

IRAN

Political Culture
in the Islamic
Republic



Edited by
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First published 1992
by Routledge
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE
Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
a division of Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc.
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001
© 1992 Samih K Farsoun & Mehrdad Mashayekhi

Typeset in Palatino by Witwell Ltd, Southport
Printed and bound in Great Britain by
T.J. Press (Padstow) Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

0-415-03142-7

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Iran: political culture in the Islamic Republic / edited by Samih K. Farsoun and Mehrdad Mashayekhi.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-415-03142-7

1. Iran-Politics and government-1979- 2. Political culture-Iran. I. Farsoun, Samih K. II. Mashayekhi, Mehrdad.
DS318.825.I65 1992

955.05'4-dc20

91-36455

CIP

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GHARBZADEGI

The Dominant Intellectual Discourse
of Pre- and Post-Revolutionary Iran

Mehrzaad Boroujerdi

INTRODUCTION

Michel Foucault, the late French philosopher, in a series of works exploring the history of madness, illness, crime, and sexuality, attempted to excavate the genealogy of various modern scientific disciplines. Through a critical analysis of their assumptions, discourses, and actions, Foucault brought a historical indictment against such disciplines as medicine, pedagogy, criminology, psychiatry, and demography. He showed that the prevalent Western definitions of rationality, perversion, appropriate codes of sexual behavior, and delinquency were all formulated through the subjugation of an "other": i.e. the "madman," the "deviant," the "born criminal," the "delinquent" or the "hermaphrodite."¹ This "other" is "always pushed aside, marginalized, forcibly homogenized and devalued as that cognitive machinery does its work."²

Formatively influenced by the works of Foucault on the "Constitution of Otherness", Edward Said, a Palestinian scholar, attempted to apply the same methodology to a different subject-matter. In his widely-acclaimed book *Orientalism*,³ Said set out to deconstruct Western representations of the Orient and Orientals. He launched his attack with a devastating critique of the basic ontological premises of Orientalism, which he defined as a "an enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period."⁴ Said first called into question the dualistic *Weltanschauung* of Orientalism which suggests there exists a radical, ontological difference between the nature, cultures, and peo-

ples of the Orient and the Occident. He showed how this epistemology of differentiation prevalent in all Orientalist writings is in reality the artifact of an "imaginative geography" stretching back several centuries. For Said, the essentialist categories of "Orient" and "Occident" which constitute the very basic foundations of Orientalism's schematization are humanly-mediated, discursive productions conceived in the process of cultural encounter.⁵ This arbitrary division of humanity into Oriental and Occidental beings at best represents a credulous acclimation, and at worst pure racism and naked discrimination. Following Foucault, Said argues that "otherness" requires (as well as reinforces) particularity and difference since the "self" is usually constituted in negative identity to the "other". Hence, the "constitution of otherness" is an attempt to (re-)determine the "self."⁶

While Said looked at the process of formation of the "Oriental other" for Westerners, I shall examine the formation of the "Occidental other" within the social imagery of the Iranian intellectuals.⁷ Hence, this chapter will provide a critical analysis of contemporary Iranian political and intellectual thought. The study will focus on the emergence of an intellectual discourse known as *gharbzadegi* which came to dominate the intellectual panorama of pre- and post-revolutionary Iranian society.⁸ The genesis of this new mode of thought will be traced back to two dominant, interrelated issues that have been confronting modern Iranian intellectuals since the last century: (1) the issue of self-identity; and (2) that of encounter with Western civilization.

The ontological, epistemological and political underpinnings of *gharbzadegi* will be addressed through a critical rendition of the works of three Iranian intellectuals: Jalal Al-e Ahmad, Daryush Shayegan and Reza Davari-Ardakani. The selection of these intellectuals was not based on their popularity, but rather by the following criteria: (1) they articulated some of the most philosophically-consequential ideas on the discourse of *gharbzadegi*; (2) they represent different views and political affiliations; and (3) they exemplify the predominate response of Iranian intellectuals during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s to the problem of encounter with the West.⁹ Jalal Al-e Ahmad was Iran's most prominent social critic of the 1950s and 1960s. Daryush Shayegan, a former university professor as well as

Director of the Iranian Center for the Study of Civilizations, presented one of the more philosophically-refined expositions of the Orient/Occident problematic. Reza Davari-Ardakani (hereafter Davari), a professor of philosophy at Tehran University has emerged as one of the two leading, non-clerical ideologues of the Islamic Republic of Iran.¹⁰

IN SEARCH OF AN "ORIENTAL IDENTITY"

As a social category, intellectuals almost constantly struggle with external or self-imposed tensions. These tensions emanate in part from the universal role of intellectuals as promoters and narrators of culture, and in part from the particular economic, social and political conditions of their respective societies. The Iranian intellectuals of this century are a case in point. The economic and cultural decadence of Iranian society in the nineteenth century along with the simultaneous advent of the Western powers paved the way for the introduction of European thought into Iran. Almost immediately a debate originated as to whether and how to limit or imitate its intellectual onslaught. A prognosis of the theoretical ventures of Iranian intellectuals at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century would substantiate the essential thrust of such an assertion.¹¹ Some intellectuals became overwhelmingly convinced that the only way to redemption was through a three-phase process: (1) a break with the past; (2) total emulation of the West; and (3) the avoidance of any indigenous innovations in this process of acculturation.

Their ambition was to remake Iran in the image of the West. Hence, one early Iranian traveler to Great Britain gave the following advice to his countrymen:

This writer believes if Iranian citizens were to have peace of mind and were to adapt the deeds of the British all of their daily matters would be done in the right way.¹²

The Iranian modernist Mirza Malkum Khan (1833-1908) spoke of the need for adoption of European civilization without Iranian adaptation.¹³ The renowned Iranian writer and statesman, Sayyid Hasan Taqizadeh (1878-1970), exemplified

this infatuation with the West when he laid out his blueprint for building a new Iran with the following pronouncement:

we need to recognize that we have fallen behind the Western civilization both spiritually and physically by some hundred thousand *farsangs* [each *farsang* is equivalent to 6.24 kilometers] in knowledge, technology, music, poetry, manners, life, spirit, politics, and industry. We should therefore only strive to retain our *milliyat* (nationality), that is, our racial identity, language and history, and beyond that seek to pursue the European advancements and civilization without the slightest doubt or hesitation. We must surrender to the Western civilization totally and unconditionally.¹⁴

As a group, these thinkers were representing the views of newly-emerging élites in Iran and in the Arab world.¹⁵ Their liberal ideas on free enterprise, education, rationalism and parliamentary government soon found staunch supporters among the intelligentsia, professionals, aristocrats and even circles among the ruling classes in Iran, Turkey, and Egypt.¹⁶ In Iran, these developments laid the foundations for sweeping socio-economic and cultural changes which were introduced first by the constitutional movement of 1905-11 and later by Reza Shah.

