Return to which Self?: Jalal Al-e Ahmad and the Discourse of Modernity

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Jalal Al-e Ahmad has often been blamed, or alternately credited, for paving the road leading to the Islamic revolutionary discourse of the 1960's and 1970's in Iran and ultimately the establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1979.[12] Undoubtedly, Al-e Ahmad's discourse must be considered one of the most significant intellectual forces in the period between the end of Second World War and the advent of Islamic Revolution. More than anyone else, his thought has contributed to the turning point in the Iranian socio-political discourse with consequences that we are still witnessing at the beginning of the third decade since the Islamic revolution. As a result, and mostly by implication, Al-e Ahmad's discourse may often be perceived as anti-modern and bordering on obscurantism. However, the exact relation of his discourse to the phenomenon and discourse we know as modernity has remained, for the most part, unanalyzed.[3]

This article attempts to analyze Al-e Ahmad's discourse in relation to the central issues involved in the notion and phenomenon of modernity by focusing on the philosophical and ontological foundations of his socio-political thought. Here, I will try to demonstrate that while the main content of Al-e Ahmad's thought was in close consonance with the tenets of the discourse of modernity, the socio-political context of his period was conducive to an integration of the Islamic symbolism and an appeal to the Shii clergy which issued in a series of aporias with regard to questions of modernity in his though that he was never able to resolve. These paradoxes in Al-e Ahmad's discourse were inherited by Islamic revolutionary thinkers of the 1960's and 1970's and the contradictions and vacillations on the tenets of modernity found in the thoughts of Ali Shariati and Ayatollah Motahhari, for example, are in close parallel to them.[4] The notion of "westoxication" (*gharbzadegi*) was of central significance in Al-e Ahmad's discourse and as such it has been identified as the core of his purported anti-modernity. However, a closer reading of Al-e Ahmad's conception of *gharbzadegi* and the related sets of notions constituting what he called *rushanfekri*, reveals his complex approach to issues in modernity.[5]

Since Al-e Ahmad's intellectual endeavors were closely grounded in, and evolved from, the political and intellectual movement known as the Third Force (*Niru-ye Sevum*) and its founder, Khalil Maleki, a discussion of the thought of this important figure in Iranian history in the second half of the twentieth century in relation to basic tenets of modernity sheds more light on Al-e Ahmad's. However, before we proceed to analyze the discourses of

these two very significant figures in contemporary Iranian thought, we need to gain an interpretation of the phenomenon and discourse we call modernity.

Critical Theory and the Interpretation of Modernity

One of the most competent sources for an analysis and a critique of the phenomenon we call modernity is the intellectual tradition known as Critical Theory. Rooted in the Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant and the philosophical tradition associated with G.W.F Hegel, Critical Theory has evolved in the theories of the members of Frankfurt School, principally Theodor Adorno and Max Horkhiemer, and continues in the.thought of German philosopher and social theorist, Jürgen Habermas. Critical Theory has taken shape partly as a response to some of the exigencies of the modern world and has developed critical tools for the analysis and evaluation of many of the issues involved in modernity.

In Critical Theory, the principle of **subjectivity** constitutes a key feature of modernity.[6] Subjectivity can be defined by the characteristics of the modern **individual agent**-- such as **autonomy, self-willing, self-defining and self-consciousness.** In this view, which is historically very much rooted in the humanist tradition of the Enlightenment, humans as individual and as collectivities are viewed as the authors of their life-processes. They determine their own life-projects and because of this they are not passive but act upon their environment. As such, the idea of subjectivity is closely related to notions such as human freedom and volition, consciousness, reason, individuality, and rights of various types, but cannot be reduced to any single one of these categories. An important aspect to keep in mind about subjectivity is that it is simultaneously the repository of emancipation as well as domination. In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Adorno and Horkheimer viewed the history of modernity in terms of the evolution of subjectivity. However, the thrust of their argument in that book was that modern subjectivity in order to "enthrone" itself has in the process objectified itself and thus annulled its own subjectivity. As such, they argued that, "Man's domination over himself, which grounds his selfhood[i.e., subjectivity], is almost always the destruction of the subject in whose service it is undertaken".[7] In *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno expressed this paradoxical nature of human subjectivity and sovereignty over the nature and the self, as responsible for the barbarity that has marked the history of modernity especially in the twentieth century and our power of destruction: "No universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb."[8]

Thus, while the Cartesian *cogito* as the modern detached subject is the source of liberation (for example, as the foundations of the rights of citizenship)[9], it is also the responsible for the objectification of nature, the Other such as the colonized and women, as well as of the subject itself. As the subject liberates the self it also objectifies, and alienates itself from, three spheres: society, the outer nature and the inner nature. It is in modernity that the subject as individual is at odds with the society, the physical world as well as with his or her own body. Herein lies the very dialectical character of modernity and its promise of emancipation as well as its potential for domination. For this reason, from Hegel to Habermas

many social thinkers and philosophers have attempted to reconcile this subject of modernity and these three spheres. In Hegel's system, the attempt to conciliate between the subject and the three spheres of society, physical world and human body constitutes the three dimension of his grand scheme of reconciliation.

Here I am mostly concerned with the first dimension, the harmonization between the individual and the collectivity at the societal level, as this reconciliation has often been attempted in terms of what might be described as universalization of subjectivity, approximating its emancipatory potential. Hegel conceptualized this reconciliation as a synthesis, to be achieved primarily in terms of universality. As such, universality is a somewhat more elusive category to analyze. With regard to the first aspect of the reconciliation, that is between the individual and society, universality may be perceived as the mutual recognition among the plurality of subjects of each other's subjectivity. In a strictly historical context, this universality is often thought of as the elimination of restrictions based on privilege, status and/or other essential considerations. In a more restricted sense, this conceptualization of universality is also considered as the bourgeois formal equality before the law. In this vein, Hegel interpreted the two concepts of subjectivity and universality as epitomized in the Kantian notion of civil society, but criticized it for what he called its formality and vacuity. For him the divorce and estrangement from society and the moral "chaos" that is the result of the process of subjectification and radical human autonomy associated with subjectivity, cannot be healed by the universality of civil society in its Kantian formulation. Hegel was one of the first and most prominent thinkers to attempt to address this crisis of formality in modern society and try to resolve the contradictions between subjectivity and universality in a substantive (as opposed to formal) synthesis of the two principles.[10]

