) Ibid, 254.
18) Ibid, 253.
19) Ben-Eliezer, *Israeli Militarism,* 33.
20) Ibid, 33.
21) Ibid, 33.
22) Ibid, 7.
23) Ibid, 9.

British Army, and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, which was associated with the kibbutzim as well as the a Haganah elite force known as the Palmach. Hakibbutz Hameuchad was essentially forced to associate with Mapai during the 1920s, but as time went on, power struggles ensued between them and Hakibbutz Hameuchad gradually began "to undertake separate political organizing within Mapai," and often fought against their temporary ally.[24] Ben-Eliezer explicitly says that these two "rivals for domination of the Yishuv believed that the new military way was a kind of resource which they could put to potent political use. They set up virtual private armies, of which they were the patrons."[25] In essence, the leaders of the various Zionist factions in Mandatory Palestine appropriated the pre-existing militaristic tendencies in the younger generation and used them to achieve predetermined political ends. Furthermore, they appropriated fears within the Yishuv sparked by the Nazi structural and physical violence against Jews in Europe, as well as the physical violence directed at Jews during the Arab Revolt in Palestine in the late 1930s. Zionist leaders used the violence as a pretext to create paramilitary organizations to be directed against the British, Arab forces, and even against rival Zionist organizations all in the name of political power and prestige.

There appear to be two men who were more responsible than anyone else for the development of combative Zionism. The main man, of course, was Ben-Gurion, who not only developed the most complex theory regarding the appropriation of these feelings within the Yishuv's youth, but used it "to explain exactly how to defeat the White Paper, and in doing so...seized the Yishuv's imagination" (Teveth 1985: 194).[26] But Ben-Gurion was still very much affiliated with Mapai during the Mandate Period, and there was also someone associated with Hakibbutz Hameuchad and the Palmach who furthered the cause of combative Zionism. His name was Yitzchak Tabenkin. Tabenkin lectured to members of Hakibbutz Hameuchad and encouraged educators "to neither ignore nor disparage" what he assumed to be the coming war over Palestine after World War II would end.[27] Ben-Eliezer goes as far as to say the following:

> Tabenkin's militaristic assumption that the solution by force of arms was the necessary, desirable, and ultimate solution in the national struggle was central to the link between Hakibbutz Hameuchad and the Palmach, which from this time espoused militant Zionism.[28]

He not only spread the gospel of combative Zionism more than anyone else except Ben-Gurion, he was also the second most responsible individual for normalizing and making combative Zionism the preferable option in dealing with the Yishuv's problems, which of course was one of the necessary preconditions needed to turn an idea into an ideology.

Ben-Gurion, on the other hand, not only formulated a plan of his own for

24) Ibid, 51.
25) Ibid, 9.
26) Teveth, *Palestinian Arabs,* 194.
27) Ben-Eliezer, *Israeli Militarism,* 56.
28) Ibid, 56.

cultivating and training new soldiers on behalf of Mapai and the Jewish state that would soon be born, but also one for fighting the British. Ben-Gurion's biographer Shabtai Teveth is quoted as saying, "In these days [the late 1930s] when the hope for a state was crushed, Ben-Gurion redoubled his efforts to breathe life into it."[29] Teveth explains that Ben-Gurion's plan to initiate a policy of combative Zionism was conceived in May 1938, and was gradually further developed and communicated to various other Zionist leaders over the next seven months.[30]

The root of this plan had already existed prior to May 1938, and originated from several different sources. Sari Nusseibeh cites Teveth as well as Benny Morris as sources for a quotation from Ben-Gurion saying "We will expel the Arabs and take their place" in a letter to his son in 1936.[31] This is substantial evidence indicating Ben-Gurion already had the intention to use military force to solve the perceived threat of Arab demographics to his envisioned but not yet realized Jewish state in Palestine, making this a perfect example of a premeditated attempt to use combative Zionism against the Arab population of Palestine in response to a perceived conflict of interest. However, there appears to be more evidence indicating that a much bigger factor in the development of combative Zionism was the rise of Nazi Germany, which is not surprising considering the military might of Germany was much more formidable than that of the Palestinian Arab factions. In his diary, Ben-Gurion wrote on January 3, 1939, "We are faced, with an age of Hitler, with the necessity of 'combative Zionism.' Palestine will be ours if we want it and can take it by force."[32] This of course adds credence to the idea that at least part of Ben-Gurion's motivation behind this new plan was Nazi Germany, but it becomes quite clear that a large portion of his motivation also came from the Yishuv's general disenchantment with the British.

The first part of Ben-Gurion's plan to initiate combative Zionism involved some basic preparations. One of these was a push for an increase in Jewish immigration to Palestine. Aside from the fact that an increase in the Jewish population of Palestine would be an additional demographic argument for the Zionist leaders to use in swaying public opinion in Britain and the United States towards their cause, an increase in the Jewish population of Palestine also meant an increase in the number of potential soldiers to fight their battles. That is why another of the first steps of Ben-Gurion's plan was "to include military training of youth [and the] establishment of a technical training apparatus."[33] Teveth explains just how connected these two concepts were to Ben-Gurion, saying that in Ben-Gurion's mind, "boats would unceasingly bring immigrants to the shores of Palestine, where, by the thousands and tens of thousands, they would fight, weapons in hand, for their right to seek shelter and establish a state of their own in the land of their fathers."[34] There was, of course, a public relations dimension to this as well, and Ben-Gurion knew it. If the British tried to prevent Jewish

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29) Shabtai Teveth, *Ben-Gurion: The Burning Ground.* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1987), 671.
30) Ibid, 672.
31) Nusseibeh, *Once Upon a Country,* 36.
32) Teveth, *The Burning Ground*, 668.
33) Ibid, 674.
34) Ibid, 670.

refugees from reaching Palestine, or even tried to fire on the ships carrying them, it would cast the Zionists in Palestine as the victim and the British as evil monsters, helping Zionist public relations within the Diaspora. The British would not be able to continue such a violent course of action that hindered the Yishuv's growing power and most of the Jewish masses would not be prevented from entering Palestine. This is a prime example of how Ben-Gurion attempted to provoke violence from the British in order to promote the use of violence as an acceptable and even preferable means to solve the Yishuv's problems, only one of which being the White Paper. It is a slight variation of a tactic Sari Nusseibeh would later attribute to the Israeli governments in the First and Second Intifada.

The next part of the plan involved a feint: being willing to participate in a set of talks between Jewish and Arab representatives of Palestine held by the British in February 1939. However, Teveth makes it clear that many Jews in the Yishuv did not want to attend such talks, expecting them to be "little more than window dressing."[35] This is not altogether surprising, considering that British and American commissions investigating the best courses of action in Palestine were not always inclined to support the Zionist agenda. One such commission was the American King-Crane Commission of 1919. Middle Eastern Historian Michael Oren, and current Israeli Ambassador to the United States, describes the commission's bias:

> The authors claimed that they had begun their study "with deep sense of sympathy for the Jewish cause" and "with minds predisposed in its favor," but had been "driven" by their findings to strenuously oppose the idea [of a Jewish state in Palestine].[36]

But Ben-Gurion decided to attend the talks anyway out of a fear that his absence would only further sour public opinion in Britain and the United States against Zionism, and because "the talks would likely provide Zionism with an international forum in which to prepare public opinion for combative Zionism."[37] In addition to being further evidence of Ben-Gurion's understanding of the importance of public relations to his cause, it is important to note here that Teveth does not say that the talks would provide Ben-Gurion or even Mapai as a whole with this opportunity, but Zionism as a whole, implying that most if not all Zionist leaders in Palestine decided to go along with Ben-Gurion's proposal in the end despite their earlier reticence. It is also important to note that in addressing the entire Jewish delegation at the conference, Ben-Gurion, playing the role of the head of the nation, announced "Our policy goal is a Jewish state," not a binational one.[38] During the talks, when questioned regarding the Yishuv's security should the British vacate Palestine, Ben-Gurion continuously highlighted the Yishuv's ability and desire to defend itself, as well as the Zionist

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35) Ibid, 669.
36) Michael Oren. *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East 1776 to Present.* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), 389.
37) Teveth, *The Burning Ground*, 669.
38) Ibid, 671.

leadership's intention of promoting extensive Jewish immigration to Palestine.[39] Based on the lack of any concrete attempts at reconciliation on the part of the Zionist delegation, not to mention the various stated objectives that were not peaceful in the slightest, it is clear that the talks were only attended because they were one step on the way for Ben-Gurion to promote his own cause, his own party, and himself to the highest rank in the leadership of the Yishuv.

