

OCCIDENTOSIS:

A Plague From the West

JALAL AL-I AHMAD

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Mizan Press Berkeley

Contemporary Islamic Thought Persian Series
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Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data Al-I Ahmad, Jalal
Occidentosis: a plague from the West.

(Contemporary Islamic thought. Persian series)

Translation of: Gharbzadagi.

Includes index.

1. Iran-Civilization. 2. Iran-Civilization-Occidental influences. I. Campbell, R. (Robert), 1947-
II. Algar, Hamid. III. Title. IV. Series.

DS316.4.A4713 1983 955 83-697

ISBN 0-933782-12-8

Book Design Ericka Hamburg

Editor Sylvia Stein

Manufactured in the United States of America

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Foreword

Occidentosis is the best known and most influential work of the Iranian intellectual and writer, Jalal Al-i Ahmad. *In a* sense, it is the record of a personal journey to a new understanding of Iranian society and history, but since it aroused a widespread and enthusiastic response (to the degree that the coined word of its title permanently entered the Persian language), it may also be regarded as a document of the ideological ferment that ultimately led to revolution.

This translation is an integral rendering of the final and uncensored version that was published in Tehran in 1978. Al-i Ahmad's style has a certain rough and uneven quality; it is marked by great informality and a deliberate disregard for the syntax of conventional literary expression. For the sake of comprehensibility, it was necessary to modify these features in translation. Thus, numerous rhetorical questions in the Persian original have been converted into affirmative sentences, and Al-i Ahmad's favorite transitional expression, "in any event," has been deleted in almost all cases. But if the translation is at all successful, it will convey not only the ideas of the original text but something of the tone in which they were presented.

The footnotes accompanying the text are the author's. Additional notes, grouped at the end of the book, are written by Hamid Algar unless followed by (Tr.), in which case they are the work of the translator.

Introduction

Jalal Al-i Ahmad was born in 1923 into a family of strong religious traditions that traced its descent back to Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, fifth Imam of the Shi'a, by way of thirty intermediaries.¹ Jalal's father, Shaykh Ahmad, was an *'alim*, and an elder brother (Muhammad Taqi), two brothers-in-law, and a cousin are also members of the clerical class.² Furthermore, the illustrious Ayatullah Mahmud Taleghani (d. 1979) was a paternal uncle of Jalal, and he maintained sporadic but important contact with him throughout his life.³

The family came originally from the village of Aurazan in the Taliqan district bordering Mazandaran in northern Iran, and in due time Jalal was to travel there, exerting himself actively for the welfare of the villagers and devoting to them the first of his anthropological monographs. Jalal's childhood was spent, however, in the Pachinar district of south Tehran, where his father functioned as prayer leader at a local mosque. The family was relatively prosperous until 1932, when 'Ali Akbar Davar, Reza Shah's minister of justice, deprived the clerical class of its notarial function and the income they derived from it. It was decided that Jalal should not continue his education beyond primary school but instead go to work, both in order to supplement the family's income and in order to save up enough money for the day when he might follow in his father's footsteps by studying the religious sciences. His intentions and preferences were, however, quite different. While working as a watchmaker and electrician, he secretly enrolled in night classes at the Dar al-Funun in Tehran and obtained his high school diploma in 1943. One year later, he made a complete break with religion by joining the Tudeh party, the most powerful Marxist organization in Iran.⁴

It has been suggested, somewhat apologetically, that his father's dry and unimaginative pietism was responsible for this abandonment of Islam and that, if Jalal had made early acquaintance with "true Islam," he would have been spared the political and ideological wanderings that marked his intellectual career.⁵ Taleghani, for example, recalls that Shaykh Ahmad would take Jalal regularly to the shrine of Shah 'Abd al-'Azim to the south of Tehran for a forced recitation of the Prayer of Kumayl, that well-known text

of Shi'i piety.⁶ Jalal's widow, the novelist Simin Danishvar, paints a somewhat different picture: that of a young man genuinely devout, to the point of regularly offering the supererogatory night prayer, who gradually fell away from religion under the influence of intellectual and political currents hostile to Islam.⁷ Al-i Ahmad himself recalls that his literary diet at the time of his break with Islam consisted chiefly of the writings of the nationalist, anti-Shi'i ideologue, Ahmad Kasravi; the scabrous novels of Muhammad Mas'ud Dihati depicting low life and poverty in Tehran; and, most importantly, such publications of the Tudeh party as the periodical *Dunya*.⁸

As a preliminary to his activity in the Tudeh party, Al-i Ahmad founded a literary association called the Anjuman-i Islah (The Reform Society) in the Amiriya section of Tehran which offered free instruction in French, Arabic, and oratory. At his suggestion, the members of this association joined the Tudeh party *en bloc*. Al-i Ahmad's rise within the party was swift: within four years, he became a member of the central committee of the party for Tehran and a delegate to its national congress. He wrote prolifically for such party publications as *Mardum* and *Rahbar*, and, in 1946, he was appointed director of the party publishing house and entrusted with launching a new monthly, *Mahana-yi Mardum*.⁹

Al-i Ahmad's career as a teacher and, more importantly, as a writer of fiction also began in the immediate postwar period. In 1946, he graduated from the Teachers' Training College in Tehran; thereafter he exercised the profession of teacher for much of the rest of his life, albeit intermittently. His teaching experiences were to furnish material for a number of novels, especially *Mudir-i Madrasa* (The school principal), and the deficiencies and problems of the Iranian educational system became one of his lasting concerns. His first essays in fiction, *Did va Bazdid* (Visits exchanged), published in 1945, drew, however, on his immediate past and the milieu of his family in south Tehran. The stories in this book depict religious customs and beliefs with the serene ridicule and implicit equation of religion with superstition that were typical for the Iranian secular intelligentsia of the day. The book was in some measure the literary consecration of Al-i Ahmad's break with Islam and his father, and many years were to pass before he was reconciled with both.¹⁰