Expressed somewhat differently, the principle of subjectivity has given rise to freedom and the notion of individual and collective autonomy as well as rights of citizenship in the modern era. The unbridled subjectivity of modernity, however, also has been responsible for moral and political chaos and various types of the domination of the "others". For this reason, much of the intellectual and political thought since Hegel in one way or another has attempted to address the abstract, monadic and self-same subject of modernity and strived to embed it in a larger context, i.e., universality.[11] The latest and one of the most comprehensive contemporary efforts at the synthesis between subjectivity and universality, primarily at the societal level between the individual and the collectivity, is elaborated in the works of Habermas and his attempt at shifting the ontological foundation of modernity from mere subjectivity to that of **intersubjectivity** through language, in his theory of communicative action.[12] Other critical theorists such as Adorno and Horkheimer have also elaborately discussed the domineering and reifying aspects of modern subjectivity. Phenomena such as positivism, instrumental rationality, bureaucracy, the advent of Fascism and what they called "culture industry," are among those constituting the domineering aspect of subjectivity and its destructive effects. Yet, despite these negative aspects of human subjectivity and the desirability of embedding it in a universality of intersubjectivity, the

emergence of full-fledged subjectivity and its carrier, the individual, is sine qua non for entrance into the thresholds of modernity.

With these insights about the nature of modernity we can now proceed to an analysis of the discourses that changed the political and intellectual landscapes of Iran drastically.

The Third Force: The Political and Intellectual Roots of Al-e Ahmad's Discourse

In order to examine the important discourse generated by the movement known as the "Third Force" we have to look back to the late 1940's. In the aftermath of the failure of the secessionist movement in Azarbayejan led by the Democratic Party of Azarbayejan in 1947, the latent crisis in the Tudeh Party came to a head. The many reasons for the crisis in the Tudeh Party are beyond the scope of this article, but as we will see shortly, theoretical debates played a major part in it. In 1947, a group of dissenters broke away from the Tudeh Party. Among these there was Khalil Maleki, one of the original members of the group known as the Fifty Three who had been imprisoned with Taqi Arani by Reza Shah.[13] After a few years Khalil Maleki joined Dr. Mozafar Baqai to create the Toilers Party. The party's program called for the establishment of a genuine constitutional government and social and economic reforms as well as steering away from "all forms of imperialism, including Russian imperialism".[14] The Party's youth newspaper was called *Niru-ye Sevum* or The Third Force which was popular especially among college students in Tehran.[15] But during the oil nationalization of the early 1950's led by Mossadeq, Dr. Baqai withdrew his support for Mossadeq. As a result, Maleki broke away from the Toilers Party too and formed his own organization named after his newspaper, The Third Force. Constituting the left wing of the coalition formed for the nationalization of oil, the National Front led by Mossadeq, the Third Force espoused the cause of a "social democratic revolution" which would bring about extensive reforms such as distribution of land and voting rights for women.[16] While the Third Force fought against internal despotism and its Western backers, it also denounced Soviet imperialism and their dogmatic and blind followers in the Tudeh Party. The discourse generated by the Third Force had some important influence on the socio-political thought in Iran, and its evolution contributed to the emergence of the all-important theme of the "Return-to-the-Self", as I will examine shortly.

The central figure in the Third Force was Khalil Maleki(1901-1969). Maleki was born into in a religious merchant's family from Tabriz. His father was an activist in the Constitutional Revolution. Maleki received his primary and secondary education in Arak in the Azarbayejan and continued his education at the German technical school in Tehran.[17] In 1928 he went to Germany to study chemistry on a state scholarship. But soon, as a result of his probing into the suspicious suicide of an Iranian student, he came into conflict with the officials of the Iranian embassy in Berlin who branded him a communist, and he lost his stipend. Consequently, Maleki had to return to Iran without finishing his Ph.D. dissertation.[18] After returning to Iran, he registered at the Teachers Training College in Tehran and became a teacher.[19] While Maleki was in Germany he had established contact with some of the radical Iranian student circles, but it was after his return to Iran that he was gradually

recruited to the radical intellectual circle of the Fifty Three founded by Taqi Arani and was imprisoned with them in 1937. After the remaining members of the Fifty Three were released from prison in 1941 and formed the Tudeh Party, they also recruited Maleki. While Maleki was very active in the Tudeh Party and held sensitive positions, he was critical of the predominant Stalinist ideology in the Party and opposed the subservience of the leaders of the Tudeh toward the Soviet Union. This opposition and criticism led to Maleki's separation from the Party and eventually to the establishment of the Third Force.

Maleki's most vehement criticism of the Tudeh Party was directed at the party's "necessitarianism" (*qaza va qadar*) as a latter-day fatalism. He took the party's leadership to task for believing in an "automatic view of history", in their conceptualization of historical materialism.[20] In his criticism of the Tudeh Party's determinist approach and the denial of human agency which was one of the causes of his splinter, Maleki distinguished his path from the Tudeh Party, while striving for the same goal of socialism,

In our opinion party and social commitments must be based on discernment, intelligence, and correct understanding and analysis of events, especially the realization that our [human] intervention has an impact and as a social force makes a difference in the process of events. The process of historical necessity is created by us, not by esoteric celestial or terrestrial forces...This is the [essence] of two paths to the same goal and as the result of the collision of these two paths, unfortunately, the current schism[i.e., the split between Maleki and the Tudeh Party] takes place.[21]