Meanwhile, a more eclectic venture was molded which attempted to articulate oriental mysticism with Enlightenment's humanism and socialism. Among its leading proponents one can find such respectable intellectual figures as Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzadeh (1812-78), Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani (1853-96), and Ahmad Kasravi (1890-1946). Faced with Europe's scientific ascendancy and temporal power, they searched for a middle ground between the spiritual East and the materialistic West. While sharing the first group's belief in the necessity of imitating the universalist West, they nevertheless maintained their critical outlook. Kasravi, a prolific writer and social thinker, articulated the second group's manifesto at the time with the following words:

Another problem is this issue of the East and the West. Since Easterners have not kept pace with Westerners in their acquiring of science and knowledge and are still

struggling in the midst of aberration and darkness of the past centuries, the latter are looking down at them, always wishing to dominate them. As an Easterner I confess that we are very backward. I confess that we are swimming in [a sea of] ignorance. But you [Westerners] should also confess that in the past two centuries, since Europeans have found their way here, instead of trying to awaken and emancipate Easterners from their aberration and darkness, they have insisted that the Easterners remain in that entanglement. They have realized that it is in their interest to keep Easterners ignorant, and have used all means toward that end.¹⁷

Their predicament arose from the fact that they were suspended between two civilizations, attempting to reconcile modern rationalism with antiquated traditions. Yet they did not fully belong to either one of these schools of thought. They manifested their eclecticism through their: (1) advocacy of pre-Islamic Persian glory; a strong sense of Persian chauvinism; hatred of Arabs; and (2) borrowing of Enlightenment's language of secularism, nationalism, democracy, socialism and scientism. They were living in a "Levantine sub-culture," sharply criticizing their decadent society for its despotic political machinery, rigid socioeconomic structures, archaic ideologies and foreign-infected (as well as unscientific) language, and poetry.¹⁸ Inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution, they advocated peasants' interests and social justice, and envisioned a revolutionary solution to Iran's miseries.

A third intellectual campaign was also formed which has come to be known as "Islamicism" or "Islamic Modernism." While the second group spoke the language of nationalism, deism, secularism, and at times socialism, this third group was positively Islamic in its outlook and political agenda. Among its leading proponents were such acclaimed figures as Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani (Assad-Abadi) in Iran, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida in Egypt, and Muhammad Iqbal in Pakistan. Faced with the imminent threat of the Western powers and the eradication of the traditional insularity of their societies, along with the aloofness of a good number of the ulama, these thinkers attempted to awaken their countrymen from their

hypnotic trance and historical nightmare. While influenced by European doctrines, they nevertheless remained opposed to the inclusive appropriation of the East by the West. Viewing cultural abstinence as no longer a practical alternative, they advocated selective adoption of those Western scientific and cultural traits which were compatible with the Shari'ah. Al-Afghani (1839-97) engaged the famous French Orientalist, Ernest Renan, in a brilliant polemic in which al-Afghani attacked the Western perception of its own "civilizing" mission, its claim to a universalist philosophy, and its historicist outlook.¹⁹ For him and his disciples, Islam constituted a mobilizing ideology capable of standing up to the West. They believed the avant-garde intellectuals of the first two groups had lost touch with the majority of the Iranian masses who were still firm believers in Islam, traditional normative values and habits. It was to this perceived need that they addressed themselves. Following the widespread tendency of intellectuals to speak for the "others" and to have a sense of political mission, they advocated pan-Islamism as their revolutionary "utopia."

While promoting modernization through selective adoption from the West in economic and technological fields, the Islamicists remained steadfast in their opposition to modernity and modernism. They were not willing to acknowledge that "modernity" as a culture and "modernism" as a consciousness were only the by-products of "modernization" as an economic process.²⁰ Unable to comprehend the interrelatedness of cultural properties, they subscribed to the maxim of Thomas Hobbes "out of the past we make a future" and attempted to pursue a visionary future through a mystical past.

What brings these three intellectual undertakings together, despite their different political beliefs, is the way they denote the West as the "other." For those who viewed it as a perfect model to be wholeheartedly embraced, those who advocated cautious acculturation, and those who attempted to dismantle and transcend it as the "antagonistic other," the West constantly returned as the "culture of reference," positing itself as universally valid. It seemed then, as now, that no way existed to circumvent the West, and its perpetual Eurocentric discourse(s). The West had become a source of inspiration as well as a vantage point from which non-Western societies could

examine themselves in order to diagnose their cultural-historical "illness."

A trajectory of the discursive terrains of modern Iranian intellectual thought from the late nineteenth century to the present would demonstrate its epistemological and political continuities as well as its ruptures and transformations. Despite the current flourishing of a genre of revisionist historical studies which have tried to deny or downplay the role of liberal and eclectic modernists of modern Iran, the fact remains that these intellectuals have left their mark upon Iranian political culture in no uncertain way. Their impact on the language, values, rituals, terminology, practices and imagery of modern Iranian political culture is irrefutable. The ascendancy of Islamicism to power in 1979 did not take place in an intellectual-theoretical vacuum. The earlier reactions and oppositional cries of al-Afghani and his disciples about the West were gradually transformed into a more articulate, antimodernist, political and philosophical paradigm which laid the intellectual groundwork for the 1979 Revolution. It is to an examination of this paradigm and its intellectual precursors that we now turn.

Al-e Ahmad: an iconoclast *homme de lettres*

In the fall of 1962, amid a social transformation which was rapidly altering the configuration of Iranian society, a monograph entitled *Gharbzadegi* was published by Jalal Al-e Ahmad.²¹ The book proved to be an intellectual bombshell immediately upon its release because it called into question the basic foundations of Iranian social and intellectual history. This quality made *Gharbzadegi* the intellectual bible of several generations of Iranian intellectuals.

Gharbzadegi performed a variety of functions. First, it depicted the dilemma of a changing society by providing a critical chronicle of a century of Iranian enlightenment. Second, by putting the question of national and ethnic identity once again on the agenda, *Gharbzadegi* enunciated a nativistic alternative to the universalism of the Iranian left so popular in the previous decade. Third, by providing a passionate eulogy for a passing era and its customs, *Gharbzadegi* articulated an anti-modernist, populist discourse very much sceptical of all that the West had

to offer. Finally, it exhorted many Iranian intellectuals to reassess their passive and unreflective embrace of Western ideas and culture, and called for an awakening and resistance to the hegemony of an alien culture which increasingly dominated the intellectual, social, political and economic life of the Iranian society.

Al-e Ahmad begins his defiant monograph with a definition of *gharbzadegi* as "the aggregate of events in the life, culture, civilization, and mode of thought of a people having no supporting tradition, no historical continuity, no gradient of transformation. . . ."²² His clear intention was to sensitize the Iranian public to the problem of growing rootlessness in their country, which he perceived as a "disease."