Did va Bazdid was followed in 1947 by *Az Ranji ki Mibarim* (On account of our troubles), a collection of short stories con-

ceived in the spirit of socialist realism and printed at the publishing house of the Tudeh party. But the very same year, the party was beset with a crisis when it insisted on defending the Soviet Union's refusal to save the communist-dominated autonomous government of Azarbayjan from overthrow by the Iranian army. Critical of this as well as other instances of Tudeh submissiveness to the Soviet Union, a group of activists led by Khalil Maliki left the party. Jalal Al-i Ahmad was among them.¹¹

Whatever the intrinsic merits of Al-i Ahmad's motives for quitting the Tudeh party may have been, it is impossible not to see in the episode one instance of his deeply felt need for constant and abrupt change of direction, a need that his widow has called - without any pejorative intention - *hadisaju'i* (*a search for happenings or events*).¹² Al-i Ahmad's political and intellectual commitments had an unstable, restless quality that touched all he wrote: as a thinker, he often appears to be unsystematic and, as a stylist, to be careless. But at the same time, the unmistakable force, sincerity, and originality of his writings must also be traced to the same source—a consistent refusal of stability.

After leaving the Tudeh party, Al-i Ahmad retained his links with Khalil Maliki but devoted his energies more to literary than to political activities. He made numerous translations from contemporary French literature (insofar as any European influence is visible in his work, it is that of modern French writers); wrote another collection of short stories, *Seh Tar* (Sitar), antireligious in its tone, like *Did va Bazdid*; and entered with Simin Danishvar in an association that was *a literary partnership as well as a marriage*.

He returned to political activity with the beginning of Dr. Musaddiq's campaign for the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry. The group that had left the Tudeh party with Khalil Maliki entered into an alliance with Muzaffar Baqa'i's *Hizb-i Zahmatkashan* (Toilers' party), one of the parties supporting Musaddiq in the Majlis. Like most of the alignments that succeeded each other in Iranian politics in the period from 1941 to 1953, the alliance between Maliki and Baqa'i was short-lived. In mid-1952, Baqa'i decided to withdraw his support from Musaddiq, and Maliki abrogated his alliance with Baqa'i in protest.

Maliki formed a new party, known as *Niru-yi Sivvum* (Third force), socialist in orientation without being either Stalinist or social democratic. Al-i Ahmad served the new party in a variety of ca-

pacities, ranging from renovating a building that was to serve as party headquarters to writing articles for its publications, such as *Ilm va Zindagi* (Science and life) and *Niru-yi Sivvum*. But his sojourn in this organization, too, was not to last long. In 1953, not long before the American-royalist coup that overthrew Musaddiq and brought the fugitive Shah back to his throne, Al-i Ahmad left the *Niru-yi Sivvum* in protest against the expulsion from it of his friend, Nasir Vusuqi, and what he perceived as the dishonest tactics of the leadership.¹³

The conditions created by the coup of August 1953 had, in any event, made organized political activity virtually impossible. Al-i Ahmad turned again to literary pursuits with undivided energy. He translated Gide's *Retour de l' URSS* as a gesture of protest against the failings of the Tudeh party and its sponsor, the Soviet Union; wrote another piece of sociocritical fiction, *Zan-i Ziyadi* (The superfluous woman); and began to take an interest in modernist Persian poetry (the school of Nima Yushij) and to dabble in painting.¹⁴ More significantly for his intellectual development and his ultimate return to Islam as a source of national if not personal identity was another new interest, one in anthropological research. He traveled to his ancestral village of Aurazan and recorded his impressions of the people and their customs in a monograph (*Aurazan*, 1954). *Aurazan* was followed four years later by *Taknishinha-yi Buluk-i Zahra*, a study of a cluster of villages near Takistan in northwest Iran, and in 1960 by *Jazira-yi Kharg*, a monograph on the Persian Gulf island of Kharg.

The appearance of these works led to an invitation by the Institute of Social Research at the University of Tehran to edit a series of anthropological monographs. Al-i Ahmad accepted, and five books appeared under his editorship, including *Ilkhchi*, the study of an Azarbayjani village by a fellow writer, Ghulam Husayn Sa'idi. Al-i Ahmad's involvement with the project did not last long, however, both because of his innate *hadisaju'i* and also because his concept of anthropology differed from that of his academic sponsors: "I saw they wanted to make the monographs into something worthy of being presented to Westerners, i.e., inevitably written according to Western criteria. I wasn't suited for this task. What I was aiming at was gaining renewed acquaintance with ourselves [*az nau shinakhtan-i khish*], a new evaluation of our native environment in accordance with criteria of our own."¹⁵

This new evaluation resulted in a realization of "the fundamental contradiction between the traditional social structures of the Iranians and all that is dragging our country toward colonial status, in the name of progress and development but in fact as a result of political and economic subordination to Europe and America."¹⁶ Al-i Ahmad had discovered the disease of *gharbzadagi*, "occidentosis." This discovery not only gave him the title and idea for his best-known and most influential book but also was, in his own words, "a turning point" in his intellectual life.¹⁷ It was the most important development for him since he had joined the Tudeh party almost twenty years earlier, for, unlike the political vicissitudes he had undergone in the meantime, it involved a fundamental reorientation that set him apart from the quasitotality of the Iranian intelligentsia. As we shall see, it cannot be said that *Gharbzadagi* represents a simple "return to Islam," and Al-i Ahmad's final intellectual destination was certainly not identical with his point of departure. But after the publication of *Gharbzadagi*, almost all that he wrote was dominated by an awareness of the historical and contemporary opposition of the West and the Islamic world, by a concern for the rescue of an Iranian cultural authenticity and autonomy at the heart of which lay Shi'i Islam, and by a critical stance toward those of his fellow intellectuals who were carriers of the disease of occidentosis.