Maleki maintained his belief in a "genuine" Marxian notion of "scientific historical necessity" while he accused the leadership of the Tudeh Party of believing in the "absolute historical necessity" which in his opinion accounted for the Tudeh Party's passivity and inaction *vis-a-vis* the international events, and following the Soviet line submissively.[22] What he meant by a "scientific historical necessity" was a belief in a limited sense of human agency in the process of history, where the "hero" and the "genius" in history, without making or initiating history, do make an impact upon it.[23] He even criticized Hegel, or an interpretation of him, for allegedly ignoring the role of the individual in the making of history as a result of powerlessness *vis-a-vis* the *zeitgeist*.[24] Maleki's emphasis on the individual subject was one of the causes of the mutual disfavor between him and the Tudeh Party. In fact, while he was still a Tudeh member one of his articles was censored by the party for broaching the role of the individual in history.[25] That Maleki criticized the surrendering of individual subjectivity to the collectively is demonstrated by his assessment of an incident involving a member of the Soviet Communist Party of Iranian origins named Dadashzadeh whom he met in prison in Iran. Maleki described Dadashzadeh as a "generic type of a non-entity" in relation to the collectivity and the Party,

He is a weak individual in relation to the large society and [even] the larger party. His individual reason, intelligence and understanding vis-a-vis the public opinion is naught. In brief, Dadashzadeh spoke of public opinion in the same manner as a devotee speaks of his master or a Dervish who is *fanafillah* [annihilated in God] of his god.[26]

Such view of individual subjectivity prompted Maleki to decry the lack of individual freedom in the Soviet system. While he was critical of the capitalist system he was even more

critical of the Soviet system for denying economic and political freedoms and destroying individual freedom.[27] This did not mean, however, that Maleki would neglect the principle of universality. His concern with universal subjectivity and intersubjectivity is encapsulated in his aphorism that, "every baker should be able to learn the art of governing and participation in government".[28]

As a socialist, Maleki criticized the Constitutional Revolution of 1906-1909 for the incompleteness of its universality.[29] For this reason he proposed that the democratic movement in Iran take up the task of creating a society in which universal subjectivity in all its depth and breadth could develop,

In my opinion the most important historical task of the National Front is the creation of a "mass civil order" [*madaniyat- e tudeh-i*], so that every individual [member] of the nation could have a place there and according to his/her merit and talent would contribute to society and would enjoy the fruits of his/her toil. We can identify a society and a civilization in which there would be a logical and proper **combination** of the **individual** and **society**, a civilization in which society is not sacrificed to the individual and also remember that society does not exist in itself but rather is made up of all individuals.[30]

To present a balanced view of Maleki's discourse, it is necessary to mention, as Daryush Ashuri has pointed out, that while Maleki bravely fought against Stalinism and Sovietism, his intellectual relations with Leninism remained ambivalent.[31] Even more importantly, it might be added, Maleki often declared himself loyal to most tenets of Marxism, neglecting Marxism's unwavering pursuit of a collective subject and the latter's contrast to his own construction of a universalist notion of human agency and subjectivity. However, the most important aspect of Maleki's discourse was its consequences. It helped to set the stage for the emergence of the theme of the return-to-the-self, which proved to change the destiny of Iran. Near the end of his career, by attempting to steer away from both capitalist imperialism and Communist domination, Maleki arrived at a position which called for the adoption of an ideology designed specifically for the particular needs and circumstances of Iran. Maleki expressly called for the creation of a "social school" [*maktab-e ejtema'i*] based in the specific historical and cultural experience of Iran. He even recommended Islam as the source of social justice for that ideology, thus initiating the call for "authenticity".[32]

Return-To-The-Self

Without doubt Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1923-1969) was the central figure in this pivotal turning point in the intellectual life of the Iranian nation and its history. As a friend and colleague of Maleki, Al-e Ahmad was a crucial link in the development of the theme of return-to-the-self initiated by Maleki.[33] Their close relationship went back to their membership in the Tudeh Party and their splinter from the Party at the same time in 1948 as well as the creation of The Third Force a few years later. After the establishment of the hierocratic regime in Iran, Al-e Ahmad has been blamed for Iran's retreat from modernity, but as I will try to analyze below the picture is more complicated.[34]

Al-e Ahmad was born into an esteemed religious family and grew up during the period of downplay of religion under Reza Shah. Both his grandfather and father were locally well-respected and prominent clerics and he himself donned the clerical robe until his early 20's.[35] In 1943, he went to the seminary at Najaf in Iraq, one of the most prominent Shii centers for the study of theology, but returned to Iran after a few months to join the newly established Tudeh Party. In 1948 Al-e Ahmad joined the separatists from the Party led by Khalil Maleki, but made known that he was no mere follower of Maleki's group and parted from Tudeh on his own terms.[36] However, in 1951 Al-e Ahmad joined Baqai and Maleki in establishing the Toilers Party and after the split between Baqai and Maleki in 1953, joined the latter to organize the Third Force.

As Hamid Dabashi has argued, after splitting from the Tudeh Party, Al-e Ahmad's political activity could not be confined to mere party politics and one particular party. As a result, he expended his considerable talents in many different fields ranging from fiction writing to ethnography, writing social and political essays, literary criticism, translation and journalism.[37] Al-e Ahmad's achievements in literature are reflected in the developments of his unique prose style. As Dabashi has described it, Al-e Ahmad's fast and often verbless sentences resemble telegraphic texts, wasting no time in getting to the point. This style of writing, combined with the extensive utilization of folklore and everyday speech was probably intended to reach the largest segments of the social universal.[38]

Al-e Ahmad might be considered as one of the earliest "post-colonial" thinkers who were increasingly paying attention to cultural issues in the confrontation between the imperialist West and the responses from the East. It is true that in the process of the effort to create an Iranian identity as an Easterner to deter the effects of Western cultural imperialism in eroding the Iranian identity as such, Al-e Ahmad increasingly gravitated toward an Islamic matrix of symbolism. But his significant usage of religious symbolism and efforts against Western imperialism did not, in the final analysis, I believe, lead him to an anti-modern camp, even though at times he seems to fall into that trap.