I speak of "gharbzadegi" as of tuberculosis. . . . I am speaking of a disease: an accident from without, spreading in an environment rendered susceptible to it. Let us seek a diagnosis for this complaint and its cause - and, if possible, its cure.²³

Influenced by Heidegger, Al-e Ahmad viewed technology and machinism as the two essences of Western civilization. For him, the West was not just an imperialist entity, but also the heart of technological development. Al-e Ahmad maintained that technology did not allow for an equal exchange among nations, since some were exporters of it while others were its importers. Similarly, machines were not just mere instruments, but rather the embodiment of a mode of thought. Viewing machinery and technology as a talisman to the Westoxicated, he formulated his basic concern in the following terms:

We have been unable to preserve our own historico-cultural character in the face of the machine and its fateful onslaught. Rather, we have been routed. We have been unable to take a considered stand in the face of this contemporary monster. So long as we do not comprehend the real essence, basis, and philosophy of Western civilization, only aping the West outwardly and formally (by consuming its machines), we shall be like the ass going about in a lion's skin.²⁴

Al-e Ahmad believed that this disease could result in the eradication of Iran's cultural authenticity, political sovereignty,

and economic well-being. His usage of a medical analogy to symbolize a cultural, political, and an economic ailment deliberately emphasized intellectual vigilance. Grounding his discussion in the familiar dichotomy of "us" versus "them" or "East" versus "West," Al-e Ahmad depicts himself as "an Easterner with his feet planted firmly in tradition, eager to make a two- or three-hundred year leap and obliged to make up for so much anxiety and straggling." Later, continuing his comparative reasoning, Al-e Ahmad writes: "As the West stood, we sat down. As the West awoke in an industrial resurrection, we passed into the slumber of the Seven Sleepers."²⁵

In criticizing the "we," however, Al-e Ahmad first and foremost incriminated those Iranian intellectuals who were looking to the West as an alternative. He viewed these intellectuals as the agents most responsible for creating an environment susceptible to Western ingress and domination. Based on such a conviction, Al-e Ahmad denounces all notable thinkers of the constitutional era as being "Westoxicated." Broadening the perimeter of his criticism from intellectuals to the common people, he wrote:

- 1 A Westoxicated person stands on thin air.
- 2 A Westoxicated person is devious.
- 3 A Westoxicated person seeks ease.
- 4 A Westoxicated person normally has no specialty.
- 5 A Westoxicated person has no character.
- 6 A Westoxicated person is effete.
- 7 A Westoxicated person is a man totally without belief or conviction.
- 8 A Westoxicated person hangs on the words and hand-outs of the West.²⁶

Al-e Ahmad viewed intellectuals as the promoters of *gharbzadegi*; yet he was not willing to accept that, as a social group, they were only a reflection of the internal contradictions and incoherence of their own society. He criticized intellectuals while ignoring the fact that in a society such as Iran, which was rapidly becoming urbanized, industrialized, and incorporated into the world capitalist system, new social classes were emerging which demanded a new definition of self. Inappropriately, Al-e Ahmad held Iranian intellectuals

solely accountable for all the anguish and misery of their society. It is as if there were no relationship between these intellectuals and their place of upbringing – as if they were weeds that grew at will. Al-e Ahmad's chiding critique puts the intellectuals, rather than social relations, on trial. Perhaps it was in an imaginary debate with Al-e Ahmad that Jean-Paul Sartre declared:

Produit de sociétés déchirées, l'intellectuel témoigne d'elles parce qu'il a intériorisé leur déchirure. C'est donc un produit historique. En ce sens aucune société ne peut se plaindre de ses intellectuels sans s'accuser elle-même car elle n'a que ceux qu'elle fait.²⁷

As the first eloquent critic of machinism in Iran, Al-e Ahmad lamented the crumbling of his traditional society at the hands of machines:

as the machine entrenches itself in the towns and villages, be it in the form of a mechanized mill or a textile plant, it puts the worker in local craft industries out of work. It closes the village mill. It renders the spinning wheel useless. Production of pile carpets, flat carpets, felt carpets is at an end.²⁸

Al-e Ahmad, however, was willingly oblivious to the reality that these "alien" machines also curtailed workers' hardships by reducing their work hours and increasing their productivity. He wanted to put the machine, a monstrous giant, back in the genie bottle, and turn it into an obedient servant ready to obey its master at any time. However, Al-e Ahmad did not discuss how this could be accomplished. In the entire *Gharbzadegi* essay, no mention is made of the positive results of machinery. Al-e Ahmad perceived the machine in a similar vein as the Orientalist viewed Easterners: as tools or people which, out of necessity, one was forced to employ in order to accomplish one's needs or goals.

His preoccupation with the role of machines prevented Al-e Ahmad from appreciating the complexity of advanced capitalism. Although he did not make any comments on such 1960s debates as the dependency theory, the North-South debate, or the New International Economic Order, Al-e Ahmad was clearly influenced by the amalgamation of these debates.

His theory of *gharbzadegi* could be viewed as a less systematic version of dependency theory, which was captivating many other Iranian intellectuals besides Al-e Ahmad at that time. Furthermore, from the perspective of political psychology, this resistance to machinism can be perceived as a byproduct of the mentality of many Third World intellectuals of that era. One Iranian thinker explained this dilemma regarding machinism in the following way:

In its encounter with the West, the Westoxicated world sees its problem as one of confrontation with the former's power. They [the people] either become captivated or intimidated by it, or become fascinated and ready to sacrifice everything they have for the sake of obtaining this power. This power can best be witnessed in the technology and sophisticated machinery of the West. It is thus that, in the eyes of the Westoxicated world, the totality of the West is equated with machinism, technology and capitalism.²⁹

His encounter with Western thought and the modernization process compelled Al-e Ahmad to turn toward nativism. Judging from the progression of his ideas one realizes that Al-e Ahmad came more and more to believe that the preservation of indigenous customs would be possible only through a turn toward Shi'ism. Maintaining an instrumentalist view of religion, Al-e Ahmad prescribed the revival of Shi'i Islam as Iran's most effective "vaccine" against the epidemic of *gharbzadegi*. Logically, he considered the clergy, as the meticulous guardians of faith, to be the most qualified as "doctors" who could distribute this identity-saving vaccine. His high esteem for the clergy stemmed from his regard for the ulama as the only group in Iran that did not succumb to Western domination. With a sense of deep regret over the hanging of the conservative Sheikh Fazlollah Nuri at the hands of progressive minded Constitutionalists, Al-e Ahmad declared: "I look on that great man's body on the gallows as a flag raised over our nation proclaiming the triumph of *gharbzadegi* after two hundred years of struggle."³⁰

As Iran's leading intellectual of the 1960s, Al-e Ahmad epitomized the puzzling state of mind which besieged Iranian intellectuals in the post-World War II era. This was a gene-

ration tormented by the Cold War, the prospect of nuclear annihilation, de-Stalinization, neo-colonialism, Western self-doubt, endemic dictatorships, economic dependency, and nationalist uprisings. Al-e Ahmad belonged to a generation that was at once inspired by the West yet politically opposed to it; a generation xenophobic toward the West, yet drawing inspirations from the thoughts of its leading thinkers; a generation dodging religion and traditionalism, yet pulled toward them; a generation aspiring for such modernist goals as democracy, freedom, and social justice, yet skeptical of their historical precedents and contemporary problems; and finally a generation in need and search of a definition of "self" and "other." Al-e Ahmad's *Gharbzadegi* underscored the dilemma of Iran's divided intellectual polity by delimiting the choice to two alternative models: the model of the contemporary Western societies, or that of the supposed "perfect utopia" of early Islam.