Part of *Gharbzadagi* was published in a monthly periodical, but the censorship intervened to prevent its continuation, and Al-i Ahmad entered on a new period of compulsory silence. By way of compensation, he undertook a series of extensive foreign travels: to Europe in early 1963, to survey textbook publication on behalf of the Ministry of Education; to the Soviet Union in 1964, to participate in the Seventh International Congress of Anthropologists; and to the United States in 1965, in response to an invitation from Harvard University. The most important of his journeys abroad was his performance of the hajj in 1964: it yielded a vivid travelogue published two years later under the title *Khassi dar Miqat* (Lost in the crowd) and marked a further stage in his journey toward Islam.¹⁸

In the remaining years of his life, Al-i Ahmad accomplished two other important pieces of work: the novel, *Nafrin-i Zamin* (The curse of the land), published in 1967, a depiction of the disruptions wrought in the Iranian countryside by the so-called

Land Reform, seen through the eyes of a rural teacher, and *Dar Khidmat va Khiyanat-i Raushanfikran* (Concerning the service and disservice of the intellectuals). This was a more careful and detailed consideration of issues raised somewhat fleetingly and impressionistically in *Gharbzadagi*, particularly the issue of the social role of the intellectual. Although it was never published *in toto* in the author's lifetime, he circulated three successive drafts of the work among friends and took their comments and criticisms into account in improving the work. Its posthumous publication during the Revolution was an appropriate memorial: the last word of one whose life had been dedicated to restless change and discovery finally became audible thanks to the greatest transformation that had taken place in Iran for a millenium.

Jalal Al-i Ahmad died on September 9, 1969, in a village in Gilan, weakened by years of constant strain. He was buried near the Firuzabadi mosque at Shahr-i Ray, to the south of Tehran.¹⁹

* * *

When reading *Gharbzadagi*, it is important to remember that its author was neither a historian nor an ideologue. He was a man who after two decades of thought and experimentation had discovered an important and fundamental truth concerning his society-its disastrous subordination to the West in all areas-and was in a hurry to communicate this discovery to others. He had neither the time nor the patience to engage in careful historical research, and at some points in the book he even enjoins his readers to dig up the historical evidence for a given assertion.²⁰ As for drawing conclusions and elaborating solutions, this too was a task he assigned to his readers, although clearly a road was sketched out before them.²¹

The chapters of the book that purport to analyze the historical roots of occidentosis contain a number of errors, some of them significant enough to undermine his argument.²² Despite Al-i Ahmad's unreliability as a historian, it is worth recalling that marshaling historical evidence to prove a significant thesis was something of a novelty in Iran at the time. Historiography consisted largely of the antiquarian recording of historical minutiae, with no higher purpose than the glorification of the past or, on the contrary, showing what advances had been made under the exalted auspices of the Pahlavis. To make a connection, as Al-i Ahmad did, between

history, even remote history, and present reality was an innovation and a considerable achievement.

In chapters 8, 9, and 10, Af-i Ahmad is on very firm ground and his powers of analysis are at their strongest. His superb psychological sketch of the occidentotic elite of prerevolutionary Iran combines the skills of a novelist with those of an acute observer of social behavior. His discussion of education, a field with which he was closely involved throughout his life, his depiction of the incoherence of Iranian society, his demonstration of the manifold ways in which the West had reduced Iran to a state of comprehensive dependence, his comments on the dichotomy between the "secret government of religion" and the national government of Shah, army, and Majlis all clearly attest to Af-i Ahmad's ability to grasp the essential in a manner unique among his contemporaries.

Much of what Af-i Ahmad describes and analyzes is not, of course, unique to Iran and might be encountered almost anywhere imperialism has imposed itself in Asia or Africa (although Af-i Ahmad rightly makes the case that the conflict between Islam and the West has unique aspects). Parts of *Gharbzadagi* are therefore reminiscent of other works of cultural self-analysis by the victims of imperialism: the writings of Frantz Fanon and an important book in Turkish, Mehmet Dogan's *Batililasma Ihaneti* (The treachery that is Westernization), which has gone through five editions since its first publication in 1975 but remains regrettably unknown outside Turkey. Some of the theses of *Gharbzadagi* also anticipate with remarkable precision points made by Edward Said in his *Orientalism* (1978): the generally invisible but significant links between orientalist scholarship and imperialist politics; the meaningless claim of orientalism to constitute a specialization in itself, without further definition; and the orientalist's assumption that the Muslim East is at bottom static and passive material for analysis by superior minds. Common to *Gharbzadagi* and *Orientalism* is even a denunciation of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

The chief interest of *Gharbzadagi*, however, is the degree to which it has both influenced and exemplified intellectual currents in contemporary Iran. Af-i Ahmad's remark in the preface that the book was for many years "the object more of gossip than of discussion" may well be true, and probably the most lasting and obvious legacy of the book has been its title, which has now passed irrevocably into common Iranian usage. Although, as Af-i Ahmad

acknowledges, Ahmad Fardid coined the word, it would probably have lapsed into obscurity were it not for this book. But beyond the word there are also a number of themes first evoked by Al-i Ahmad that recurred with increasing insistence in later years and all point to a reevaluation both of history and of national identity.

He initiated, for example, a critical reevaluation of the Safavid dynasty and the circumstances of Iran's adherence to Shi'ism (not the adherence itself), portraying the Safavids as traitors to Islamic solidarity whose policies were based on the slaughter of Sunnis and complicity with the Christian powers of Europe.²³ As for the religious scholars of the Safavid period, men such as Mir Damad and Mulla Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, they are shown as more worthy of condemnation for their ties to the court than of praise for their erudition.²⁴ This devaluing of the Safavids has as its corollary some appreciation, however hesitant and reserved, for the historic role of the Ottomans as the chief bastion of Islamic power in the face of the European onslaught. Such an adjustment of historical perspective, deriving in large part from a wish to overcome the Safavid legacy of sectarian division and play an active and even leading part in the Islamic world, has become increasingly common since the publication of *Gharbzadagi* and may be said now, after the triumph of the Islamic Revolution, to be standard.