Gharbzadegi was the central concept in Al-e Ahmad's socio-political discourse. The title of a very influential book in the recent history of Iran as it appeared in 1962, *gharbzadegi* has been translated by different neologisms into English. Literally meaning "west-struckness," it has been variously translated as "occidentosis", "westmania", "euromania" and "westoxication". In reality the term *gharbzadegi* had been first coined by Ahmad Fardid, an Iranian philosopher who was a self-styled Heideggerian and seems to have taken upon himself the task of introducing and propagating Heidegger's anti-modern philosophy into the intellectual circles in Iran in the 1960s, '70s and even the '80s. Fardid had coined the Greek neologism *dysiplexia* as the basis for *gharbzadegi* to denote the anti-modern constructs of Heidegger.[39] However, Al-e Ahmad's take on *gharbzadegi* was quite different.[40] Al-e Ahmad himself defined *gharbzadegi* as,

The aggregate of symptoms afflicting the life, culture, civilization and mode of thought of a people having no tradition functioning as a fulcrum, no continuity in history, no gradient of [social] transformation, but having only what the machine brings them...Thus

gharbzadegi is the characteristic of a period of our history when we have not yet conquered the machine and do not understand the secrets of its configuration and structure.[41]

This characterization, especially the first part, can easily be misinterpreted as a critique of modernity with the implication of a simple return to the pre-modern Iranian identity heavily overlaid with religion and fanaticism as a remedy. Indeed, Al-e Ahmad himself aided this misinterpretation by fulminating against the figures of the 19th and early 20th century Iranian enlightenment, without understanding the dialectical nature of the latter and praising reactionaries such as Sheikh Fazlollah Nuri.[42] Be that as it may, this has been the common reading of Al-e Ahmad's work, especially after the revolution of 1979, which has blamed the consequences of that revolution, to a large extent, on him.

However, a closer examination of Al-e Ahmad's writings, I believe, yields different results. In many passages in the book *Gharbzadegi* Al-e Ahmad described the concept of *gharbzadegi* as the process of the creation of an " empty self". Borrowing the term bi-*simayi*, which can be translated as "characterlessness" or "facelessness", from Khalil Maleki, he described the Iranian youth as bereft of their **subjectivity**, as a "faceless crowd who have lost their religious anchors without gaining any sensibility of self-hood".[43] Al-e Ahmad used more metaphors to describe the personality devoid of subjectivity and the process of the destruction of Iranian subject. He faulted the Iranian educational system for the creation of *gharbzadeh* ("westoxicated") people who are just like "faces on water" (*naqsh bar ab*). He also explained the concept of *gharbzadegi* in terms of **suspension** in a state of limbo and indifference. He criticized the members of the ruling elite for having their "feet on the air", for being just like a "particle suspended in the air" or a "'mote on water" who have been disconnected from the depth of their society, culture and tradition. Such a person is not, "the connecting point between the ancient and modern, between old and new". He is "a thing without any connection with past and without any understanding of the future. He is not a point on the line, but a hypothetical point on a plane or even in the space, just like that suspended particle".[44] He complained about the insouciance of *gharbzadeh* people who have no beliefs, nor any commitments. They do not believe in God but they are not even atheists. They sometimes go to the mosque as they go to movies or clubs. But they are everywhere mere onlookers, always sitting on the fence.[45] Most importantly, Al-e Ahmad defined the *gharbzadeh* person in terms of "inauthenticity" devoid of personality and subjectivity,

The *gharbzadeh* does not have a personality. He is an inauthentic [*bi-esalat*] thing. His self, his house, and his words smack of nothing. He is more representative of everything and everybody. Not that he is cosmopolitan, that he is internationalist. By no means. He belongs to nowhere rather than being cosmopolitan. [He] is an amalgam of a personalityless individuality and a personality devoid of character [*enferad bi-shakhsiyat va shakhsiyat khali az khasiseh*].[46]

Al-e Ahmad maintained that the process of the creation of the "empty Iranian self" was perpetuated by the West and its domestic lackey, the Pahlavi regime. In the long rivalry between the East and the West, "we have ended up becoming the sweeper of the circus ring" and the West has become "the ringmaster". "And what a circus!" he wrote, "A circus of pornography, stultification and arrogance in order to freeload [our] oil." Al-e Ahmad further

argued that the process of creating empty selves in Iran was achieved through the technological domination of Iran by the West and their domestic henchmen,

It is true that, as Marx said, we still have two worlds in struggle against one another. But these two worlds have acquired much vaster dimensions since his time and the struggle is much more complicated than the struggle between capital and labor...Our time is characterized by the worlds: one involved in the making, development and exportation of the machine, the other engaged in the consumption, depreciation and importation of the machine.[47]

Thus, in order to fight against this unholy alliance between reification and imperialism, Al-e Ahmad exhorted not to succumb to Western technological domination and put the "jinni of machine" back into its bottle and liberate ourselves by making the machine ourselves and gaining control over it.[48]

Rushanfekri: Modern Subjectivity as Anti-dote to the Loss of Iranian Subjectivity

In order to fill the empty self and restore authenticity to it, Al-e Ahmad proposed what he called *"rushanfekri"*. His ideas on this issue were mostly discussed in a book called *On The Services and Treasons of Intellectuals*, on which he started working after the, mostly religiously inspired, uprising of the summer of 1963, which was led by Ayatollah Khomeini and bloodily suppressed by the Shah's regime. That Al-e Ahmad held the secular intellectuals responsible for the failure of this uprising, was the occasion for him to discuss the role of intellectuals in addressing Iran's socio-political problems. What Al-e Ahmad meant by *rushanfekri*, it seems to me, was the exact opposite of *gharbzadegi* and its antidote. The term *rushanfekri* is of a relatively recent coinage in Iran. It is a Perso-Arabic term composed of *"rushan"*, meaning "enlighten" and *"fekr"*, meaning "thought". *Rushanfekr* in modern Persian is roughly equivalent to intellectual, but *rushanfekri*, at least in the context used by Al-e Ahmad, may be translated as "enlightenment" and *rushanfekr* as a member of the intelligentsia. In fact, he gave a definition of what he meant by *rushanfekri* which is almost a textbook definition of Western Enlightenment and **freedom of subjectivity**,

We can say that *rushanfekri* is peculiar to the period in which human societies are no longer organized on the basis of blind obedience [*ta'abud*] or fear of the supernatural...as before. A period in which the transformation in thought following the principle of experiment and progress in technology spreading among increasingly vaster human societies, with the aid of means of communication, has taken out the element of fear in natural phenomena and demonstrated that they have no influence on human destiny. In more general terms, *rushanfekri* is a **period in which man is cut off from natural elements**; [he] **is left alone and his destiny is separated from that of nature.** [He] **finds himself alone** *vis-a-vis* **his destiny, without any Celestial or Terrestrial support.** [He] **is forced to act relying on himself only, without any expectations from the Outside or the Sublime world.** [He is forced] to **choose, to be free, and responsible.**[49]

He then concluded that when humans are liberated from "necessitarianism" (jabr) and take their own destiny in their hands, then they have entered the "circle of *rushanfekri*".