Immediately following the unsuccessful conference, the infamous White Paper was issued by the British, which severely limited Jewish immigration to Palestine as well as Jewish land purchases. It even "abandoned the 1937 Peel Commission plan to partition Palestine and to create a Jewish state."[40] This was neither what Ben-Gurion expected nor wanted.

However, it still worked to his advantage. Ben-Gurion and other Zionist leaders used the White Paper to rile up the younger generation and their militant proclivities to support their particular breed of combative Zionism. Violence was being used to support further retributive militant actions; after the conference, Ben-Gurion played the self-defined role of the "Zionist preacher," embarking on a tour throughout Palestine. He began differentiating between the Zionism of the late 1930s and early 1940s and the Zionism of previous years, claiming in a speech to the Mapai party in April 1939 that there had been two previous periods in Zionist history and that they were about to enter a third. Teveth records the following from the speech:

> Until now there have been two periods of Zionism. The first from 1880 until the outbreak of the world war...an attempt to implement Zionism with no legal basis. The second...the Mandatory period, in which Zionism was implemented on the basis of certain political rights. It is evident that we now stand at the threshold of a third period...a period of Zionist realization on the basis of state rule.[41]

Although Ben-Gurion was often quite vague as to how he was supposed to bring about this third period of Zionist history based on state rule, one of the main subjects of these speeches was, not surprisingly, the empowerment of the younger generation, which he did not even attempt to deny would be a tactic based on the "accumulation of power [and the] enlarging of power."[42] He was quoted as saying, "Zionist policy is first and foremost a policy of power...policy means power...and the center of this power is the young generation."[43] Essentially, Ben-Gurion was saying that the first two eras of Zionist history were not eras in which the Zionists attempted to bring about their desired goal of a Zionist state through the use of force, whereas the approaching third

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39) Ibid, 670.
40) Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 114.
41) Teveth, *The Burning Ground*, 668.
42) Ben-Eliezer, *Israeli Militarism*, 66.
43) Ibid, 66.

era would be. He pleaded to the Yishuv that "we must assist the British army as though there were no White Paper; and we must oppose the White Paper as though there were no world war."[44] They were fighting everyone at the same time, which was "intended to strengthen the Yishuv" in order "to make it a power of consequence."[45] It is also important to acknowledge how the phrase "we must assist the British army" is not just a statement calling on the Jews of the Yishuv to support the British establishment. It is also Ben-Gurion's personal promotion of serving in the Mapai-endorsed British army, as compared to its Hakibbutz Hameuchad rival paramilitary organization, the Palmach.

Not surprisingly, the younger generation responded well to this, because many of them, particularly those on kibbutzim, were not permitted to become a part of what Tabenkin described as "the cult of the uniform" because of a labor shortage on most kibbutzim.[46] Ben-Gurion further won the support of the younger generation by enforcing "the first universal call-up order in the history of the Zionist movement" in May 1941.[47] This provided the militant younger generation with the real military experience so many of them craved. This was particularly appreciated by those members of the younger generation who seemed to be disenchanted with the Palmach, which occasionally forced its members to do more labor on the kibbutzim than military service. This provided Ben-Gurion with an exclusive military organization for the Mapai that was united against Hakibbutz Hameuchad and its Palmach. All of these things culminated in a net gain for Ben-Gurion because it helped him accumulate power from all corners of the Yishuv.

One aspect that is of the utmost importance to understanding combative Zionism and how it became a mainstream ideology in the Yishuv is the militant spirit of the younger generation, how greatly it differed from that of their parents' generation, and how it came to be that way. This younger generation of Jews in Mandatory Palestine was the first generation in centuries not born into exile and the first born in the Holy Land. Because of this fact, they had a completely different view of the world than their parents. Ben-Eliezer explains that when it came to their opinions of the Diaspora, they tended to view it in terms that were almost entirely negative, interpreting the entirety of Jewish life outside Palestine as not only a place where Jews were mistreated, but also a place where the Jews themselves were weak. Jewish mistreatment in the Diaspora was such an outrage for them that at times it bordered on the pathological, such that they considered the Jews of the Diaspora as getting what they deserved. Referring to a young Jewish man who lived in Palestine during the Holocaust named Moshe Tabenkin, Ben-Eliezer quotes him as saying "it is not because we are in the right that we are being slaughtered...The shame of our weakness is no less terrible. At this time 'negation of the Diaspora' has become for me hatred of the exile. Our weakness today is to blame. It is despicable. It is a crime!"[48]

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44) Teveth, *Palestinian Arabs*, 195.
45) Ibid, 195.
46) Ben-Eliezer, *Israeli Militarism*, 53.
47) Ibid, 67.
48) Ibid, 97.

Of course, this young man's response for how to stop Jewish suffering was "a thirst for power, sensitivity for power, a 'craze' for power. True power. Ours. At our disposal."[49] And to make it absolutely clear how normal such terrifying statements were, he emphasizes that these statements were "not exceptional; most young people used similar terminology."[50] What was important to them was a connection to the Land of Israel, that they would remain "whole in body and in spirit."[51] Ben-Eliezer wrote that they were "raised on Hebrew soil and in a Hebrew culture": it is very important to observe that he did not use the adjective Jewish to describe his land or his culture.[52] He even quotes a Palmach journal in which a youth from this time period later recalled the following:

> There was an inclination...to recoil from everything that had a Jewish ring. Supposedly we held our heads higher [than Jews in the Diaspora] and therefore warranted a different definition. That is, by going to the Palmach, we could feel that we were Hebrew.[53]

Again, it does not say that this man felt Jewish by going to the Palmach: it says he felt Hebrew. It is also important to note how military service is so strongly correlated to living in the Land of Israel and being Hebrew in this sentence, showing how quickly combative Zionism became an ideology in Palestine. This marked such a stark departure not only from their parents' generation, but from anything their mostly-European ancestors had ever experienced before, that Ben-Eliezer brilliantly sums up these young people's attitudes as being "an instinct of revenge mixed with a power-based military ethos completely detached from Jewish history."[54]

It is here that it becomes clear how militant tendencies amongst the younger generation became ideology. I have already well established how the leaders of both Mapai and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, as well as these parties' "bearers of arms," "attempted to obtain legitimacy for their activities and roles in the Yishuv."[55] I have now also established not only how the younger generation began to identify themselves separately from their parents' generation, and separately within themselves based on whether their true loyalties lay to the British Army or the Palmach, but also how these divisions were helped along by "the development of a style and the use of stratification strategies designed to produce exclusivity and uniqueness" by the higher-ups of both Mapai and Hakibbutz Hameuchad.[56] Ben-Eliezer then articulates what happened next in a way that a summary would not do justice:

The military solution gradually became acceptable and legitimate,

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49) Ibid, 97.
50) Ibid, 97.
51) Ibid, 97.
52) Ibid, 97.
53) Ibid, 98.
54) Ibid, 96.
55) Ibid, 94.
56) Ibid, 94.

a sort of status convention that determined life chances and granted honor and prestige. And when the cultural capital that the military groups had accumulated was invested in an attempt to influence politics and challenge power relations, the military way turned into an ideology.[57]

The negated Diaspora was the only perception the younger generation had of a reality outside of Palestine that was much more complicated than of which they were aware. They perceived an incompatibility with what little of the Jewish culture from the Diaspora that their parents maintained in Palestine, just as they perceived that every Jew in the Diaspora was a pale weakling, regardless of how true this actually was. It was, in essence, a self-fulfilling prophecy of truly ideological proportions. Because they wanted to be different from their skewed sense of the other, they did feel different, and they acted different. This was further enforced by the repetitive militaristic ideology that was merely reflected back at them by the leaders of Mapai and Hakibbutz Hameuchad. As military service and military actions began to address many of the younger generations' problems, some of which being even as basic as gaining a sense of belonging to a unique group and finding some sort of purpose in life, it became further accepted by the greater Jewish culture of Palestine as the norm. It became habitualized and routine and they became further entrenched in a militaristic ideology. They perceived an entire world beyond the Land of Israel that only sought their annihilation; regardless of how true it actually was, it was true for them in their reality. This is not to say that there were not credible threats to the security of the Yishuv, merely that how real these threats were did not affect these people's decision-making process. This was because they became subjects to this ideology without being aware of its imposed and purely external nature. And of course, as they grew up and had children, their children grew up in this newly-established environment, and they inherited their parents' newly-discovered ideology.

Now would be an appropriate time to examine the last way in which Ben-Gurion's plan was not seen through to fruition. The combination of the Holocaust and the White Paper ensured that the epic quantities of boats carrying Jewish refugees to Palestine that Ben-Gurion expected didn't arrive. In a rather biased, yet nonetheless tragic fashion, Teveth concludes his book Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs by explaining, "There were few ships, and no need to fire on them."[58] However, he counter-balances this melodramatic epithet by using his concluding paragraph to quote Ben-Gurion in 1937, even before the truly-horrific dimensions of the Holocaust began, as saying that "Jewish suffering is also a political factor...whoever says that Hitler diminished our strength, is not telling the whole truth."[59] Ben-Gurion was already using public relations as a political tactic and violence was already being used to justify further violence as early as 1937.

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57) Ibid, 94.
58) Teveth, *Palestinian Arabs*, 196.
59) Ibid, 196.

A combination of several factors led to the creation of a militant ideology within mainstream Zionism called combative Zionism. The new generation, having been born in Palestine, viewed the threats of Nazi Germany and their Palestinian Arab neighbors as problems that, because of their inbred distaste for the Diaspora that was derived from a perception that Gentiles mistreated Jews and that Jews in the Diaspora were weak, would be best resolved by them, the new Hebrew generation, using force. From there, the leaders of Mapai and Hakibbutz Hameuchad saw the potential in harnessing this generation and began to spew back at them a glorified set of militaristic values and beliefs that were often foreign to them, but not to their children. This helped them both organize their respective paramilitary organizations and fight each other over the main power in the Yishuv. After the release of the White Paper, Ben-Gurion announced that it was their duty to fight the White Paper while also helping the British fight the Nazis. This further trained the Yishuv's paramilitary organizations and helped them prepare for the war Ben-Gurion and many others assumed was coming over Palestine after World War II ended. Eventually, militaristic tendencies in these organizations and in society as a whole became so normalized that it became a militaristic ideology held by an entire nation that was not even aware of its existence. Thus, mainstream Zionism became combative Zionism.

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## Refuting al-Ghazālī's 'Poison'

### *Ibn Rushd's Doctrine of 'Exclusive Instruction' in his Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*

By Andrew J. O'Connor

The commentaries of Ibn Rushd[1] on the works of Aristotle served as the impetus for a revival of western interest in Aristotelian logic and Greek philosophy and earned him the title "The Commentator" by Thomas Aquinas. In addition to his many commentaries, however, Ibn Rushd wrote extensively in defense of philosophy against Islamic thinkers such as al-Ghazālī who believed that it was a flawed enterprise which ultimately resulted in heresy or unbelief. On the contrary, Ibn Rushd believed that philosophy was a legitimate means of ascertaining truth, albeit a means not suitable for everyone. Indeed, one of Ibn Rushd's central doctrines seems to be that certain classes of people should not be taught--or attempt to comprehend--particular concepts that are beyond their inherent natural dispositions to understand. This idea is most explicitly laid out in his work *Kitāb Fasl al-Maqāl* and appears to be one of the most central concepts of Ibn Rushd's philosophical thought. However, what role does it play in his rebuttal of al-Ghazālī[2] in his most famous work, the *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* ("The Incoherence of the Incoherence"), and how does he employ it in order to discredit his opponent's conclusions? To what degree does Ibn Rushd follow his own doctrine and does he contradict himself? This essay seeks to determine the ways in which this doctrine of Ibn Rushd manifests in, or is applied to, the *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* and his refutations of al-Ghazālī's critiques of philosophy. In doing so, we elucidate Ibn Rushd's specific intentions in writing this work and who he envisioned to be his target audience, beyond simply justifying his own vocation as a philosopher.

To begin, let us look to the development of Ibn Rushd's doctrine within the *Fasl al-Maqāl*, in which he states that different people arrive at assent (Arabic: *taṣdīq*) through one of three methods or judgments: demonstration, dialectic, or rhetoric.[3]

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1) Also known in the west as Averroes, 1126-1198 CE.
2) 1058-1111 CE.
3) All three are categories inherited from Aristotle.

Those who belong to this first group are the "elect" or the "elite," while those in the second two are those with lower intelligence or belonging to the ordinary masses. Furthermore, he stresses that those with weaker dispositions should never be instructed in ideas that they cannot understand (we could, perhaps, call it his doctrine of "*exclusive instruction*"). Demonstration is the most perfect form of reasoning,[4] which begins with a basic first principle (or axiom) and is used to create a deductive argument or syllogism from which an inference can be made to a valid conclusion based on those premises. Those of the demonstrative class are whom he later calls "persons of superior natural intelligence" and the "best class of people and best class of beings"—that is, the philosophers.[5] Dialectical argument, on the other hand, involves trying to compel assent on the basis of conceding certain propositions or assumed principles, or simply through showing an opponent's argument to be false (best exemplified by the Socratic method). Ibn Rushd associates this group with the *Mutakallimūn* (i.e., the Islamic theologians). Rhetoric, which he believed to be the lowest form of assent, is an attempt to persuade others through emotive appeals and is the method of assent inherent to the common masses. Demonstration, therefore, affords necessary and absolute proof, whereas dialectic and rhetoric yield only probability. Ibn Rushd asserts that the natures of men align with one of these three categories, and that someone from the lower two levels cannot understand the reasoning of those from the demonstrative class, because "he who does not understand the art does not understand the product of art."[6] Additionally, he believes that religion summons men by all three of these methods.[7]