As for more recent history, Al-i Ahmad was probably the first member of the intelligentsia to evaluate critically the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909 and to lament the killing of Shaykh Fazlullah Nuri, the chief opponent of Western-style constitutionalism.²⁵ Nuri had been for long the *bete noire* of most Iranian historians of the Constitutional Revolution, but with the favorable mention he earned in *Gharbzadagi* he began a process of rehabilitation that was completed after the Revolution.

Also important for the influence of *Gharbzadagi* was the global context of shared suffering and exploitation into which Al-i Ahmad set Iran, foreshadowing the solidarity with the oppressed-the *mustaz'afin*-that has been one of the chief ideological slogans of the Revolution.

In all of these respects, as well as several others, Al-i Ahmad appears as the precursor of the lecturer, writer, sociologist, and ideologue, 'Ali Shari'ati (1933-1977), who bears a closer resemblance to him than any other member of Iran's literary intelligentsia. The two men are known to have met at least twice, in 1968, and

to have felt great sympathy for each other. One meeting took place in Tajrish, to the north of Tehran; Shari'ati reminisced to Al-i Ahmad about his days in Paris with Fanon, and Al-i Ahmad told him of his work on *Dar Khidmat va Khiyanat-i Raushanfikran*.²⁶ The other took place in Mashhad; the two men discussed the alienation to which Iranian intellectuals had fallen prey as a result of their occidentosis, and afterwards Al-i Ahmad noted: "I am happy that we travel the same road with respect to these matters."²⁷ Themes such as cultural authenticity, the role of the socially committed intellectual, the problems posed by the presence of the machine in a traditional society, discussed cursorily, even impressionistically, by Al-i Ahmad, were taken up in much greater detail by Shari'ati and made the subject of a series of lectures and books.²⁸

But for all the similarities between the two men, there were also important differences. First is the fact that Shari'ati was much more influential than Al-i Ahmad, partly, no doubt, because the intellectual climate of Iran had matured by the early 1970s to a point of greater receptivity for critical ideas. More significant in explaining Shari'ati's greater appeal is the fact that he was primarily a lecturer, even an orator, and only secondarily a writer, whereas Al-i Ahmad was above all a man of the pen. In a country of limited literacy, where contemporary literature had followed a path largely divergent from popular taste and concern, it was only natural that an orator should wield more influence than a litterateur.²⁹ The second important difference was that, although Al-i Ahmad's life was marked by a long series of intellectual and spiritual peregrinations, Shari'ati never abandoned Islam in order to be faced with the necessity of rediscovering it. Certainly, he came under the influence of European concepts and ideologies while studying in Paris; he attempted to apply what he had learned to understanding and interpreting Islam, sometimes plausibly, sometimes implausibly; and on his return to Iran, he formulated received doctrine in ways that were highly controversial within the religious community. But he never lost sight of Islam as point of both personal and national orientation. The case of Jalal Al-i Ahmad is quite different. Not only did he abandon Islam in his youth, but the sense in which he rediscovered Islam after the writing of *Gharbzadagi* requires careful definition; it is certainly not a straightforward return to guidance of one formerly erring but now penitent.

In *Gharbzadagi*, Islam is presented above all as the essential and defining attribute of a civilizational sphere, to which Iran belongs, that has been at war with the West for more than a millennium. Within the context of this fundamental contradiction, Islam is seen to be the ultimate defense against the encroachments of occidentosis. Such a view of things doubtless commended itself to believing Muslims in Iran. But Aḷ-i Ahmad's remarks concerning the "origins" of Islam are hardly those of a believer; in fact, they have something in common with analyses made by Western scholars, although Aḷ-i Ahmad's conclusions are quite different from theirs. He suggests that Islam is a kind of delayed response to "the call of Mani and Mazdak" or, alternatively, "a new call based on the needs of the urban populations of the Euphrates region and Syria." That the Prophet was able to elaborate such a call, Aḷ-i Ahmad allusively claims, is due to his childhood encounter with Christian monks in Syria. There is also an unmistakably nationalist color to Aḷ-i Ahmad's proud claim that Salman Farsi, the Iranian companion of the Prophet, played a role in "the creation of Islam unrivaled by any the astrologer Magi had in the creation of Christianity." Similarly, his assertion that Islam "became Islam when it reached the settled lands between the Tigris and the Euphrates, until then being the Arabs' primitiveness and *jahiliyya*," leads inescapably to the conclusion that, in the time of the Prophet, Islam was nothing more than a modified form of Arab *jahiliyya*, its transformation into a civilization and world religion coming only when it reached lands impregnated by Iranian influence.³⁰

It is, perhaps, a mistake to look for signs of the recovery of personal faith in *Gharbzadagi*, which is fundamentally a sociohistorical critique. *Khassi dar Miqat*, however, is a different matter, being an account of the hajj, a key experience in the life of every believing Muslim. If Jalal Aḷ-i Ahmad had experienced a return to Islam as belief and personal practice, there would surely be evidence of it in this work. Such evidence is not entirely lacking. For example, when he visited the tomb of the Prophet in Medina, he was profoundly moved: "In the morning when I said, 'peace be upon you, o Prophet,' I was suddenly moved. The railing surrounding the tomb was directly in front of me and I could see the people circumambulating the tomb.... I wept and fled from the mosque."³¹ But such passages are rare in *Khassi dar Miqat*, and it may even be significant that Aḷ-i Ahmad fled from the mosque of the Prophet

at the onset of religious emotion, almost as if he were in fear of it. For the most part, *Khassi dar Miqat* is marked by the same attention to detail in the author's human and material surroundings that characterizes his works of fiction. The impression that Jalal Al-i Ahmad leaves is that of a meticulous and generally sympathetic observer of the pilgrims, not that of an enthusiastic participant in the pilgrimage, one distracted from the shortcomings of his fellows by the intensity of his own experience.