Shayegan: an Oriental critic of Occidental philosophy

As one of the few Iranian intellectuals who balanced his interest in Western philosophy with an equal attention to Asian philosophy, Daryush Shayegan remains an intellectual exception worthy of in-depth consideration.³¹ From 1976 to 1978 he served as the director of the Iranian Center for the Study of Civilizations, a small institute aimed at familiarizing Iranians with the civilizations of Eastern and Asian countries such as China, Japan, India and Egypt. One of the first books published by the Center was a collection of essays by Shayegan himself on the socio-cultural mutations of the traditional societies of Asia.³²

In this book, Shayegan turned Al-e Ahmad's political critique of the West into a more elaborate philosophical critique. He warned Iranian (and Asian) intellectuals about the "double illusion" of trying to acquire Western technology while maintaining their own cultural identity. Shayegan contended that the traditional societies of Asia have fallen behind Western history and that this has become their predicament ever since. He writes:

My years-long research on the nature of Western

thought, which from the point of view of its variety, richness, searching and mesmerizing power is a unique and exceptional phenomenon in our earthly world, made me conscious of the fact that the process of Western thought has been moving in the direction of gradual negation of all articles of faith which make up the spiritual heritage of Asian civilizations.³³

Shayegan maintained that the elements of Western thought which were gradually negating all Oriental articles of faith were to be found in "technical thinking." Following Heidegger, he called this mode of thinking the "inevitable end of Western thought." Disagreeing with the early twentieth century Iranian intellectuals who argued that one can borrow such elements as technology from the West as long as they are compatible with one's indigenous cultural heritage, he rebutted: "One cannot say that we borrow technology but would abstain from its annihilating consequences, since technology is a product of a transformation of thinking and the outcome of a process lasting a millennium."³⁴

Reminiscent of French sociologist Jacques Ellul's characterization of a "technological society" based on automatism, self-augmentation, universalism, autonomy and monism, Shayegan put forward a philosophical critique of "technical thinking."³⁵ He viewed technical thought as a by-product of the amalgamation of four descending trends in the evolution of Western thought:

- 1 *Technicalization of Thought*: The process of descendance from intuitive insight to technical thought, and of reducing nature into material objects.
- 2 *Materialization of the World*: The process of descendance from substantial forms into mathematical-mechanical concepts, which causes the negation of all mystical and magical qualities of nature.
- 3 *Naturalization of Man*: The process of descendance from spiritual drives to instinctive drives, which negates all the divine qualities of celestial man.
- 4 *De-Mythologization*: The process of descendance from resurrection and concern with future life (based on cyclical time) to historicism and a conception of time which is empty of any otherworldly meaning (based on linear time.)

Shayegan's philosophical reading of history was based on a dualistic ontology which candidly accepted the West as its culture of reference. For him, Oriental identity could only be constructed and upheld through differentiation from the West. He maintained:

In the Orient, science never developed in the same way it evolved in the West because the Orient never became mundane, and nature never got separated from the spirit governing it, and the manifestations of divine blessing never left the realm of our universe. The Orient never produced a philosophy of history, since existence was never reduced to a mere subjectivity or a process such as in the philosophy of Hegel.³⁷

In other words, "we" (Orientals) have avoided the destructive repercussions of the four descending trends of Western thought, and so much better for "us." According to Shayegan, the essence of science and philosophy in Asian civilizations was altogether different from that of the rest of the world. On the status of science he wrote:

In the great Asian civilizations of Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, science has always been subordinate to religion and philosophy. Science never obtained the independence and possession which it gained in Western culture, and subsequently led to its mutiny against religion and philosophy, making humans into the sole owners and possessors of the universe.³⁸

Turning to philosophy, Shayegan maintained that in Asian civilizations, philosophy has an entirely different telos: "Asian thought is essentially gnostic and its goal is salvation."³⁹ "If Occidental philosophy is a question of existence and being, and if philosophy answers 'why' questions, in Islamic mysticism the questioner is God, and humankind only answers."⁴⁰ In other words, according to Shayegan, Occidental philosophy is based on rationalist thinking while Oriental philosophy is grounded in revelation and faith.⁴¹ The first began with relativity and secularized all knowledge, while the latter began with prophecy and divine revelation and viewed all knowledge as sacred. In the Islamic theosophical tradition which is based upon belief in a set of esoteric truths supported by such axiomatic principles as

prophecy, holiness and celestial revelation, there cannot be any "unknowns," since the answers were supposedly provided long before the questions were formulated.

Shayegan asserted that since the sixteenth century, when the West replaced religious order with civil society, it has been losing its spiritual trustworthiness. The outcome, according to him, is the present crisis of the West which has manifested itself in four forms: cultural degeneration, the twilight of gods, the demise of myths, and the collapse of spirituality.⁴² Viewing the Orient as the only remaining depository of humanity, authenticity and spirituality, he warned Asian intellectuals to safeguard their cultural identity, ethnic memories and heritage in the face of the intellectual assault of Western thought. Shayegan's basic premise was that the survivors of the great Asian civilizations are living in a no-man's land, between the agony of God(s) and its (their) imminent death. For him, *gharbzadegi* was the commanding spirit of this transitional phase. Speaking of *gharbzadegi*, he wrote: "it is another side of unawareness about the historical destiny of the West . . . *gharbzadegi* equals ignorance about the West, not knowing the dominant elements of a way of thought which is the most dominant and aggressive world view on Earth."⁴³

Hence Shayegan appears to be more anti-technological than Al-e Ahmad ever was. While the latter wanted only to make an obedient servant out of Western technology, Shayegan contended that Western technology and science constitute an inseparable whole. To reject one is to reject the other. The solution, according to Shayegan, was to return to cultural spirituality, which represented the only effective weapon possessed by the Orient against the intrusive West. He maintained that ethnic memories would expedite the flourishing of Asia's ancient, glorious heritage. In the case of Iran, Shayegan viewed Islam, and in particular Shi'ism, to be the constitutive source of Iranians' collective ethnic memory. For Shayegan, just like Al-e Ahmad, Islamic Iran and Iranian Islam have been so mixed with one another (for over fourteen centuries) that it is no longer possible to distinguish between the two. In a Hegelian fashion he describes the relationship between Shi'ism and Iran:

Contact with this atmosphere means contact with the

spirit of Iran which, whether we like it or not, blossomed in the context of Islamic thought and is still influential since Iran is in reality the trustee of the Muhammadian truth, and the light of mysticism in Islam. It is for this reason that Iran gives priority to the descendants of Muhammad and its last heavenly appearance (i.e. the Twelfth Imam).⁴⁴

Similarly, Shayegan's upholding of religion as the Iranians' source of identity led him to the same position previously undertaken by Al-e Ahmad. If Shi'ism was Iran's sole spiritual asset, then the ulama by necessity would be its most conscientious custodians. Shayegan wrote: "Today the class that is more or less the protector of the ancient trust and, despite its weak health, keeps alive the treasure of traditional thought is to be found in the Islamic theological centers of Qom and Mashhad."⁴⁵ He concludes his critique with a piece of philosophical-political advice: "Against a [Western] culture which is threatening our existence in the most aggressive way, we have no right to remain silent."⁴⁶

Shayegan's philosophical expositions lead him to construct the "West" as an "ontological other" (see Table 2.1). This othering' of the West and his subsequent castigation of the influences wrought by it compelled Shayegan to: (1) congratulate Islamic and Oriental cultures (for avoiding the four descending trends of Western thought); (2) promote an oppositional counterdiscourse; and (3) call for an alliance with the clergy, whom he views as the rightful custodians of the treasure-house of traditional thought.

Shayegan's construction of the West is reminiscent of Georg Lukacs's "reification." Inspired by Marx's theory of "fetishism of commodities," Lukacs coined this term to describe the idea that humans come to perceive the products and realities "made" by themselves to have a separate existence from them. As the new objects, humans are then alienated from, controlled by, and live at the mercy of their own former products.⁴⁷ It seems that Shayegan's grandiose postulation about the nature of things Occidental has led to a reification of the "West." The "West" is not considered as an assorted amalgamation of disparate entities and qualities but rather as an essence, or a Hegelian *Geist*.

Table 2.1 A taxonomy of Shayegan's philosophy^a

	<i>Occident</i>	<i>Orient</i>
Ontological and epistemological bases of philosophy	Subjectivity, historicism, materialism	Intuition, revelation, resurrection, prophecy
Goal of philosophy	Acquisition of greater dominance through knowledge	Acquisition of truth and salvation
Nature of questioner	Mankind as questioner seeking answer to "Why" questions (Being, Existence)	Questioner is God, mankind only answers
Nature of knowledge	Profane and mundane	Sacred and gnostic
Position of science	Independent of and privileged over religion and philosophy	Dependent and subordinate to religion and philosophy
Descending trends	Technicalization of thought, secularization of the world, naturalization of man, de-mythologizing	Questioning and abandonment of cultural spirituality
Causes of present crisis	Cultural degeneration, twilight of gods, demise of myths, rise of self-centered humanity, collapse of spirituality	Infiltration by Western philosophical doctrines

^a This table represents my reconstruction of Shayegan's positions based on his following books: *Asiya dar Barabar-e Gharb*; and *Boha-ye Zehni va Khatirah-e Azali*.

Only in the aftermath of the 1979 Revolution, when his theoretical exhortations were turned into a political reality, did Shayegan realize the shortcomings of his earlier reifications. Incriminating himself as well as his fellow travelers, he wrote:

The deep shocks that the Iranian Revolution caused in regard to our thinking, and values, as well as everyday practices, should lead us to rethink the state of relationships among civilizations. This means that we should not view these civilizations as two distinct geographical

worlds or opposing cultural poles. Instead, we should view them as two constellations whose stars constantly enter each other's universe and create eclectic and unclear concepts which to a sharp observer represent the non-cohesiveness of ideas present within the foundation of each civilization.⁴⁸

Davari: an ideologue in pursuit of *homo islamicus*

If Al-e Ahmad endeavored to awaken Iranian intellectuals from their historical coma by vehemently attacking *gharbzadegi*, and Shayegan attempted to delineate an ontological difference between Orient and Occident, Reza Davari has set himself a more ambitious goal.⁴⁹ His objective is to transcend both Al-e Ahmad's politicized critique and Shayegan's ontological counterclaims through a more immanent philosophical critique aimed at, what he perceives to be, the pivotal truths of Western thought, i.e. humanism and modernity. For Davari humanism is the "blueprint for another man, a man to whom all the philosophies, theories, logic and new sciences are subordinated. Humanism is present in all philosophies and theories. . . . Even religion is interpreted based on humanism. Humanism is Westoxication. . . ."⁵⁰

After viewing humanism as tantamount to *gharbzadegi*, Davari moves on to an indictment of modernity. He writes:

Modernity is a tree which was planted in the West and has spread everywhere. For many years we have been living under one of the dying and faded branches of this tree, and its dried shadow which is still hanging over our heads. While we have taken refuge in Islam, the shadow of this branch has still not yet totally disappeared from over our heads. In fact, neither we nor it have left each other alone. What can be done with this dried branch?⁵¹

The answer is obvious: not only the branch, but also the tree of modernity itself should be eradicated. How may this be done? Through the formation of a distinctive intellect, one that is distinguishable and superior to the "Western intellect." An intellect which instead of believing in humanism and the separation of politics and religion is grounded in the axioms of guardianship and prophecy.⁵² As an anti-modernist philosopher

aspiring toward the absolute edification of the minds of the Iranian intellectuals, Davari contends that a renaissance in Islamic philosophy can only occur through repudiating humanism, modernity and the totality of the Enlightenment accomplishments (i.e. rationalism, secularism, and individualism).

In a way, Davari is conversing with the ghost of Al-e Ahmad. He begins with rectifying the latter's definition of the West.

The West is a way of thinking and a historical practice which started in Europe more than four-hundred years ago, and has since expanded more or less universally. Its accomplishment is to possess everything included in the celestial cosmos. Even if it were to prove the existence of God, it will be done not with the intention of obedience and submission, but in order to prove itself.⁵³

According to Davari's Hegelian view of history, the West is not a partial or a political entity but rather a "totality." Davari thus goes way beyond Al-e Ahmad and Shayegan in appropriating and domesticating the West as an oppositional "other." He blames the West not only for its imperialistic ambitions *vis-à-vis* the Third World, but also for its anthropomorphization of god.