Indeed it is here, in the discussion of understanding religion and scriptural interpretation, that Ibn Rushd first applies his doctrine of *exclusive instruction* that we will then trace in his *Tahāfut*. Ibn Rushd states that the purpose of scripture and religion is to teach true science and right practice to *everyone*, and for that reason it must draw an all three levels of assent.[8] To argue for this he quotes 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib: "Speak to the people about what they know."[9] Furthermore, verses of scripture have three forms of interpretation: (1) those for which the apparent (outer) meaning must be accepted by everyone; (2) those which the lower classes must accept by their apparent meaning but the demonstrative class interprets by their allegorical (inner) meanings; and (3) those verses for which this is uncertain.[10] The apparent or outer meanings are those which are most practical and should be taught to everyone; allegorical interpretations, however, are specific to elect scholars who have been chosen by God for the purpose of studying allegorical interpretations.[11] He argues that the lower classes are never allowed to interpret verses through anything other than their outer meaning. Dealing with allegorical interpretations by rhetorical or dialectical means, he says,

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4) Ibn Rushd, *On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy,* edit. George F. Hourani (London: Messrs. Luzac & Co., 1967), 45.
5) Ibid, 62.
6) Ibid, 47.
7) Ibid, 49.
8) Ibid, 63-64.
9) Ibid, 52. From the *Hadith* of Bukhārī.
10) Ibid, 58-59.
11) Ibid, 52-54, 57. Much of this is tied to his interpretation of *sura* 3, verse 7 in the Qur'ān.

is committing an offense against the Law and Philosophy. He therefore concludes that "allegorical interpretations ought to be set down only in demonstrative books, because if they are in demonstrative books they are encountered by no one but men of the demonstrative class."[12] Allegory ultimately leads those of a lower intelligence to unbelief, and for that reason allegorical interpretations are *not allowed to be shared* outside of the elite who assent through demonstration. This is central to his concept of *exclusive instruction*.

Demonstrative learning, consequently, should never be taught to those of the rhetorical and dialectical classes or even put in their books. Doing so makes one an unbeliever, and indeed Ibn Rushd states that this is the reason for the appearance of different sects within Islam—that is, this results in unnecessary schism and dissension.[13] As will be seen, these are the primary charges which Ibn Rushd directs toward al-Ghazālī in the *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*. It is to this work, and how Ibn Rushd employed within it his view that the masses should never be taught the pure proof, that we will now turn.

In his work *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa* ("The Incoherence of the Philosophers"), al-Ghazālī pointed to twenty errors made by the philosophers, seventeen of which proved that they were heretics and three of which made them outright unbelieving infidels. Ibn Rushd responded to each of these points in turn in his work *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, the aim of which was to "show the different degrees of assent and conviction attained by the assertions in the 'Incoherence of the Philosophers', and to prove that the greater part has not reached the degree of evidence and of truth." [14] That is, he seeks to see whether the arguments of al-Ghazālī ever achieve the level of demonstration of the philosophers, or if all of his claims are simply rhetorical and persuasive and therefore inferior. He ultimately concludes that al-Ghazālī was simply too unqualified (or indeed stupid) to know what he was talking about and should have named his work simply "The Incoherence." He was a man of the dialectical class (an Ash'arite theologian) who ultimately sinned by critiquing the demonstrative arguments of the philosophers and his accusation against them were therefore unjust. In fact, his arguments within "are found deficient in the conditions [required] for demonstration…as will be understood after the slightest inspection of anyone acquainted with the conditions of demonstration."[15] This is exactly for which Ibn Rushd believes himself to be well-suited and what he undertook with his *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*.

Let us look, to begin, at the Sixth Discussion, in which al-Ghazālī originally intended to refute the philosophers' denial of the attributes of God. This was related to the way in which the Mu'tazilites denied the existence of divine attributes distinct from the divine essence. Throughout the debate, Ibn Rushd repeatedly admits that he

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12) Ibid, 61.
13) Ibid, 66, 68.
14) Ibn Rushd, *Tahafut al-Tahafut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence),* Volumes I & II, trans. Simon Van Den Bergh (Cambridge: E.J.W. Gibb Memorial, 1954), 1.
15) Hourani, 68.

is using dialectical argument in refuting the dialectic of al-Ghazālī.[16] Indeed, after a lengthy discussion involving a chain of receptive causes, Ibn Rushd announces that they had reached the limit of simple persuasive reasoning on the issue. The remedy, of course, was to seek the "demonstrations [that] are in the works of the ancients which they wrote about this science, and especially in the works of Aristotle."[17] This was because the works of Islamic thinkers, including Ibn Sīnā whom al-Ghazālī had been critiquing, contained metaphysical theories that were "pure presumptions, since they proceed from common, not particular, notions." The dialectical arguments of the Muslims on this issue were inferior to those of the demonstrative ancients, although Ibn Rushd does not tell us what those arguments were. The discussion comes to a head when Ibn Rushd quotes al-Ghazālī as saying:

> …our aim is to make you desist from your claim to possess knowledge of the essential realities through strict proofs, and to make you doubt. And when your impotence becomes evident, we say that there are men who hold that the divine realities cannot be attained through rational inquiry…Why then do you oppose this group of men…who refuse to acknowledge those meanings which are forbidden and who recognize our impotence to reach the Divine Intellect? You only refute these men in so far as they are ignorant of the methods of demonstration and of the arrangements of premises according to the figures of the syllogisms, and you claim that you know these things by rational methods; but now your impotence, the breakdown of your methods, the shamelessness of your claim to knowledge, have come to light, and this is the intention of our criticism. And where is the man who would dare to claim that theological proofs have the strictness of geometrical proofs?[18]

Unfazed, Ibn Rushd responds that all this tedious talk had only rhetorical and dialectical value. It is here that Ibn Rushd re-introduces the concept that the highest form of truth should not be shared outside the elect philosophers (i.e., his doctrine of *exclusive instruction*). Al-Ghazālī was not qualified to attempt to refute the theories of the philosophers—in fact, he was in their debt and should have been thanking them for the learning that they imparted to him:

> And as to this statement that his aim here is not to reach knowledge of the truth but only to refute the theories of the philosophers and to reveal the inanity of their claims, *this is not worthy of him*—but rather of very bad men…For the greater part of the subtlety this man acquired…he only acquired from the books of the philosophers and from their teaching.[19] [Italics mine]

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16) Van Den Bergh, 194, 211
17) Ibid, 194.
18) Ibid, 210.
19) Ibid, 212.

In addition to the fact that he was indebted to their methods, Ibn Rushd believes that al-Ghazālī was wrong to discuss issues such as the Knowledge of God in a dialectical way and put it down in a book—this was forbidden of him. The ordinary masses simply did not possess enough understanding to grasp these concepts and when they try to do so the "meaning of divinity becomes void for them."[20] The only ones qualified to discuss these issues, of course, were those men "versed in profound knowledge to whom God has permitted the sight of the true realities," and the only books in which they were permitted to appear were those composed in a purely rational and logical fashion. However, is not Ibn Rushd breaking his own rule of *exclusive instruction*? He confesses that this book and his literary dialogue with al-Ghazālī is almost entirely dialectic. How then does he justify this work?