It was nonetheless remarkable that a member of the Iranian literary intelligentsia had thought fit to go on the hajj, and *Khassi dar Miqat* can be regarded as the record of a step forward on a path that might have taken Al-i Ahmad to a more complete identification with Islam. During the last years of his life, he began attending lectures on the exegesis of the Qur'an taught by his uncle, Ayatullah Taleghani, at the Himmat mosque in Shimiran, causing Taleghani to remark of him: "Jalal was very good toward the end of his life; he had become very interested in Islamic tradition."³² But the process of comprehensive return to Islam as personal belief as well as sociocultural resource-if we are correct in assuming that such a process was under way-was never completed. To quote Simin Danishvar, the final impression with which Jalal Al-i Ahmad leaves us is that of a "relative return to religion and the Occulted Imam, both as a means of preserving national identity and as a path leading to human dignity, mercy, justice, reason, and virtue."³³

Despite the ambiguities surrounding Al-i Ahmad's "return to Islam," it has been suggested, in the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution, that Al-i Ahmad was in some measure a herald of that movement.³⁴ Insofar as numerous hitherto secular intellectuals ranged themselves under the banner of Islam, at least in certain stages of the movement, and the cultural policies of the Islamic Republic have been aimed at the extirpation of all forms of occidentosis, the suggestion is reasonable. An important consideration in this respect is, however, the attitude discernible in the works of Al-i Ahmad toward the *'ulama*, who have played the leading role both in the gestation of the Revolution and the administration of the new order that has emerged from it.

Al-i Ahmad was probably alone among the literary intelligentsia of Iran in correctly perceiving the uprising of 15 Khurdad 1342/6 June 1963 as inaugurating a new and decisive stage in the struggle between the "secret government of religion" and the Ira-

nian state.³⁵ He even went to visit Imam Khomeini after the event and left a favorable impression upon him.³⁶ There is laudatory mention of the Imam in Al-i Ahmad's last major work, *Dar Khidmat va Khiyanat-i Raushanfikran*, which includes among its appendices the full text of his historic speech of 4 Aban 1343/27 October 1964, denouncing the granting of capitulatory rights to the United States.³⁷ But there is no clear sign that Al-i Ahmad foresaw, or would have supported, a revolution led and directed by the *'ulama*. In fact, his failure to take into account such a possibility may be regarded as a lingering vestige of the isolation from the masses that characterized the Iranian literary intelligentsia. When remarking on the new period of intensified struggle between *'ulama* and state that began with 15 Khurdad, Al-i Ahmad even suggested that the outcome of the struggle would be determined by the intelligentsia's choice of sides.³⁸ *Gharbzadagi* is not sparing in its criticisms of what the author perceives as the rigidity and formalism of the *'ulama*. Likewise, in *Dar Khidmat va Khiyanat-i Raushanfikran*, Al-i Ahmad castigates them for attachment to religious tradition [*sunnat*], which he seems to associate in an exclusive and debilitating sense with the past.³⁹ It appears, too, from the same work, that he regards the vast legal corpus of Islam as determined by historical conditions that have long since disappeared.⁴⁰ The enactment of Islamic law now seen in Iran would, then, hardly have won his approval.

The question of how Al-i Ahmad would have regarded the Islamic Republic is, ultimately, of course, unanswerable, although it is inevitable that it should be posed. Those close to him who have survived down to the present have adopted differing attitudes. His widow, Simin Danishvar, signed a letter in June 1981 that protested the alleged lack of cultural and intellectual freedom in the Islamic Republic, a letter signed by most of the well-known literary intellectuals of Iran.⁴¹ By contrast, one of his brothers, Shams Al-i Ahmad, enthusiastically welcomed the new order, taking on a variety of positions in the press and the Council for the Cultural Revolution. He has also suggested that Jalal would have thrown himself into constructive labor for the sake of the Islamic Republic if he had lived to see it.⁴²

To summarize, *Gharbzadagi* cannot be presented as a decisive and pioneering work of revolutionary thought, fully in tune with the historical forces that were to bring about revolution. Nonetheless,

it has a solid if modest claim to lasting attention, as the record of an eloquent diagnosis of the major ill of Iranian society by one whose life was devoted to constant, sincere, and solicitous reflection on the state of his countrymen and who contributed to a partial reorientation of the Iranian intelligentsia.

Hamid Algar
1 Day 1361/22 December 1982

Notes

1. The full genealogy is given in Jalal Al-i Ahmad, *Aurazan*, Tehran, 1333/1954, p.15.
2. Jalal Al-i Ahmad, "Masalan Sharh-i Ahvalat," in *Yek Chah au Dau Chala*, Tehran, n.d., p.47.
3. See statement of Taleghani to *Kayhan*, 14 Shahrivar 1358/4 September 1979, reproduced in Taleghani, *Az Azadi ta Shahadat*, Tehran, 1358/1979, p.291.
4. "Masalan Sharh-i Ahvalat," p. 48.
5. See, for example, the article by Qasim 'Ali Firasat in the commemorative supplement to *Jumhuri-yi Islami*, 20 Shahrivar 1359/12 October 1980, p.11.
6. *Az Azadi ta Shahadat*, p. 291.
7. Simin Danishvar, "Shauhar-i man Jalal," in *Andisha va Hunar*, vol. 4 (Mihir 1343/September-October 1964), p. 345.
8. "Masalan Sharh-i Ahvalat," p.48.
9. *Ibid.*, p.49-50.
10. Jalal Al-i Ahmad's tensions with his father were exacerbated by his marriage to Simin Danishvar because she did not observe the Islamic criteria of dress. See "Shauhar-i man Jalal," p.348.
11. "Masalan Sharh-i Ahvalat," p. 50.
12. "Shauhar-i man Jalal," p.344.
13. "Masalan Sharh-i Ahvalat," p. 51. Despite this break with Khalil Maliki, it has been said that Al-i Ahmad was active for a time in the post-1953 continuation of the *Niru-yi Sivvum*, known as the *Jami'at-i Susyalistha-yi Nihzat-i Milli* (League of Socialists of the Popular Movement); see article by Muhammad Mahdi Ja'fari in commemorative supplement of *Jumhuri-yi Islami*, p. 8. For a full account by Al-i Ahmad of his involvement both with the Tudeh party and with Khalil Maliki, see *Dar Khidmat va Khiyanat-i Raushanfikran*, Tehran, 1357/1958, pp.332-378. His outwardly historical novel, *Nun va'l-Qalam* (The letter nun and the pen), published in 1340/1961, was also intended by him to serve as "analysis of the reasons for the failure of contemporary leftist movements" ("Masalan Sharh-i Ahvalat," p.54).