Having laid down these epistemological groundwork, Davari proceeds to reprimand Al-e Ahmad's theory of *gharbzadegi* through the following statement: "Contrary to what Al-e Ahmad thought, *gharbzadegi* is not a sickness and does not have any particular remedy;⁵⁴ and "it is not enough to limit ourselves to a purely political struggle against it. *Gharbzadegi* is not a personal physical complication, and it is not limited to certain groups".⁵⁵ Making his criticism even more pointed, Davari writes: "Not everyone who is against *gharbzadegi* or proclaims himself to be is by necessity outside its domain. Anyone who is guided by the 'Western intellect' and is conquered by Western materialism and consciously or unconsciously evaluates everyday events based on the evolution of Western history is Westoxicated."⁵⁶

After challenging the totality of Al-e Ahmad's theory of *gharbzadegi* and politely taunting him as being "Westoxicated," Davari implicates Al-e Ahmad's historical evaluation of the Iranian intellectual movement. He claims that, for Al-e Ahmad, politics is the guarantor of fulfillment of all decency and truth, as well as wickedness.⁵⁷ Davari considers intellectuals as off-

spring of modern Western history who did not live before it. He designates an intellectual as one who begins with the principle of separation of politics and religion (with the help of an intellect that has taken the place of revelation). Davari credits Al-e Ahmad with having presented a brilliant description of Iranian intellectuals but maintains that the latter has failed to understand the essence of intellectualism, which Davari contends has now reached a dead end.⁵⁸

Davari argues instead of blaming or counseling intellectuals, like Al-e Ahmad did, one has to move toward altercating with intellectualism altogether. He maintains that in the aftermath of the 1979 Revolution it is no longer sufficient just to complain about *gharbzadegi*. Instead one should indulge in a process of critical reflection on the very essence and reality of Western history. According to Davari a serious critique of *gharbzadegi* can only be effective when it is undertaken in the name of a return to the essence of Islam. He writes: "If we were not to enjoy the guidance of religion, we would unwillingly remain within the trap of the West".⁵⁹ For him, Islamic identity can only be constructed and protected through first perceiving (constituting) and then nullifying the Western "other."

Davari's philosophical account is full of sweeping generalizations. He writes: "There is not even one just [system of] government and politics in the political East or West;"⁶⁰ "no revolution can occur in the world unless the foundation of the West is transformed".⁶¹ Davari speaks of the "spirit of the West," "Western Philosophy", "Western civilization," "destiny of the West" and the "essence of the West" as if it were a homogenous totality with well-defined cultural and intellectual boundaries. Having assumed that the "West" is a unified whole, Davari comes to the conclusion that non-Western societies should reject the West in its totality.

What in non-Western countries are generally regarded as "modernity", "progress", "revolutionary ideology", "liberalism" and "democracy" are in reality the dispersed, superficial, and defective forms of *gharbzadegi* which can be called defective or passive *gharbzadegi*.⁶²

However, Davari does not illustrate (1) why the West should be viewed as a unified whole; (2) why is it that its history has or should come to an end. His Hegelian/Heideggerian construc-

tion of a unified and totalizing "West" leaves us with no chance but either to fully accept or fully reject the "West."

Davari's philosophical axioms do not lend themselves to any type of analytical criticism. As soon as one tries to scrutinize Davari's grandiose postulates through any social science methodology, he rebuts with yet another barrage of sweeping propositions which do not enhance the terms or the topics of discourse in any reasonable fashion. Such propositions as "the scientific method of inquiry is itself a product of the West and a manifestation of its spiritual decline and technological domination" are all too frequent and fallacious to warrant a response. Furthermore, Davari's philosophical propositions has grave political ramifications for a democratic system of government. His anti-modernist stand does not and can not acknowledge any space for doubt, dissent, irreverence, or pluralism; since these are the very same achievements of the Enlightenment era he is so dauntlessly trying to disavow.

CONCLUSION

This tripartite typology attempted to trace the trajectory of the metadiscourse of *gharbzadegi* which dominated the Iranian intellectual panorama from the early 1960s onward. It was argued that *gharbzadegi* was far from being monolithic. Quite the contrary, it was a paradigm full of internal contradictions and currents that was refined at each turn by its advocates. *Gharbzadegi* metamorphosed from Al-e Ahmad's chilling political critique into Shayegan's philosophical formulations, and came to rest temporarily with Davari's ontological denunciation of the West. The first blamed the West, the second mourned its self-inflicted death, and the third called for its abandonment.

Under the aegis of depicting an Oriental identity, all three thinkers discussed here have come to depict the West as a radical other. The internal/external figurative speech of *gharbzadegi* has forged a discursive space in which a radical mental boundary separates "we" and "they." The result has been the gradual essentialization and purification of the categorical dualism of *gharbzadegi*. This dualistic perception has been both indispensable and detrimental to the endeavor of Iranian intellectuals to construct a collective identity of their own. It has been indispensable since their alibi involved

devaluation of the "other" from the very beginning, and detrimental since they have been consumed with this imaginary "other."

On the face of such theoretical lacuna and intellectual stagnation, it should not come as a surprise that the majority of both religious and secular Iranian intellectuals have turned toward nativism, traditionalism and Islamicism. As a result of this dynamic transformation, the status of the discourse of *gharbzadegi* is no longer the same in post-revolutionary Iran as it was in the pre-revolutionary era. It grew from being an acculturated response of disenchanting intellectuals to becoming the hegemonic discourse of a revolutionary élite. The former uneasy squabbles of a number of critical intellectuals were now transformed to the theoretical stockpile of a revolutionary movement.

It is inconceivable to begin to comprehend the true causes of the unmistakable phobias, distrust, enmity, sensibilities, and defiant behavior of post-revolutionary Iranian leaders toward the West without first scrutinizing the discourse of *gharbzadegi*. Such slogans as "Death to the Great Satan" and "Neither East nor West," which captivated the minds of so many people, were not merely an Iranian replica of Third World nationalistic sentiments. They were also enriched with a strong dosage of the ontological principles of *gharbzadegi*. Khomeini's articulation of Iran's Islamic and national identities with one another and his suspicion of the outside world and commitment to the notion of a besieged nation engaged in an unequal combat helped to inculcate a garrison state mentality among many Iranians already accustomed to a universally dichotomizing mind-set.

Despite its triumphant political status, *gharbzadegi* remains intellectually tormented. It is based on too many untenable, questionable ontological and epistemological premises to sustain itself for long. Its nostalgia for the past, attachment to things native, idealization of identity, and ethical rejection of modernity are all problematical. Having grown jaded by the fiery rhetoric of *gharbzadegi*, an increasing number of Iranian citizens, intellectuals and politicians have come to abandon this discourse altogether. They view its dichotomizing mind-set, redolent romanticism and unabashed anti-modernism, as short-sighted, unpopular and irrelevant. The end may be at

hand for a discourse too ill-suited for the needs of a rapidly transforming polity.