Ibn Rushd surmounts this problem with an analogy comparing ideas with medical remedies and poisons. Discussing these questions with the masses was equal to handing them poison, sure, but someone had already done so: al-Ghazālī. Ibn Rushd viewed himself as the one who would right this wrong:

> But when the wicked and ignorant [al-Ghazālī] transgress and bring poison to the man for whom it is really poison, as if it were nourishment, then there is need of a physician who through his science will exert himself to heal that man, and for this reason we have allowed ourselves to discuss this problem in such a book as this, and in any other case we should not regard this as permissible to us; on the contrary, it would be one of the greatest crimes…[21]

Al-Ghazālī had erred in attempting to bring the learning of the philosophers to the masses and dealing with them in a dialectical book; however, Ibn Rushd was justified in rebuffing al-Ghazālī's arguments in a similar dialectical fashion because the poisoned masses were in need of a physician or someone to clarify all the nonsense they had been subjected to. He justifies his own use of dialectic--even though he was a man of demonstration, a philosopher—by stating that he needed to cater to those who did not possess the proper mental training. Thus, even though his ideal of *exclusive instruction* forbade introducing the masses to demonstrative method and serious philosophical issues, he was allowed to do so since he was undoing the damage caused by his opponent.

He then turns toward the method utilized by the philosophers in arriving at their belief that the First Principle/Cause was simple and an intellect (without attributes or a body). He then states:

> This in summary is the method of the philosophers, and if you are one of those whose mind is sufficiently trained to receive the sci-

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20) Ibid, 215.
21) Ibid, 216.

ences, and you are steadfast and have leisure, it is your *duty* to look into the books and the sciences of the philosophers, so that you may discover in their works certain truths…but if you lack one of these three qualities, it is your *duty* to *keep yourself to the words of the Divine Law*, and you *should not look* for these new conceptions in Islam; for if you do so, you will be neither a rationalist nor a traditionalist.[22] [Italics mine].

He asserts, once again, his view that those innately predisposed to do so should look into the books of the philosophers whereas everyone else must not. In fact, he reminds them here that it is the duty of the philosophers to do so, just as it is the duty of everyone else to mind their own business. He addresses all of his readers and implores them to know their place. It is interesting to note that this call appears after a lengthy series of technical logical thought, as if he is trying to weed out portions of his audience and draw the attention of potential future philosophers. It is hard to imagine, however, that dialectical theologians reading this work would henceforth remove themselves from all philosophical discourse or critique of the philosophers. Nevertheless, he continues to discuss issues for which he says they were "not permitted to divulge it to the masses" and for whom his discussion was forbidden. After further critiquing al-Ghazālī's argument and use of philosophical terms, he concludes the discussion by stating that al-Ghazālī's work should instead be called simply "the Incoherence."[23]

Ibn Rushd's defense of *exclusive instruction* is again employed later in the last section concerning the Natural Sciences. In the Second Discussion of those sciences, al-Ghazālī had critiqued the "impotence of the philosophers to show by demonstration proof that the soul is a spiritual substance."[24] In tracing al-Ghazālī's arguments, Ibn Rushd accuses him of misunderstanding Ibn Sīnā's[25] argument proving that the intellect was separate from the body.[26] Indeed, throughout this discussion, Ibn Rushd concludes that al-Ghazālī fails to understand the arguments of Ibn Sīnā and Aristotle, both because they are too elevated for someone of the dialectical class to understand and because, when removing their arguments out of their respective sciences/subjects, they lose their demonstrative value. Thus, al-Ghazālī was meddling in sciences that he did not understand and should not have attempted to instruct them to others in the first place. Since all of his arguments are simple persuasion as opposed to logic, and indeed many of the arguments of the philosophers become dialectic once removed of the context of their sciences, Ibn Rushd concedes that:

The only aim of this book of ours is therefore to ascertain the value of the arguments in it which are ascribed to the two parties, and to show which of the two disputants the terms 'incoherence' and 'con-

22) Ibid, 218.
23) Ibid, 220.
24) Ie, Avicenna, 980-1037.
25) Ibid.
26) Ibid, 340.

tradition' would be applied with greater justification.[27]

Here, again, Ibn Rushd admits that his own book is not meant to be demonstrative. His admittance that al-Ghazālī's arguments, the arguments of the philosophers outside of their context, and his own arguments are all persuasive and not demonstrative further supports the notion that he intended this work for a dialectical audience—most certainly the supporters of al-Ghazālī. However, he almost apologizes for using these persuasive arguments. He encourages those of the "elect" scholarly class to seek out the works of the philosophers while continually explaining that these works are forbidden for anyone who, like al-Ghazālī, is incapable of understanding them. Ibn Rushd's demonstration of al-Ghazālī's shortcomings is meant to convince them of this; again, al-Ghazālī is the one worthy of the term "incoherence".

This theme is carried through the remainder of the debate over the soul in the Second Discussion. Al-Ghazālī fails to "grasp the views of the philosophers."[28] Interestingly, when discussing Ibn Sīnā's argument for the impossibility of the intellect and intelligible being identical, Ibn Rushd defends this view and does so with a dialectical argument; yet he also says that a demonstrative argument is possible to prove it as well.[29] He does not, however, detail the entire argument but merely says that it is possible with the proper premises. One would think that if he truly wanted to disarm al-Ghazālī he would do so, as this was the only way he believed one could achieve absolute evidence. Nonetheless, if he truly intended this work only for those of the dialectical class, then by sticking solely to arts of persuasion he is sticking to his doctrine of *exclusive instruction*.

In the Fourth Discussion of the Natural Sciences, Ibn Rushd treats al-Ghazālī's attack on the philosophers for their denial of bodily resurrection. This was one of the most serious charges he brought against them: it did not merely render them heretics, but infidels. However, Ibn Rushd, after admitting that this was not a serious issue for the ancient philosophers, states that the Islamic philosophers "regard this doctrine as most important and believe in it most."[30] His reason for this is tied to the concepts he elaborated upon in the *Fasl al-Maqāl* and his conviction that the ordinary masses were obligated to accept all doctrines at face value. Bodily resurrection is a religious belief held by the masses and, therefore, it is conducive to order happiness. He says that the "philosophers believe that religious laws are necessary political arts, the principles of which are taken from natural reason and inspiration."[31] Religion seeks the instruction of the masses, and in that way it is obligatory for everyone. It brings universal wisdom accessible to all human beings. Religious beliefs such as resurrection, therefore, confirm to the modes of thinking and judgments of the ordinary masses (rhetoric and dialectic). Philosophy, on the other hand, only leads a certain select group of particularly intelligent individuals to happiness. Philosophers

27) Ibid, 341.
28) Ibid, 346.
29) Ibid, 348.
30) Ibid, 359.
31) Ibid, 359.

should thus not repudiate doctrines held by the common man because, even if they understand a clearer truth, only religious doctrines are able to reach those of a weaker mental capacity. Indeed, they should explain them in a manner befitting their audience and inciting them to "the performance of virtuous acts."[32] For this reason, religion that can appeal to both the ordinary man and the philosophical man is deemed to be the best:

> And since in the principles of the demonstrative sciences there are postulates and axioms which are assumed, this must still more be the case for the religions which take their origin in inspiration and reason. Every religion exists through inspiration and is blended with reason. And he who holds that it is possible that there should exist a natural religion based on reason alone must admit that this religion must be less perfect than those which spring from reason and inspiration.[33]

Any doctrine, even if it is grasped by a philosopher demonstratively, must be able to be expressed in somewhat material images.

From here Ibn Rushd finalizes his rebuttal of al-Ghazālī's condemnation. Philosophers did not deny the resurrection; they simply understood it in a more sophisticated manner than the theologians and the masses. He says that what survives the body is a "simulacrum" of our early forms, not our bodies themselves.[34] Contrary to what al-Ghazālī declared, a being that perished could not return in an identical form—it could only return as an image of that being. Given what he said above, however, Ibn Rushd does not object to the notion of bodily resurrection as a religious doctrine. The masses were told what they needed to believe in order to assent to a concept analogous to the truth, which Ibn Rushd and the philosophers had attained. And he was perfectly content to let them believe as they did.