14. See Al-i Ahmad's obituary of Nima Yushij, "Pir-i Mard Chishm-i Ma bud," in his *Arzyabi-yi Shitabzada*, Tabriz, 1344/1965, pp.37-53, translated by Thomas A. Pinks under the title "The Old Man Was Our Eyes" in *The Literary Review*, vol. 18, no. 1 (Fall 1974), pp.115-128.

15. "Masalan Sharh-i Ahvalat," p.52.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., p.53.

18. Ibid., pp.53-54.

19. Writing in 1964, five years before his death, Danishvar remarks that Al-i Ahmad looks much older than his age ("Shauhar-i man Jalal," p.345).

20. See p.61.

21. See p. 79.

22. See notes 8, 19, 23, 26, 31, 42, 45, 46, and 49 at the end of this book.

23. See p.52.

24. See p.45.

25. See pp.56-57.

26. See article by Ghulam Riza Imami in commemorative supplement to *Jumhuri-yi Islami*, p.6.

27. *Dar Khidmat va Khiyanat-i Raushanfikran*, pp.51-52. During the same meeting, Al-i Ahmad related to Shari'ati, with some pride how he had once been mistaken for a villager. But the way in which Al-i Ahmad responded to the incident represented, in Shari'ati's view, an imperfect identification with the masses, and he reproached him accordingly. See Shari'ati, *Insan va Islam*, Tehran, n.d., pp.236-237.

28. See above all *Bazgasht* (Majmu'a-yi Asar, Tehran, n.d., 4); *Mashin dar Asarat-i Mashinism*, n.p., n.d.; and *Risalat-i Raushanfikr barayi Sakhtan-i Jami'a*, n.p., n.d.

29. Al-i Ahmad addressed himself to the problem of the social isolation of the contemporary writer in Iran in his essay, "Chand Nukta dar bara-yi Mushakhkhasat-i Kulli-yi Adabiyat-i Mu'asir," *Arzyabi-yi Shitabzada*, pp.54-66.

30. Al-i Ahmad seems to have harbored persistently ambivalent feelings toward the Arabs, expressed even in works written after *Gharbzadagi*, such as the critique of Israel entitled "Vilayat-i Isra'il" published

in *Andisha va Hunar*, vol.4, pp. 380-386, on the eve of his departure for Mecca.

31. *Khassi dar Miqat*, Tehran, 1345/1966, p.74.

32. Taleghani, *Az Azadi ta Shahadat*, p.291. See also the remarks of Abu 'l-Hasan Taleghani in the commemorative supplement to *Jumhuri-yi Islami*, p. 8.

33. Danishvar, *Ghurub-i Jalal*, Tehran, 1361/1982, p.30.

34. This is, for example, the unspoken implication of much of the commemorative supplement to *Jumhuri-yi Islami* to which reference has been made in these notes.

35. See p.74.

36. The Imam is quoted as saying: "I once saw Jalal Al-i Ahmad for a quarter of an hour. It was in the early part of our movement. I saw someone sitting opposite me, and the book *Gharbzadagi* was lying near me. He asked, 'How did you come by this nonsense?' and I realized it was Al-i Ahmad. Unfortunately, I never saw him again. May he enjoy the mercy of God." Commemorative supplement to *Jumhuri-yi Islami*, p.10.

37. *Dar Khidmat va Khiyanat-i Raushanfikran*, pp. 1-17 of the supplementary volume.

38. See p.74.

39. *Dar Khidmat va Khiyanat-i Raushanfikran*, pp.255-256.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 257.

41. For the English text, see the *New York Review of Books*, June 11, 1981.

42. See the collected essays and addresses of Shams Al-i Ahmad published in two volumes under the title *Hadis-i Inqilab* (Tehran, 1360/ 1981) and the interview with Shams Al-i Ahmad in the commemorative supplement to *Jumhuri-yi Islami*, p.⁶.

Preface

The first draft of what you are about to read took the form of a report presented at two of the many sessions of the Congress on the Aim of Iranian Education, on Wednesday 8 Azar 1340/ 29 November 1961, and Wednesday 27 Day 1340/17 January 1962. The Ministry of Education published a collection of the papers presented by members of this congress in Bahman 1340/January-February 1962, but they neither could nor wanted to publish this one. Although the estimable members of the congress were able to endure listening to my report, the time has not come when one of the departments of the Ministry of Education can officially publish it.

The report remained unpublished, but some copies reached friends, who leafed through it and made suggestions for its improvement. Among them I would like to thank Dr. Mahmud Human, who urged me to see one of the works of the German, Ernst Junger a work on nihilism entitled *Uber die Linie*. As Dr. Human pointed out, Junger and I were both exploring more or less the same subject, but from two viewpoints. We were addressing the same question, but in two languages. Not knowing German, I relied on Dr. Human; I availed myself of his generosity and studied with him for three months, at least three hours a day, at least two days a week. Thus it was that *Uber die Linie* was translated, he speaking, I writing.

In the process, the periodical *Kitab-i Mah* got under way early in 1341/1962, having for its content the first section of *Uber die Linie* and the first third of *Occidentosis*, which later caused the suspension of *Kitab-i Mah*. After dropping the fruit of *Occidentosis*, it became *Kayhan-i Mah*, which lasted only a single issue.

I published *Occidentosis* as a separate work privately in Mihr 1341/September-October 1962, printing a thousand copies. You have before you the same work, with some additions, omissions, and revisions of judgment.