NOTES

- 1 See the following works by Michel Foucault: *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Vintage Books, New York, 1979); *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 (Vintage Books, New York, 1980); *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (Pantheon, New York, 1965); and *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (Vintage Books, New York, 1975).
- 2 Stephen K. White, 'Poststructuralism and Political Reflection', *Political Theory*, vol. 16, no. 2 (1988), pp. 190.
- 3 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage Books, New York, 1979).
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- 5 Throughout this chapter the two dichotomies of Orient/Occident and East/West will be used interchangeably in order to remain loyal to the literal translations and the tone of the works cited. The 'East' or the 'Orient' encompasses all of the Middle and Near East, Asia, Far East, and North Africa, while the 'West' or the 'Occident' refers mainly to Western Europe and North America. As we shall see later, however, the term 'West' is also (mis)used very ambiguously by a number of Iranian intellectuals. While it represents a geographical entity for some, others take a more symbolic or mystical view of it, and regard it as a way of life or a set of ontological doctrines.
- 6 For two thought-provoking works on the 'constitution of otherness' see Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (Harper & Row, New York, 1984) and Michael J. Shapiro, *The Politics of Representation: Writing Practices in Biography, Photography, and Policy Analysis* (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1988).
- 7 Throughout this chapter I have used the term 'intellectual' as the English equivalent of the Persian term '*rowshanfekr*' which has a more generic connotation than its English counterpart. The category of '*rowshanfekran*' encompasses both the intelligentsia and the intellectuals. Hence, such groups as writers, poets, literary critics, artists, teachers, professors, researchers, translators, and journalists have been categorized as intellectuals.
- 8 The progenitor of the term *gharbzadegi* is a contemporary Iranian philosopher named Ahmad Fardid (b. 1912). However, it was popularized by Jalal Al-e Ahmad in a book by the same title published in 1962. *Gharbzadegi* has been rendered into various English translations such as: 'Weststruckness,' in *Gharbzadegi [Weststruckness]*, trans. by J. Green and A. Alizadeh (Mazda Publishers, Lexington, 1982); 'Occidentosis,' in *Occidentosis: A Plague From the West*, trans. by R. Campbell (Mizan Press, Berkeley, 1984); 'Plagued by the West,' in *Plagued By the West*, trans. by Paul Sprachman (Caravan Books, Delmar, 1982); 'Westernmania', in James Bill,

- The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1988); 'Euromania,' in Roy Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet* (Pantheon Books, New York, 1985); 'Xenomenia,' in *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, trans. by Hamid Algar (Mizan Press, Berkeley, 1981); 'Westitis' in Edward Mortimer, *Faith & Power* (Vintage Books, New York, 1982); and 'Westoxication,' in Nikki Keddie, *Roots of Revolution* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1981). In all instances the term *gharbzadegi* was generally meant to convey Iranian society's and its intellectuals' indiscriminate borrowing from the West. I prefer 'Westoxication' since it most closely resembles Al-e Ahmad's usage of *gharbzadegi* as a medical metaphor denoting a social illness. However, throughout this chapter I will continue to use the original Persian term *gharbzadegi* since its use somewhat differs from one author to another.
- 9 One notable exclusion in this regard is Dr Ali Shariati whose work came to exert a lot of influence upon Iranian intellectuals during the 1970s.
 - 10 The other being Dr Abd al-Karim Surush, a British educated philosopher and historian of science. I have dealt with the ideas of Surush and Shariati, among others, in my forthcoming book *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: A Study in Orientalism in Reverse* (State University of New York Press, Albany, 1992).
 - 11 For a systematic treatment of the life and ideas of some of the more influential Iranian intellectuals of this era see the following works of Fereydoun Adamiyat: *Andishahha-ye Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani* [The Thought of Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani], (Zar, Tehran, 1978), *Andishahha-ye Talebuf-e Tabrizi* [The Thought of Talebuf-e Tabrizi], (Damavand, Tehran, 1984), *Fekr-e Demukrasi-e Ejtema'i dar Nahzat-e Mashrutiyyat-e Iran* [The Idea of Social Democracy in the Iranian Constitutional Movement], (Payam, Tehran, 1984), and *Andishah-ye Taraqqi va Hokumat-e Qanun* [The Idea of Progress and the Rule of Law], (Khvarazmi, Tehran, 1977).
 - 12 Abo'l-Hasan Khan Ilchi, *Heyrat'نامه: Safarnameh-ye Abo'l-Hasan Khan Ilchi beh Landan* [The Book of Perplexities: Travel Memoirs of Abo'l-Hasan Khan Ilchi To London], edited by Hasan Mursalvand (Mu'assasah-ye Khadamat-e Farhangi-e Rasa, Tehran, 1985), p. 221.
 - 13 See Hamid Algar, *Mirza Malkum Khan: A Study in the History of Iranian Modernism* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1973).
 - 14 Cited in Gholamreza Vatandoust, 'Sayyid Hasan Taqizadah and KAVEH: Modernism in Post-Constitutional Iran (1916-1921),' unpublished Ph.D dissertation, University of Washington, 1977, p. 47.
 - 15 In the Arab world, Rifa'ah Rafi' al-Tahtawi, Taha Hussein and Ahmad Lutfi al-Said suggested a similar undertaking in taking a short cut to civil society. See Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, *Arab Rediscovery of Europe: A Study in Cultural Encounters* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1963).

- 16 The simultaneous rise of Muhammad Ali's movement in Egypt, and the Young Ottomans, the Young Turks and Ataturk in Turkey led to enormous cultural transformations in these two respective societies. For an exposition of the ideas of Arab and Turkish intellectuals during this era see: Albert Hourani, *Arab Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984); and Serif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1962).
- 17 Ahmad Kasravi, *Payan be Daneshmandan-e Urupa va Amrika* [A Message To European and American Scientists], (n.a., Tehran, 1958), p.35.
- 18 See H. Algar, 'Malkum Khan, Akhundzadeh and the Proposed Reform of the Arabic Alphabet,' *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 5, no. 5 (1969), pp. 116-130; and M. A. Jazayeri, 'Ahmad Kasravi and the Controversy Over Persian Poetry,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 4, no. 4 (1973), pp. 190-203.
- 19 See H. Pakdaman Natiq, *Jamal ed-Din Assad Abadi dit Afghani* (Maisonneuve et Lgrose, Paris, 1969); and N. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1983).
- 20 For a philosophical discussion of 'modernism,' 'modernization,' and 'modernity' see Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1982).
- 21 Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1923-69) was born into a religious family from northern Iran. Upon graduating from high school he broke with religion and joined the ranks of the Marxist Tudeh Party, where he soon rose to a high position within the party's publicity department. In 1947, however, he left the party and retired from the political arena only to return a few years later during the oil nationalization campaign led by Dr Muhammad Mossadeq. His reorientation toward Islam gradually took place after the 1953 coup and reached its focal point with the publication of *Gharbzadegi*. By this time, as a teacher, belletrist, translator and ethnographer he had earned a reputation for being the unofficial, leading spokesman of anti-establishment Iranian intellectuals, and served as a mentor to a great many of them.
- 22 Jalal Al-I Ahmad, *Occidentosis: A Plague From the West*, p. 34.
- 23 *Ibid*, p. 27.
- 24 *Ibid*, p. 31.
- 25 *Ibid*, p. 55.
- 26 *Ibid*, pp. 92-7.
- 27 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Plaidoyer pour les intellectuels* (Gallimard, Paris, 1972), p. 41.
- 28 Al-I Ahmad, *Occidentosis*, p. 68.
- 29 Daryush Ashuri, 'Dar Amadi be Ma'na-ye Jahan-e Sevvom', [A Preface to the Meaning of the 'Third World,'] *Kitab-e Agah* (Agah, Tehran, 1983), p. 206.
- 30 Al-I Ahmad, *Occidentosis*, p. 57.