There is no evidence that Al-e Ahmad was directly familiar with, or utilized, the notion of human subjectivity in its philosophical sense as an essential pillar of modernity. As mentioned above and as Daryush Ashuri points out, Al-e Ahmad had not read Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, where the concept of subjectivity and related issues, such as the freedom of the individual as the carrier of subjectivity, are elaborately discussed. Yet, Al-e Ahmad had extensive knowledge of other existential texts by Sartre and others as he translated them as books.   He must have also been intimately familiar with articles on Sartre and his philosophical positions on modernity through translations that were published in *Elm va Zendegi*, a journal published by Maleki with which Al-e Ahmad collaborated very closely.   In these texts, the notion of subjectivity and its central position in modernity are elaborately, albeit not too explicitly, discussed. As a result, without knowing them by their philosophical designations, Al-e Ahmad was quite familiar with the importance of notions such as subjectivity and freedom of the individual and was quite extensively, even though more implicitly than explicitly, engaged with them.[50]   And precisely because of this fact, in his discourse these notions are very much present, but not too explicitly.   Indeed the main contention of this article is to point out and bring to light this aspect of Al-e Ahmad's discourse, along with the historical contingencies that the intellectuals of his generation faced and which impelled them to gravitated to Islamic symbolism, resulting in the aporias that have characterized contemporary Iranian thought and experience.

What Al-e Ahmad considered to constitute the substance of *rushanfekri* was freedom and freethinking, which constitute an essential part of the notion of subjectivity.[51] He also wrote that the "foundation of *rushanfekri* lies in the dissemination of free-thinking and the freedom to ask questions".[52]   This position puts him at odds with dogmatic religionists (*mutshari'*) since he excluded them from being *rushanfekrs* because they, just like the military personnel, only obey the Command [*Amr.*]   In fact, Al-e Ahmad presented a fascinating comparative ontology of different religious traditions regarding the relationship between God and humans.   He contended that in Islam the relation between humans and God is that of master and slaves.   In Judaism it is the relations between two rivals as exemplified in the story of the wrestling between Jacob and Jehovah.   In Christianity, he argued, this relation is that of father and son and in Buddhism the unity of the creator and the created.   Then he concluded that this relation of master and slave was one of the causes of the weakness of *rushanfekri* in the Islamic world. [53]

Al-e Ahmad expressed some of his deepest ontological thought regarding the subjectivity of the **individual** in an essay which is an intimate analysis of his own existential problem of being infertile.   Using the Persian metaphor that every child is a gravestone for his father, Al-e Ahmad "celebrated" his infertility, perhaps out of frustration, as signifying his radical freedom as an individual.   In the essay "Sangi Bar Guri" (A stone on a grave), written in 1963 but not published until 1981, he interpreted his inability to connect his ancestors to his progeny as a break in the continuity of tradition, guaranteeing his individual freedom. Regarding his infertility as the negation of the past and tradition, he characterized the past and tradition as Nothing (*Hich*).   And all this was salutary because they proved there was freedom for the individual,

If you knew how happy I am that I am the last gravestone for my dead [ancestors]. [I] am the one and the only ending point of Tradition. [I] am the negation of future which would have been imprisoned by past.... At least I am left with the consolation that in this world there is freedom for the sole individual.[54]

Universalization of *Rushanfekri* and the Aporias of Al-e Ahmad's Discourse

Such a radical view of individual subjectivity, however, did not deter Al-e Ahmad from advocating the dissemination of *rushanfekri* among the Iranian people as a large part of his discourse concentrated on this issue. In fact, it was with regards to the types of **vehicles** involved in this process of dissemination of *rushanfekri* and the utilization of the Islamic symbolism entrenched in the popular sentiments in the same process, which was responsible for contradictory and controversial positions in Al-e Ahmad's discourse. Like many of his predecessors, Al-e Ahmad contended that the extent of universalization and empowerment of people issuing from the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 was confined to the aristocracy.[55] He also faulted the Tudeh party for its inability to reach deep into the social universal and its failure to disseminate *rushanfekri* among the "masses", despite its promising beginnings.[56]

Al-e Ahmad's frustration with the failure of secular movements in disseminating *rushanfekri*, as he called the universalization of empowerment, issued in a series of related aporias in his discourse which he never managed to resolve completely. He maintained that secular ideologies could not penetrate the depth of the social universal as has been proven time and again in Iranian history. To illustrate his point, he went back as far as the 6th and 7th centuries B.C. and the success of Zoroaster's religious message and the failure of the secular reformist Geumat, who probably lived two centuries after Zoroaster.[57] But, ironically, at the same time, he found religion to be the largest obstacle in the dissemination of *rushanfekri*. For example, Al-e Ahmad criticized the Shii concept *intizar* or the expectation of justice at the time of the advent of the promised Imam. One of the problems with this concept, he wrote, was that it was based on

ignoring the present reality and living only by hope of that Day or relegating the solution of all problems to that Advent. Don't you think this is the greatest cause of necessitarianism[*qaza va qadar*]? This gives rise to negligence in acting and decision making, and procrastination which is the biggest obstacle in the achievement and dissemination of *rushanfekri*.[58]

Al-e Ahmad attempted to resolve this aporia in a very cursory fashion by invoking the Shii principle of *Ejtehad*, which has historically been the method of deriving secondary rules from the revealed data utilizing the syllogistic paradigm.[59] He just made a passing reference to such an important issue by claiming that *Ejtehad* could be used to address the issues and problems of a modern society.[60]

The second aporia that Al-e Ahmad faced was the choice of the agents for the dissemination of *rushanfekri*. In fact, this aspect of his discourse has acquired such a pivotal significance that it has overshadowed the rest of his discourse. Al-e Ahmad reserved his most caustic criticism for secular Iranian intellectuals and the intelligentsia of the past and present.