Ibn Rushd finishes the *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* by briefly addressing the three points for which al-Ghazālī called the philosophers unbelievers, and he states that all three of these are unjust condemnations. Questions concerning resurrection are purely of a speculative nature and should not be condemned outright. As for their denial that God knows particulars, Ibn Rushd claims that the philosophers said no such thing. With regard to the philosophers' belief in the eternity of the world, Ibn Rushd says that this term "has not the meaning for which they are accused of heresy by the theologians."[35] Al-Ghazālī did not understand these rational issues and was wrong to attempt to invalidate them. He then concludes the work with a statement which again seems to confirm that his notion of *exclusive instruction* was indeed one of the driving factors in writing this work:

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32) Ibid, 359-361.
33) Ibid, 361.
34) Ibid, 362.
35) Ibid, 362.

> I have decided to break off my inquiry about these things here, and
> I ask pardon for their [i.e., the above issues] discussion, and if it
> were not an obligation to seek the truth for those who are entitled to
> it…and to prevent from discussion those who have no claim to it, I
> would not have treated all this.[36]

These issues had no place in dialectical books such as al-Ghazālī's or indeed that of
Ibn Rushd himself.

How, then, does Ibn Rushd's belief that philosophical truths should not be
expressed to those unfit to understand them fit into the *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*? Ibn Rushd
believed that only philosophers of the demonstrative class were innately adept to un-
derstand philosophical truths. Those of the rhetorical (the masses) and dialectical (the
theologians) classes were not allowed to pursue these truths, and if they did so it
would result in unbelief for the masses and hasty judgments on the side of the theo-
logians. Al-Ghazālī, a dialectical Ash'arite theologian, was not qualified to refute the
philosophers and, furthermore, he was certainly not allowed to attempt to distribute
these philosophical notions to a wider readership. Ibn Rushd in turn concludes that
theologians must not read the ancients or the works of the Islamic philosophers, and
to let them keep their theories because these did not contradict religious truths—they
were simply too advanced for anyone else to comprehend.

Al-Ghazālī is thus presented as the ultimate example for the importance
of the doctrine of *exclusive instruction*. He broke this rule by seeking instruction in
matters too sophisticated for his dialectical mind and then committed a greater sin
by trying to lay out these philosophical arguments in a book unfit for these elevated
methods. He failed the philosophers by misunderstanding their views and he failed
his readers by presenting these misrepresentations. In doing so, he caused others to
unjustly turn against the philosophers. To repair this situation, Ibn Rushd resorted to
writing his own *Tahāfut*. In doing so, he removed the title of "'incoherence" from the
philosophers and granted it instead to al-Ghazālī. Using the dialectical method of his
opponent and probable readership, he defends the views of the philosophers as legiti-
mate expressions of truth—albeit ones too advanced for anyone but the select few. The
message to those outside the domain of the elect is clear: leave philosophy to those in
the major leagues.

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36) Ibid, 363.

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         (London: Messrs. Luzac & Co., 1967).

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         II, trans. Simon Van Den Bergh (Cambridge: E.J.W. Gibb Memorial, 1954).

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# Political Economy of Ingenuity

## a Case Study of Turkey's Justice and Development Party

### By Mohammad Sagha

Introduction

This paper is concerned with the dynamics of the phenomenon known as Islamism. Much has changed since the nascency of the Islamist movement, the intellectual roots of which many scholars place at the feet of the visionary Jamal al-Din Asadabadi (d. 1897). Asadabadi initiated a powerful mode of thought in the face of European dominance in Muslim lands with the center of his attention shifting from "Islam as a religion" to "Islam as a civilization." Asadabadi posited that "the aim of man's acts is not the service of God alone; it is the creation of human civilization flourishing in all its parts."[1] There are many theories abound as to the present circumstances of Islamism, and many authors contend we now live in an age of "post-Islamism" in which the ideological foundations of the movement are subject to change.[2] These authors argue that in light of developments in the past decade, most noticeably represented by the "Arab Awakening" or "Arab Spring", that Islamism has entered a new phase. In order to get a greater sense of the diverse effects of the Islamist wave, this paper will turn to a case study of how Islamist politics have affected Turkey. Turkey is quite a fascinating study because it is the base of the secular dream in the Middle East -- it is where, in the terminology of Salman Sayyid, "Kemalism" spread as a viable model of state governance. From this Turkish base has recently emerged a unique form of politics most visibly represented by the electoral victories of the Welfare (*Refah*) Party in the 1990s, and the even more recent successive victories of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey in the past decade. This case study will focus on the very practical side of Islamism and use a political-economy approach to study the effects of Islamist politics in this particular context through analyzing existing literature on the topic alongside official statements and policies.

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1) Hourani, Albert Habib. *Arabic thought in the liberal age, 1798-1939*. London: Oxford University Press, 1962. 114.

2) Bayat, Asef. "The Post-Islamist Revolutions." What the Revolts in the Arab World Mean. http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67812/asef-bayat/the-post-islamist-revolutions.

What makes the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey so intriguing is its seemingly innovative relationship with the crucial factors that have been challenging the Middle East from the beginnings of the modern age to present. The questions this case study looks to answer are questions prevalent in the present-day discourse of global politics as it relates to Islamism: is the AKP perceived as making "democracy compatible with Islam"? In this vein, how "Islamist" is the AKP?  Have the AKP's domestic politics been able to create a more harmonious society given the legacy of secular-religious tension? And, finally, what is the electoral logic and political economy behind the ballot box successes of the Justice and Development Party? This paper utilizes the logic of political economy (how the control and distribution of resources affects political scenarios) along with analyzing the relationship the AKP has to the international economic and political system and how that translates into domestic politics at home. What are the means through which the AKP implements a marriage of "modernity and Islam" -- as its leaders so often claim?

What this paper argues is that from a legacy of Islamist thought turned "conservative," the AKP has successfully been able to uphold neo-liberal economic reforms through republican politics. More concisely, the party has been able to articulate its solidification into the international order through what their leaders call a "conservative democratic" reference point and politics which serves to further its own visions and skillfully combat old guard secular domestic rivals. The AKP represents a case of instrumental use of the Islamist message, although through implied, not explicit means, to further party politics while staying nominally "secular" and never actually calling themselves "Islamist."

The AKP's Islamism and Relation to International Order

Much has changed in the world order since Turkey became a republic in the early 20th century and started down the path of state-building. Chief among these changes are the rise of institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the United Nations (UN). The IMF and World Bank, in particular, are key institutions to consider as they represent ways through which "developing economies" are supposed to be brought into the international order as demonstrated by what is now known as the "Washington Consensus" (a term which will be discussed in further detail below).