I owe the expression "occidentosis" to the oral communications of my other mentor, the esteemed Ahmad Fardid, one of the participants in the aforementioned congress. If any exchanges

of substance took place at that conference, one was surely that between him and myself, one productive of many more ideas under the same rubric that are all well worth recounting. I hoped the recklessness of this work would provoke him in turn to speech.

Now the text of this second edition has quite a history. Written all at once toward the end of 1342/early 1963, it was a bit more detailed than its predecessor. I intended a large press run and a pocket-sized edition, but publication of the book was halted, resulting in the bankruptcy of the publisher, the Bungah-i Javid, much to my chagrin. But one should never give up. So it was that in Farvardin 1343/March-April 1964 I rewrote the whole thing and sent it to Europe in the hope that students living there would publish it. But that didn't occur, and the work has returned to haunt me, with all the additions and improvements you see. I am not up to rewriting it yet another time; were I to do so, there would be another work before you now. In the interim, offset copies of that first edition have appeared surreptitiously and without the consent of the late author, several times in Tehran and once in California.¹ What immense sums have God's servants thrown away buying them! What a debt we owe to the censor, who takes the right to publish a work away from its author and effectively gives it to others who have the initiative to print the book and market it, without concern for anything but profit. As a result of all this, this wretched book of mine has been the object more of gossip than of discussion, and its name has been more frequently mentioned than its contents have been appreciated. Nonetheless, those few critics from whose writings I have taken admonition and the sound points in whose critiques I have observed have so lately awakened that I have come to believe in the wakefulness this little book reflects. I have come to believe that these disordered pages, contrary to their author's expectations, still merit discussion now, after six or seven years. I had believed that they only addressed issues of the day and would grow dated after a year or two. But you see how the limbs of our society have remained afflicted, how the contagion spreads day by day. This is why I have consented to the republication of the work, despite all its hasty conclusions and judgments. Please forgive me if all the candor of this preface is followed by still more audacity in the text. Finally, I hope that you will preserve the work from textual corruption at the hands of the malicious demons of our age.

1

Diagnosing an Illness

I speak of "occidentosis" as of tuberculosis.² But perhaps it more closely resembles an infestation of weevils. Have you seen how they attack wheat? From the inside. The bran remains intact, but it is just a shell, like a cocoon left behind on a tree. At any rate, I am speaking of a disease: an accident from without, spreading in an environment rendered susceptible to it. Let us seek a diagnosis for this complaint and its causes-and, if possible, its cure.

Occidentosis has two poles or extremes-two ends of one continuum. One pole is the Occident, by which I mean all of Europe, Soviet Russia, and North America, the developed and industrialized nations that can use machines to turn raw materials into more complex forms that can be marketed as goods. These raw materials are not only iron ore and oil, or gut, cotton, and gum tragacanth; they are also myths, dogmas, music, and the higher worlds. The other pole is Asia and Africa, or the backward, developing or nonindustrial nations that have been made into consumers of Western goods. However, the raw materials for these goods come from the developing nations: oil from the shores of the Gulf, hemp and spices from India, jazz from Africa, silk and opium from China, anthropology from Oceania, sociology from Africa.³ These last two come from Latin America as well: from the Aztec and Inca peoples, sacrificed by the onslaught of Christianity. Everything in the developing nations comes from somewhere else. And we-the Iranians-fall into the category of the backward and developing nations: we have more points in common with them than points of difference.

It is beyond the scope of this book to define these two poles in terms of economy, politics, sociology, or psychology, or as civi

lizations. This is exacting work for specialists. But I shall draw on general concepts from all these fields. All I will say here is that "East" and "West" are no longer geographical or political concepts to me. For a European or an American, the West means Europe and America and the East, the USSR, China, and the Eastern European nations. But for me, they are economic concepts. The West comprises the sated nations and the East, the hungry nations. To me, South Africa is part of the West. Most of the nations of Latin America are part of the East, although they are on the other side of the world. Although one must secure exact data on an earthquake from the university's seismograph, the peasant's horse (however far from thoroughbred) will have bolted to the safety of open land before the seismograph has recorded anything. I would at least sniff out rather more keenly than the shepherd's dog and see more clearly than a crow what others have closed their eyes to-or what they have seen no gain for themselves in considering.

Western nations generally have high wages, low mortality, low fertility, well-organized social services, adequate foodstuffs (at least three thousand calories per day), per capita annual income of at least 3,000 *tumans*,⁴ and nominal democracy (the heritage of the French Revolution). The second group of nations has these characteristics: low wages, high mortality, even higher fertility, social services nil (or for hire), inadequate foodstuffs (at most one thousand calories per day), annual income less than 500 *tumans*, and no notion of democracy (the heritage of the first wave of imperialism).

Obviously, we belong to this second group, the hungry nations. The first group is all the sated nations, in accordance with Josue de Castro's definition in *The Geography of Hunger* (Boston, 1952). There is not only a great gap between the two groups, but, in the words of Tibor Mende, an unfillable chasm deepening and widening by the day. Thus wealth and poverty, power and impotence, knowledge and ignorance, prosperity and ruin, civilization and savagery have been polarized in the world. One pole is held by the sated -the wealthy, the powerful, the makers and exporters of manufactures. The other pole is left to the hungry -the poor, the impotent, the importers and consumers. The beat of progress is in that ascending part of the world, and the pulse of stagnation is in this moribund part of the world. The difference arises not just from

the dimension of time and place-it is not just a quantitative one. It is also qualitative, with two diverging poles: on the one hand, a world with its forward momentum grown terrifying and, on the other, a world that has yet to find a channel to guide its scattered motive forces, which run to waste. And both these worlds have a certain dynamic.*

Thus the day is past when we could divide the world into two blocs, East and West, or communist and noncommunist. And although the constitutions of most of the world's governments begin with this great whitewash of the twentieth century, the flirtation of the United States and Soviet Russia (the two supposed unchallenged pivots of the two blocs) over the Suez Canal or Cuba showed that the masters of the camps can sit quite comfortably at the same table. The same may be said of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and other happenings. Thus our age, besides being no longer the age of class conflicts within borders or of national revolutions, is no longer the age of clashing "isms" and ideologies. One must see what would-be corporate colonists and what supportive governments are secretly plotting under cover of every riot, coup d'etat, or uprising in Zanzibar, Syria, or Uruguay; one can no longer see in the regional wars of our time even the ostensible contests of various beliefs. Nowadays, many not only see through the cover of the Second World War to the expansionism of the two contending alliances' industries, but see the underlying struggles over sugar, diamonds, and oil, respectively in the cases of Cuba, the Congo, and the Suez Canal or Algeria. Many see in the bloodshed in Cyprus, Zanzibar, Aden, or Vietnam the establishment of a bridgehead designed to secure commerce, the foremost determinant of the politics of states.