The greatest sin, he believed, committed by the Iranian intellectuals and intelligentsia was their rift and alienation from the social universal, resulting especially from their attack on the religious beliefs and traditions of the people. For example, in a cursory review of some of the major figures of the 19th century Iranian enlightenment, he dismissed their efforts as paltry.[61] Even worse, he accused the majority of the intellectuals of being the pawns, if not direct agents, of cultural imperialism,

The intellectual in Iran is someone who in theory and practice, has a colonial approach in the name of a scientific approach. That means he discusses science, democracy and free thought [*azadandishi*] in an environment in which modern science is not established. Therefore, [the intellectual] does not know his indigenous people (i.e. his 'demos') to believe that they deserve democracy. Similarly, he exercises his free thought not against the rulers but only against the traditional institutions (religion, language, history, ethics and rituals) because exercising free thought is difficult against the rulers and colonial and semi-colonial institutions.[62]

It was as a result of this colonial link, in his estimate, that the contemporary intellectual in Iran, "is still alienated from the people. [He] is not in touch with the people and inevitably has no concern for them. [He] thinks about problems which are not local; his problems are imported. As long as the Iranian intellectual is not familiar with his indigenous and local problems and does not try to solve them, the situation remains the same".[63]

Such an analysis of Iranian intellectuals by Al-e Ahmad was only possible by means of a relatively elaborate sociological discussion of intellectuals in which he heavily drew on Gramsci's work. Taking the Gramscian concept of organic intellectual as the model, Al-e Ahmad coined the concept of indigenous (*bumi*) or "self-same" (*khodi*) intellectual in opposition to the *gharbzadeh* ("westoxicated") and imperialist intellectual. Moreover, he considered the overwhelming majority of secular Iranian intellectuals since the 19th century to belong to the latter groups. This led him to a desperate search for an "indigenous" type of intellectual to guide the people to their liberation.

Thus, the second aporia that Al-e Ahmad faced had its roots in the search for an "indigenous" type of intellectual. Well aware of the obscurantism of the clerics and their negating postures toward *rushanfekri*, he nevertheless gravitated toward them as the primary source of indigenous intellectuals who through their religious offices were closely in touch with the people. On numerous occasions Al-e Ahmad referred to the ineligibility of the clerics to become the intellectual and therefore political leaders of the nation because, like the military men, they belonged to the realm of "obedience" (*ta'abud*). But, at the same time he believed that "by the virtue of its defense of tradition, the Shii clergy is a type of resistance force against the encroachments of colonialism whose primary target for pillage is cultural and traditional. Thus the clergy is a bulwark against the westoxication of the intellectuals and the absolute submission of [our] governments toward the West and its imperialism".[64] Nevertheless, Al-e Ahmad stipulated that if the clerics decided to participate in socio-political movements they would have to drop the idea of government based on revelation or else they must refrain from political activity altogether.[65]

The third dilemma that Al-e Ahmad faced was the question of which "self" to return to. As we have seen before, the crux of his problematic in his book *Westoxication* was to identify the substance with which to fill the "emptied personality" devoid of subjectivity which was produced by imperialism. We also saw that he identified *rushanfekri*, or what he considered to be true enlightenment and free thought, to constitute the basic elements of that substance. At the same time he could not ignore how deeply Islam and loyalty to the Islamic heritage were ingrained in the consciousness of the people of Iran.

Conclusion

Subjectivity, or more accurately its universalization as intersubjectivity, is the ontological foundation of modern universal citizenship and democratic and human rights. In Al-e Ahmad's discourse, the critique of Iran's surrender to the cultural inroads of Western imperialism and domestic repression, captured in the notion of Westoxication, is often interpreted as his all out attack on modernity. However, in the light of the analysis presented here it is more fruitful to read Al-e Ahmad's concept of *gharbzadegi* more as a criticism of the loss of subjectivity of the Iranians . On the other hand, Al-e Ahmad's notion of *rushanfekri* , as freedom and free thinking of associated with human agency and its dissemination among Iranians, epitomizes the modern idea subjectivity and approximates a notion of intersubjectivity.

Thus, while the **main contents** of Al-e Ahmad's thought were closely in agreement with the philosophical and ontological tenets of the discourse of modernity, the socio-political exigencies of his period constituted a force that impelled him toward an Islamic matrix of symbols and an appeal to the Shii clergy that resulted in a series of aporias with regard to questions of modernity that he was never able to resolve. We can also see some of these paradoxes, contradictions, and vacillations on the tenets of modernity continued in the discourse of Islamic revolutionary thinkers of the 1960's and 1970's such as Ali Shariati and Ayatollah Motahhari, albeit perhaps for somewhat, but not entirely, different reasons. Indeed none of the dilemmas faced by Al-e Ahmad were easy to resolve. Thus, the significance of Al-e Ahmad's discourse lay in the fact that it opened the road for a return to a "self" which proved to vacillate with regard to the principle of modern subjectivity and therefore citizenship. The full force of the return to this contradictory "self" became apparent in the revolutionary religious discourses of the 1960's and 1970's whose echoes still resonate loudly in Iran.[66]

Endnotes

[1]. The author wishes to thank the anonymous readers for the helpful suggestions.

[2]. See, for example, Mostafa Zamaninia, *Farhang-e Jalal Al-e Ahmad* (Tehran: Pasargad, 1984), introduction pp. 25-38.

[3]. For good analyses of Al-e Ahmad's work and life in the historical context of Iranian intellectual history see, Ali Gheissari, *Iranian Intellectuals in the Twentieth Century* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism* (Syracuse: Syracuse

University Press, 1996); and Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1993).

4. Parallel, but somewhat different, paradoxes can be found in the thought of some other Islamic thinkers of the period such as Mehdi Bazargan and Ayatollah Taleqani. See, for example, the articles by Bazargan and Taleqani in *Bahsi dar bareh-ye Marj'aiyat va Rowhaniyat* [A discussion on religious authority and the clergy] (n.p.p; n.p, [1341], 1962).