However, the question remains as to why the AKP would look to negotiate with the world order as a means to modernize? Islamists are often characterized as being resistant to the "West" and global institutions, perhaps largely in part due to the anti-colonial legacy of Iran's Islamic Revolution of 1979. However, this is a wrong-headed characterization: in fact "Islamists recruited most easily from groups that had intense exposure to modern ideas... Islamists insisted that lay Muslims, people with experience of the world and not just of the holy texts, also have a voice in the interpretation of the faith and the construction of political institutions."[3] It is from among

3) Sadowski, Yahya. "Political Islam: Asking the Wrong Questions?" *Annual Reviews* 9 (2006): 215-40.

this group of non-clerical individuals, broadly speaking, that the AKP forms its core. For Western journalists, this is quite intriguing and contradictory. For them, Islamism tends to be synonymous with fundamentalist groups belonging to another "civilizational" tradition alien to liberal notions of thought. But, as Hakan Yavuz demonstrates:

> Before the November 2002 election, many in the Western media had described the AKP as a 'fundamentalist party.' After the election, the same journalists used the phrase 'Islamist or Islamic party'; and when the party started to adopt the EU's Copenhagen criteria, they referred to it as a 'party with Islamic roots'...Later, during parliamentary consideration of new legislation on adultery, the European media once again used the adjective 'Islamist' or 'Islamic' to describe the AKP.[4]

However, the Islamist project is wholly modernist in character. Islamists re-articulated an Islamic message in a modern language through which control of the state could lead to a more pious, as well as more powerful, polity.[5] It is important to note, however, that the AKP still officially asserts secularism in government and is very careful not to explicitly contradict the narrative of secularism, even going as far as verbally promoting a model of secularism in Egypt shortly after the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak, with Reccip Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's Prime Minister stating that a secular state "does not mean 'an irreligious state.' Rather it means respect for all the religions and giving all individuals the freedom to practice religion as they please."[6]

Secularism and Domestic Legacies

The circumstances of the Justice and Development Party within the Middle East are quite unique given the legacy of state building that Mustafa Kemal Ataturk initiated in Turkey. Ataturk tied in the ideas of anti-religious secularism, or more accurately an anti-clerical laicism to the "developmental ethos," a term well defined by James Gelvin as "the widely held belief that a leading function of government is to guide economic development and ensure social justice [which enabled] governments in the [Middle East] to concentrate an inordinate amount of power in their hands."[7] The Kemalist model of developmentalism believes that Islam itself is the problem, seeks to eliminate Islam from social and political spheres, and advocates a strict replication of the European path to modernization and secularization, to the point that "Islam was no longer linked with state power... Mustafa Kemal repeatedly described

221.
4) Yavuz, M. Hakan. *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2009. 1-2.
5) Sadowski, Yahya. "Political Islam: Asking the Wrong Questions?" *Annual Reviews* 9 (2006): 215-40. 221.
6) Cole, Juan. "Muslim Brotherhood Rebukes Erdogan for Advocacy of Secularism."Thoughts on the Middle." Informed Comment, 15 Sept. 2011. 10 Mar. 2012. <http://www.juancole.com/2011/09/muslim-brotherhood-rebukes-erdogan-for-advocacy-of-secularism.html>.
7) Gelvin, James L. The Modern Middle East: A History. New York: Oxford UP, 2011. 241.

Islam as 'the symbol of obscurantism'; as 'a purified corpse which poisons our lives'; as 'the enemy of civilization and science.'"[8] At the core of this thinking was the idea that modernization equals Westernization.

However, as a national founder, the process of development Ataturk initiated is still very much at the forefront of state policy and is a pillar of legitimacy for state authority. While Ataturk's model was based off a "consensus that economic development required strong state guidance,"[9] the economic imperatives of what is considered to be proper state involvement in development have since changed. In what came to be known as the Washington Consensus, international organizations, such as the IMF and World Bank, offered loans to heavily indebted developing states in return for particular policy concessions.[10] This consensus did not always work out so smoothly however. The Washington Consensus is very much subject to geopolitical concerns and interests; Turkey, like other Middle Eastern countries, was and is able to use its leverage as a strategic partner to the United States and Europe to negotiate the policy prescriptions the IMF attempts to impose. This leveraging is not foolproof though as, for example, when the AKP lost a key bargaining chip against IMF policy prescriptions by losing an anticipated American aid package when the Turkish parliament voted against allowing U.S. troops to use Turkey as a base against Saddam Hussein in 2003.

However, by and large, a major reason behind the successes of the AKP was the party's ability to capture the mantle of state-led development initiated by Ataturk and transform the now outdated heavy-handed state intervention as modernization and instead undertake free market reforms and European Union (EU) partnership. As the next section highlights, the AKP's economic vision is a further acceptance of the international liberal model for state building.

Neo-Liberal Politics & Economics

The main political economy issue facing the Justice and Development party is the coordination of Turkish macroeconomic policy with reigning international financial institutions. There are contradictory roles that Islamist parties must undertake in this endeavor: the main issue facing the AKP in particular is the tension which arises in reconciling neo-liberal economic reforms with commitments to enhance  the "public presence of Islam."[11] According to Sultan Tepe, the way that the AKP is politically successful is through the

> capacity to identify accurately the nature of public perception and
> support behind the [economic] reforms, to redistribute the burdens

8) Sayyid, S. *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*. London: Zed, 2003. 64-5.
9) Moore, Pete W. "Political Economy." *Politics & Society in the Contemporary Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2010. 74
10) *Ibid*, 84
11) Tepe, Sultan. "Politics between Market and Islam: The Electoral Puzzles and Changing Prospects of Pro-Islamic Parties."  *Mediterranean Quarterly*. Volume 18, Number 2, Spring 2007, 107-135. 108.

of stabilization and adjustment policies, and to implement programs
without resorting to populist Islamist measures and driving away
the moderate wing of their electoral coalition.[12]

An addition to Tepe's model is the consideration the AKP leadership has to take into mind when dealing with the international economic order of free market capitalism and financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF.  Marice Patton describes this problem facing the AKP in answering the question of how the "Islam-sensitive" party balances the priority it places on the IMF's macroeconomic prescriptions and "fiscal restraint in lieu of its electoral promises to pursue a justice-oriented social agenda and aggressively tackle problems of poverty and unemployment."[13] The roots of this contention are not new to the Turkish Republic. William Riker's *Liberalism Against Populism* essentially identifies the same challenges facing Western "liberal-democratic" politicians, highlighting how leaders face temptations to tap into populist sentiments and policy while balancing the demands of the liberal order and free market prosperity. The fact that  the Justice and Development Party face these challenges are only further evidence of the envelopment of Turkey into the world system and Turkey's path towards "modernization."

The AKP's relationship with the IMF is described in much detail by Patton, who states that the lack of preparedness and strategic economic planning,  large amounts of debt inherited by the time the AKP won elections, and secular establishment opposition, the Justice and Development party was essentially forced into towing IMF prescriptions. However, undertaking neo-liberal economic reforms comes at a price of constrained policy options, which force

the party to give priority to macro-economic issues, rather than to a social agenda. By toeing the IMF line, the AKP's economic policies have been successful in servicing debt, bringing down inflation and reigning in fiscal indiscipline; however, these steps have neither improved income distribution nor addressed the problem of unemployment. In this regard the most challenging question facing the AKP... is how to push for greater distributive justice in a resource-strapped country when the opportunity for engaging in egregious fiscal populism no longer exists[14]

This surrender, in a sense, is quite risky since the main crux of neo-liberal reforms is to place the emphasis of growth on the market which is inherently volatile and can create serious unrest given the pronounced inequalities free market economics can provide. The Justice and Development Party has not been able to provide a very comprehensive economic vision other than that of growth, as it still struggles with unemployment and

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12) *Ibid*, 110.
13) Patton, Marcie J. "The Economic Policies of Turkey's AKP Government: Rabbits from a Hat?" *The Middle East Journal* 60.3 (2006): 513-36. 513.
14) *Ibid*, 535.

income equality.