- 31 Born in 1935 in Tehran, Shayegan was educated in Iran, England, Switzerland and France, respectively. In 1968, he received his doctorate in Hindu and Sufi philosophy from the Sorbonne under the supervision of Professors Corbin and Lacombe. Upon his return to Iran he became a professor of mythology, Indology and comparative philosophy at Tehran University. After the revolution he served as the Director of the Institute of Ismaili Studies in Paris, and is presently the editor of *Iran Nameh*, a Persian journal of Iranian Studies published by the Foundation for Iranian Studies in Maryland, USA.
- 32 Daryush Shayegan, *Asiya dar Barabar-e Gharb* [Asia Facing the West], (Amir Kabir, Tehran, 1977).
- 33 *Ibid*, p. 3.
- 34 *Ibid*, p. 46.
- 35 See Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (Knopf, New York, 1964).
- 36 Shayegan, *Asiya dar Barabar-e Gharb*, pp. 47-8.
- 37 Daryush Shayegan, 'Din va Falsafeh va Elm dar Sharq va Gharb' [Religion, Philosophy and Science in East and West], *Alefba*, vol. 1, no. 6 (1977), p. 108.
- 38 *Ibid*, p. 102.
- 39 Shayegan, *Asiya dar Barabar-e Gharb*, p. 233.
- 40 Shayegan, *Din va Falsafeh va Elm dar Sharq va Gharb*, p. 109.
- 41 See Daryush Shayegan, *Botha-ye Zehni va Khatirah-e Azali* [Idols of Mind and Perennial Memory] (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1976).
- 42 Shayegan, *Asiya dar Barabar-e Gharb*, p. 168.
- 43 *Ibid*, p. 51.
- 44 *Ibid*, p. 190.
- 45 *Ibid*, p. 296.
- 46 *Ibid*, p. 51.
- 47 See Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness* (MIT Press, Cambridge, 1968), pp. 83-110.
- 48 Daryush Shayegan, 'Ideolozhik Shodan-e Sonnat' [The Ideologization of Tradition], *Zaman-E Now*, no. 12 (1986), p. 45. For a more comprehensive treatment of this topic see his *Qu'est-ce qu'une revolution religieuse?*, (Les Presses d'aujourd'hui, Paris, 1982).
- 49 Born in Ardakan (near Isfahan) in 1933, Davari finished his primary and secondary education in his place of birth. His dissertation, completed in 1967, dealt with the influence of Greek philosophy on the political philosophy of such early Islamic thinkers as Farabi. Since his graduation, Davari has been a professor of philosophy at his alma mater, Tehran University, where he mainly teaches courses on the history of modern philosophy. After the revolution, while maintaining his academic post, Davari served in such capacities as a researcher in the Iranian Academy of Philosophy; member of the newly-found Iranian Academy of Sciences; as well as a member of a number of scientific and academic delegations representing Iran in international conventions.
- 50 Reza Davari, *Engelab-e Islami va Vaz'-e Kouuni-e Alam* [Islamic Revolu-

- tion and the Present Status of the World], (Entesharat-e Markaz-e Farhang-ye Allamah Tabataba'i, Tehran, 1982), p. 59.
- 51 Ibid, p. 83.
- 52 Ibid, p. 85.
- 53 Reza Davari, 'Lavazem va Natayej-e Enkar-e Gharb' [The Necessities and Consequences of Refuting the West], *Kayhan-e Farhangi*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1984), p. 18.
- 54 Davari, *Enqelab-e Islami va Vaz'-e Konuni-e Alam*, p.56.
- 55 Ibid, p. 83.
- 56 Ibid, p. 80.
- 57 Ibid, p. 48.
- 58 Reza Davari, *Shammah-ey az Tarikh-e Gharbzadegi-e Ma (Vaz'-e Konuni-e Tafakkor dar Iran)* [A Short Account of Our Westoxicated History (The Present Status of Thought in Iran)], (Surush, Tehran, 1984), p. 8.
- 59 For more on Davari's views see the following two articles of his: 'Eshterak-e Mabade-ye Gharb va Sharq-e Siyasi' [The Common Origin of Political West and East], *Kayhan-e Havai*, 6 Aug. 1986; and 'Ilteqat: Tajavoz-e az Had' [Eclecticism: Exceeding the Limits], *Kayhan-e Havai* 23 Sept. 1986.
- 60 Davari, *Shammah-ey az Tarikh-e Gharbzadegi-e Ma*, p. 22.
- 61 Ibid, p. 15.
- 62 Davari, *Enqelab-e Islami va Vaz'-e Konuni-e Alam*, p. 113.

IRAN'S RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT

The Dialectics of Politicization

Mohammad Borghei

INTRODUCTION

Ayatollah Khomeini and his associates invariably state that the Iranian Revolution began in 1962.¹ Also, specific reference is made to that effect in the preamble of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. But the literature concerning the Islamic Revolution is generally silent about that year and the preceding years. The literature, at the most, dates to the events of June 5, 1963. In effect, those events were the culmination of a movement that began earlier in 1961, found its direction in practice in 1962 and engulfed a wide spectrum of the religious establishment. The main question is how did the Qom Seminary and the religious establishment, that had remained politically aloof until 1961, appear on the political scene within a period of one year, and how was it able to start a movement which was unprecedented on such a scale since the Mossadeq era in the early 1950s? This chapter deals with the developments within the religious community, and in particular within the Qom Seminary after the death of Ayatollah Boroujerdi in 1961, in the process of the rise of political Islam.

We will examine the religious atmosphere of Iran and, in particular, of the Qom Seminary, during the leadership of Ayatollah Boroujerdi. It will also be demonstrated how an alert leader such as Ayatollah Khomeini, by taking advantage of the favorable conditions within the Seminary as well as the political situation of the country, was able to transform the Seminary from a politically aloof institution into an active and interventionist one.

This results from the fact that the emergence of a *Marja* (religious leader of reference) is more a function of his under-