5. *Rushanfekri* can be translated as "intellectualism" and Al-e Ahmad certainly wanted to convey this meaning in his writings. Yet, in his elaborate discussions of this concept, one can find, as I argue below, another sense of this term that stands for a core concept in modernity.

6. Habermas concurs with Hegel that the normative content of modernity should be understood principally in terms of subjectivity. He has quoted Hegel that, "The principle of the modern world is freedom of subjectivity, the principle that all the essential factors present in the intellectual whole are now coming into their right in the course of their development". G.W.F Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 286; cited in Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), p. 16.

7. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 54.

8. Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), p. 320.

9. For a discussion of the notion of subjectivity as the foundation of democratic rights, see for example, Alain Touraine, *What is Democracy?* (Boulder: Westview, 1998).

10. In a boarder context, that of the aesthetic realm and culture, for example, the synthesis between the two categories of subjectivity and universality may be conceived as a reconciliation of the mind and emotion, the intellect and sensibility and reason and imagination. Yet another dimension of the synthesis involves the harmonization between the soul and body, the subject and the object, consciousness and nature. On the dialectical relations between the two categories of subjectivity and universality and Hegel's objection to Kant's "formality" and his own attempt at a substantive synthesis between them see Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Also see Lawrence E. Cahoone, *The Dilemma of Modernity: Philosophy, Culture and Anti-Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987) ; David Kolb, *The Critique of Pure Modernity: Hegel, Heidegger and After* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) and Fred Dallmayr, *G.W.F Hegel: Modernity and Politics* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1993).

11. For a discussion of the debates regarding the efforts to embed the unbridled subject of modernity without compromising the freedom of subjectivity see, for example, Seyla Benhabib, *Critique, Norm and Utopia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); and idem., *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

12. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Vol.1. Reason and the Rationalization of the Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1981); and *idem., The Theory of Communicative Action. Vol. 2. Lifeworld and System: Critique of Functionalist Reason* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).

13. For a survey of this group and some the ideas of their members, see Ervand Abrahamian, *Tortured Confessions: Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 48-72.

14. Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 256.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., p. 277.

17. Homa(yun) Katouzian, *Khalil Maleki: Khaterat Siyasi* [Khalil Maleki: political memoirs] (n.p.p; Jebheh Publishers, 1983), p. 22.

18. Ibid., p. 28.

19. Ibid., p. 30.

20. Ibid., p. 63.

[21]. Ibid., p. 64. A brief consideration of the intellectual and the political contexts at the international level with regard to the leftist politics and political philosophy shed much light on Maleki's schism from the Tudeh Party. At the theoretical and philosophical front, in reaction to the increasing theoretical dogmatism and political repression of the Comintern, the Hungarian revisionist Marxist philosopher, Georg Luckas reintroduced the notion of human subjectivity into Marxist discourse in the 1920s. While Luckas's notion of subjectivity was not extended to the individual and remained at the level of the collectivity as a subject writ large, his initial critique of the deterministic approaches of the Communist International, which he later repudiated, set the stage for much of the critique of this orthodox brand of Marxism that contributed to the formation of Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School in Germany as well as what later became known as Western Marxism in France and then in the Anglo-American context. At the political level, Tito was at helm of the socialist opposition to the Comintern type of political repression and ideology. A comparison between Maleki and Tito is quite legitimate since both vehemently criticized the Stalinist politics and ideas after the second world war. For the central contributions of Luckas to this process, see, for example, Andrew Arato and Paul Breines, *The Young Luckas and the Origins of Western Marxism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979). On Tito, see, for example, Sharon Zukin, *Beyond Marx and Tito: Theory and Practice in Yugoslav Socialism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

[22]. Khalil Maleki, *Khalil Maleki: Barkhord -e 'Aqayed va Ara* [Khalil Maleki: the interplay of beliefs and views]. Amir Pishdad and Homayun Katouzian, eds. (Tehran: Markaz, 1995), pp. 78-79.

[23]. Ibid., p. 73.

[24]. Ibid., pp. 70-72. Much in agreement with the prevailing misunderstanding of Hegel in the West as well as in Iran, Maleki here seems not to be aware of the emphasis that Hegel placed on the notion of subjectivity and the individual as its carrier.

[25]. Katouzian, *Khalil Maleki: Khaterat Siyasi*, p. 289.

[26]. Ibid., p. 332.

[27]. Ibid., p. 186. Maleki specifically targeted "Democratic Centralism" as a farce in which there was no democracy and centralism was unlimited. See Khalil Maleki, *Khalil Maleki: Barkhord 'Aqayed va Ara* ,p. 132.

[28]. Maleki, *Khalil Maleki: Barkhord-e 'Aqayed va Ara* , p. 230.

[29]. Ibid., p. 85.

[30]. Ibid., p. 230; emphasis added. Here one must differentiate between what Maleki meant by "mass civil order" and what might be construed as a populist approach. As Maleki makes it clear in this passage the role of the individual is crucial in the first type of society, while there should be a "logical" combination of the individual and the collectivity. In populist approach the individual is usually sacrificed in the name of collectivity.

[31]. Daryush Ashuri, "Ba Khalil Maleki dar Vapasin Salha-ye Zendegi" (With Khalil Maleki in the last years of life), in Amir Pishdad and Homayun Katouzian, eds., *Yadnameh Khalil Maleki* [Memorial book of Khalil Maleki] (Tehran: Enteshar, 1991"), p. 52. Perhaps the paradoxical position adopted by Maleki, that is advocating a universalist notion of human agency and at the same time maintaining loyalty to Leninism, can be explained, as Ashuri suggests, by the aura that was associated with Lenin's personality and Leninism being construed as a force against Stalinism. See Ibid.

[32]. Maleki, *Khalil Maleki: Barkhord-e 'Aqayed va Ara* , pp. 218-224.

[33]. An elaborate discussion of the socio-political exigencies that impelled the intellectuals of Al-e Ahmad and Maleki generation toward Islamic symbolism is beyond the scope of this article. Schematically, however, they can be summarized as, the disillusionment with liberal democracy, especially after the coup d'état of 1953; the experience with the Tudeh Party; and the powerful and prevalent discourses that originated in the West which celebrated notions such as "authenticity" and the idea of "organic intellectuals". For a discussions of the political and intellectual context of this period see, Ali Gheissari, *Iranian Intellectuals in the 20th Century* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998),chapter 5.