When it comes to the European Union, the AKP has quite skillfully utilized the party's "success in using the integration process to leverage democratizing reforms favorable to religious interests" which "has left opposition parties looking defensive as they demand that the EU make exceptions for Turkey on the accession criteria."[15] In other words, the AKP has skillfully used the EU criteria to create more religious freedom at home which contradicts the secular establishment's preferred status quo -- but since the secularists place so much emphasis on merging with Europe, they only seem self-defeating by challenging the AKP and EU to shy away from religious reforms. This example encapsulates some of the main reasoning behind why the AKP made EU accession a cornerstone of policy -- it is an enormous bulwark against the secular establishment at home and can be used instrumentally to open up space domestically to chip away at the non-democratic secular establishment practices which frustrate the AKP's full electoral potentials. However, like all neo-liberal economic policies, the Turkish economy is based on a model of growth.    Given the country's interdependency in the global system, the question must be asked: what happens when that growth slows or reverses? Will the AKP still be considered "conservative democratic" if their economic stewardship falters?

Genealogy of Islamist Party Politics

Ironically, it was perhaps the secular elites who provided the most advantageous openings for Islamist actors. In Turkey, this was done in the "1980s by the government as a bulwark against the political left."[16] In the wake of an economic and political crisis in Turkey in 1980, the wall between religion and politics was breached as the military junta took power and declared a Turkish-Islamic synthesis as state ideology. The state was trying to somehow "bridge the factionalism that was destroying society" at that  time. This interplay of instrumental use of religion by the Turkish state provides some reasoning behind the rise to prominence of Islamist politics in Turkey and the openings which eventually led to the realization of the AKP project.

The Justice and Development Party can be more properly understood as one of the latest manifestations of the Islamist project within Turkey. Most immediately, it is one of the two offshoots of the Refah Party (RP), headed by Necmettin Erbakan, whose party was banned by the military in the late 1990s. The RP represented many things for many people; the urban poor took notice of the word Refah (welfare) while others took it as a metaphor for Islamic law. This confusion was justified: "while the party said it would develop a market economy, it also promised market regulation, redistribution, unionization, and the eradication of poverty."[17] From the ashes

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15) Findley, Carter V. Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity. New Haven: Yale UP, 2010. 361.

16) Hibbard, Scott W. Religious Politics and Secular States: Egypt, India and the United States. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 2010. Conclusion.

17) Tuğal, Cihan. *Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism.* Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2009. 6.

of the banning of the RP, two wings formed: the old guard formed the Felicity Party while a new "reformist" generation formed the AKP. According to Cihan Tuğal, the Felicity Party has since become quite marginalized and represents the sort of lack of clarity and formal strategy which characterized the Refah Party, while, on the other hand, the "AKP leaders attempted to remove an ambivalence and market the party as a secular, pro-state, pro-Western and pro-capitalist organization."[18] Perhaps the most significant consequence of this new articulation is the marriage of MUSIAD and AKP. MUSIAD, or the Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen, essentially represents the pious business community of Turkey. The Islamists turned in politics from Refah, which represented an unclear economic message, towards the AKP which fully embraced a pro-capitalist and business model. This is partially done through MUSIAD setting the AKP's agenda and capturing vast agency in determining the AKP's economic policies which were essentially non-existent outside of general slogans when it captured office.[19]

To explain the current context surrounding the AKP, it may be further necessary to introduce a comparative and political culture approach. Indeed, understanding the struggles of The Nationalist Action Party (NAP) at the turn of the century can in fact highlight many of the core issues at stake with the AKP and the attempts to use Islam as a basis for modernity. Tepe asserts that the "NAP successfully projected itself as a middle ground between the polarizing positions of secularists and Islamists."[20] The NAP won 128 seats, the second largest block, in Turkey's 1999 parliamentary elections. The party tried to reconcile the Kemalist state with Islamic society through trying to "create a reformed Islam compatible with the state's goals."[21] The way the NAP tried to form a fusion was to define Turkishness through Islam, effectively co-opting Islam into the project of state building and development. The NAP filled in an electoral gap left by the banning of the Refah party, but their victory turned out too temporary as evidenced by the 2002 fortunes of the AKP. While the NAP had a very distinct pan-Turkish outlook at the expense of their ties with the West, which differs from the AKP's close ties with the West and pan-Turkic cultural promotion, the successes of the Nationalist Action Party laid the groundwork for the AKP to more easily transition from the standard pan-Islamist "hardline" bent of Refah while foreshadowing many of the nascent shifts the AKP would undertake. At the core of the NAP project was the "Islamization of Turkishness," which, if successfully implemented, would serve as a strong defense against accusations of anti-secularism. The progress the NAP took in this route along with the massive electoral support provided to the AKP and its pro-Western agenda helped in ensuring the AKP enough political capital to protect itself from the aggression of secular elites and the military.

The nature of the AKP can be glimpsed through President Abdullah Gul's speech after a series of constitutional reforms weakening military authority was

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18) *Ibid*.

19) Patton, Marcie J. "The Economic Policies of Turkey's AKP Government." 525.

20) Tepe, Sultan. "A Kemalist Islamist Movement? The Nationalist Action Party." *Turkish Studies* 1.2 (2000): 59-72. 59.

21) *Ibid,* 60.

passed in 2011. Islam is not mentioned once within the speech. This further highlights the AKP's "uneven appropriation of Islamist strategies, which it put to the use of non-Islamist causes."[22] In fact, from its inception, the AKP "presented itself not as an Islamic party but as 'conservative democratic.'"[23] In the speech, the Turkish President espouses a strong liberal worldview:

> Our new constitution must be of a flexible character based on freedoms. The basic principle should be to refrain from using the constitution as a means of controlling different political views and to avoid the creation of tensions between the state and the people... Our new constitution should strengthen and guarantee the concept of equal citizenship in every aspect on the basis of fundamental rights and freedoms for everyone."[24]

In an article analyzing the constitutional changes, the Economist calls the AKP "mildly Islamist" and then goes on to qualify the "mildness" of the AKP by stating "the EU has welcomed the constitutional changes... [which] includes measures to bar gender discrimination, bolster civil liberties and protect personal privacy."[25] While there are concerns regarding the judicial reforms the constitution entailed which may have the potential to thwart the judicial process in favor of party politics, the new constitution and framing of it by the AKP elite reflects liberal political thought and acceptance of the liberal vision of citizenship, political plurality and rights.

Conclusion

Thus, the term "Islamist" must be used cautiously when addressing the Justice and Development Party. While the party is the direct legacy of more heavily influenced Islamist predecessors represented by the Welfare party, and while the AKP certainly is a new Turkish phenomenon in terms of rejecting the anti-religious laicism inherent in the traditional secular ruling ideology, they represent policy fully in line in with the Washington Consensus and Western Liberal notions of state development and citizen rights, but at the same time the AKP is clearly concerned with setting examples for Muslim majority countries and inheriting a mantle of leadership in the Middle East. Perhaps Erdogan summed up his party's position best at a recent AKP party congress: "We have shown, both at home and abroad, that a country with a Muslim population can have a thriving and advanced democracy."[26] Erdogan then called the

22) Tuğal, Cihan. *Passive Revolution*. 8.

23) Yavuz, M. Hakan. *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2009. 2.

24) Gul, Abdullah. "A New Civilian Constitution for an Institutionalized Turkish Democracy." Turkishreview.org. Turkish Review, 24 Nov. 2011.

25) Economist. "Turkey's Constitutional Referendum: Erdogan Pulls It off." *News Analysis*. The Economist Newspaper, 13 Sept. 2010. <http://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2010/09/turkeys_constitutional_referendum>.

26) Tuysuz, Gul, and Yesim Comert. "Turkish Party Endorses Erdogan's 'example' for Islamist Democracies." *World*. CNN, 30 Sept. 2012.

AKP a "conservative democratic party," further stating that "this understating that we have put forth has gone beyond our borders and has practically become an example to all Muslim countries."[27]

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27) Ibid.

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