[34]. For an interesting inculpation of Al-e Ahamd for his role in Iran's alleged retreat from modernity, see, for example, Freydun Adamiyat, "Ashuftegi Fekr-e Tarikhi[Confusion of historical thought]" in Ali Dehbashi, ed. *Yadnameh-ye Jalal Al-e Ahmad* [Memorial book of Jalal Al-e Ahmad] (Tehran: Pasargad, 1985).

[35]. Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), p. 42.

[36]. Ibid., p. 48.

[37]. Ibid., pp. 49-63.

[38]. See Ibid., for a detailed biography in English and analysis of Al-e Ahmad's works.

[39]. Ali Gheissari has provided a very informative account of Fardid's original conceptualization of *"dysipilexia"* and its Persian translation *gharbzadegi* which deserves full quotation. Gheissari has related, "In a private interview on the genesis of the term with Professor Fardid, he predictably gave a more philosophical, yet no less obscure, explanation. The term, he contended, was made into Persian while having in mind the spirit of a Greek combined expression *dysiplexia*, a term which was also created by Fardid himself. *Dysis*, in Greek, means the West; and *plexia* means to be hit or afflicted by something(as in, for example, "apoplexy"). The West or *dysis* in Greek (similar to the Arabic *gharb*) is both geographical West as well as the place where the sun sets and darkness begins. Here Fardid's main reproach is not to Western technology(or the *machine*, according to Al-Ahmad) but to the very structure of the so-called egocentric *weltanschauung* of occidental epistemology, as originated in ancient Greece, which regards an existential separation between man as the knowing subject and the external world as the object of study. Accordingly the emergence of such a perspective, as opposed to the harmonious and illuminative qualities of the oriental philosophies, was nothing but the beginning of a universal period of darkness which has since concealed the original unity and totality of Being". See Ali Gheissari, *Iranian Intellectuals in the Twentieth Century* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), P. 89 and p. 180, note, 101, For the full quotation used here see, Ibid., *The Ideological Formation of the Iranian Intelligentsia: From the Constitutional Movement to the Fall of the Monarchy* (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Oxford, 1989), pp. 264-5.

[40].In Daryush Ashuri's estimation, Al-e Ahmad was much more influenced by Sartre--even though he did not seem to have read his *Being and Nothingness*-- rather than by Heidegger through Fardid. Ashuri also suggests that Al-e Ahmad misunderstood Fardid's Heideggerian sense of *gharbzadegi* . See Daryush Ashuri, "Jalal Al-e Ahmad", in Ali Dehbashi, ed. *Yadnameh-ye Jalal Al-e Ahmad* [Memorial book of Jalal Al-e Ahmad] (Tehran: Pasargad, 1985) pp. 257-8.

[41]. Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Gharbzadegi* [Westoxication] (Tehran: Ravaq, 1977), pp. 34-35.

[42]. Ibid., pp. 78-80.

[43]. Ibid., p. 106.

[44]. Ibid., p. 141.

[45]. Ibid., p. 144.

[46]. Ibid., p. 146.

[47]. Ibid., pp. 26-27.

[48] . Ibid., p. 118. Al-e Ahmad's basically sound analysis of the alliance between reification and imperialism did not prevent him from making ludicrous pronouncements betraying a paranoid conspiratorial view of history. He suggested, for example, that the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1906 was a plot by the British to wrest an oil concession from Iran(*Gharbzadegi*, p. 83). Similarly ludicrous were his suggestions that Timurlane's destruction of the Islamic East was as a result of European instigations(*Gharbzadegi* , pp. 67-80). On the other hand, he discussed the phenomenon of Orientalism some two decades before Said did. See *Gharbzadegi* , p. 151.

[49]. Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Dar Khedmat va Khianat Rushanfekran* [On the services and treasons of intellectuals] (Tehran: Ravaq, 1980), pp. 30-31. Emphasis added. It is highly unlikely that

Al-e Ahmad had read Kant's important essay "What is Enlightenment?". However, his understanding of the notion of *rushanfekri* is very close to what Kant expresses by Enlightenment. See Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?", in Carl Friedrich. ed., *The Philosophy of Kant: Immanuel Kant's Moral and Political Writings*, (New York: Modern Library, 1949).

[50]. See Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent*, p. 57.

[51]. Al-e Ahmad, *Dar Khedmat va Khianat Rushanfekran*, p. 431.

[52]. Ibid., p. 243.

[53]. Ibid., p. 34.

[54]. Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Sangi Bar Guri* [A stone on a grave] (Tehran: Ravaq, 1981), pp. 92-93.

[55]. Al-e Ahmad, *Dar Khedmat va Khianat Rushanfekran*, pp. 202-5; 402.

[56]. Ibid., p. 415.

[57]. Ibid., p. 152-58.

[58]. Ibid., p. 271; appendix S.

[59]. See Roy Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran* (New York : Simson and Schuster, 1985), for example, for the exercise of *Ejtehad* in Shii tradition.

[60]. Al-e Ahmad, *Dar Khedmat va Khianat Rushanfekran*, p. 257.

[61]. Ibid., pp. 272-76.

[62]. Ibid., p. 50. Al-e Ahmad also blamed the intellectuals for fleeing the front-line with the coming of Reza Shah's dictatorship and the concomitant process of the eclipse of the emancipatory aspects of modernity that was briefly applied in Iran after the Constitutional Revolution. See Al-e Ahmad, *Dar Khedmat va Khianat Rushanfekran*, pp. 321-22.

[63]. Ibid., p. 407.

[64]. Ibid., p. 255.

[65]. Ibid., p. 271.

[66]. The Islamic revolutionary thought in Iran is characterized by an intense vicissitude, the concurrent positing and negating of human subjectivity and its corollary the simultaneous positing and negating of the rights of modern citizenship. . For an analysis of the contradictory nature of the Islamic revolutionary discourse with regard to modernity, see Farzin Vahdat, "Metaphysical Foundations of Islamic Revolutionary Discourse in Iran: Vacillations on Human Subjectivity," *Critique* 14 (Spring 1999), pp. 49-73.