No longer is the specter of communism dangled before the people in the West and that of the bourgeoisie and liberalism in the East. Now even kings can be ostensibly revolutionary, and Khrushchev can buy grain from America. Now all these "isms" and ideologies are roads leading to the sublime realm of mechanization. The political compass of leftists and pseudoleftists around the world has swung ninety degrees to the Far East, from Moscow to Beijing, because Soviet Russia is no longer the "vanguard of the world revolution" but rather sits around the conference table

*Paraphrased from Tibor Mende, *Entre la peur et l'espoir: reflexions sur l'histoire d'aujourd'hui*, Paris, 1958.

with other members of the nuclear club. A direct hotline has been set up between the Kremlin and the White House. No longer is there a need for British intermediation.

Even those in power in Iran understand that the Soviet threat has declined. The plunder that Soviet Russia hoped to snatch was really just the leavings from the disastrous picnic of the First World War. Now is the era of de-Stalinization, and Radio Moscow has come out in support of the referendum of 6 Bahman!⁵ Communist China has taken the place of Soviet Russia because, just like the Russia of the 1930s, it summons all the world's hungry to unity in aspiring to utopia. And while Russia then had a population of a hundred-odd million, China today has 750 million people.

What Marx said is true today, that we have two worlds in conflict. But these two worlds stretch far vaster than in his time, and the conflict has grown far more complex than the one of worker and employer. In our world, poor confront rich, and the vast earth is the arena. Our age is one of two worlds: one producing and exporting machines, the other importing and consuming them and wearing them out. The stage for this conflict is the global market. The weapons, apart from tanks, guns, bombers, and missile launchers, themselves products of the West, are UNESCO, the FAO, the UN, ECAFE, and the other so-called international organizations.⁶ In fact, they are Western con artists come in new disguises to colonize this other world: to South America, to Asia, to Africa. Here is the basis for the occidentosis of all non-Western nations. I am not speaking of rejecting the machine or of banishing it, as the utopianists of the early nineteenth century sought to do. History has fated the world to fall prey to the machine. It is a question of how to encounter the machine and technology.

The important point is that we the people of the developing nations are not fabricating the machines. But, owing to economic and political determinants and to the global confrontation of rich and poor, we have had to be gentle and tractable consumers for the West's industrial goods or at best contented assemblers at low wages of what comes from the West. And this has necessitated our conforming ourselves, our governments, our cultures, and our daily lives to the machine. All we are we have had to conform to the measure of the machine. The one who created the machine has grown accustomed to this new god, its heaven and hell, over the course of two or three hundred years' gradual transformation.

But what of the Kuwaiti who became acquainted with the machine only yesterday, or the Congolese, or myself as an Iranian? How are we to vault over this three-hundred-year historical gap?

I shall pass over the others; let me consider Iran. We have been unable to preserve our own historicocultural character in the face of the machine and its fateful onslaught. Rather, we have been routed.* We have been unable to take a considered stand in the face of this contemporary monster. So long as we do not comprehend the real essence, basis, and philosophy of Western civilization, only aping the West outwardly and formally (by consuming its machines), we shall be like the ass going about in a lion's skin. We know what became of him. Although the one who created the machine now cries out that it is stifling him, we not only fail to repudiate our assuming the garb of machine tenders, we pride ourselves on it. For two hundred years we have resembled the crow mimicking the partridge (always supposing that the West is a partridge and we are a crow). So long as we remain consumers, so long as we have not built the machine, we remain occidentotic. Our dilemma is that once we have built the machine, we will have become mechanotic, just like the West, crying out at the way technology and the machine have stamped out of control. +

Let us concede that we did not have the initiative to familiarize ourselves with the machine a hundred years ago, as Japan did. Japan presumed to rival the West in mechanosis and to deal a blow to the czars (in 1905) and to America (in 1941) and, even earlier, to take markets from them. Finally the atom bomb taught them what a case of indigestion follows a feast of watermelons. And if the nations of the "free world" have now opened some of their treasure hoard of global markets to Japan's goods, it is because they have investments in all her industries. Another explanation may be that they want to make good their military expenditures to defend those islands, for the leaders of Japan came to their senses after World War II and were very reluctant to spend money on armies and armaments. Perhaps also the average American wishes to salve the unease of conscience that drove the pilot of that infernal plane

*I have given a precise example of what I mean in *Jazira-yi Kharg* [Kharg Island], Tehran, 1339/1960.

+For example, see Georges Bernanos, *La France contre les robots*, Paris, 1947.

to madness.* The story of 'Ad and Thamud was repeated in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.⁷

The "West" began calling us (the area from the eastern Mediterranean to India) the "East" just when it arose from its medieval hibernation, when it came in search of sun, spices, silk, and other goods. First it came in the garb of pilgrims to the Christian holy places of the East (Bethlehem, Nazareth, and so forth), and then in the armor of the crusaders. Next it came in the dress of merchants, then, under cover of cannon, as shippers of goods, and most recently as apostles for "civilization." This last name was really heaven-sent. *Isti'mar* ("colonization") is from the same root as *'umran* ("settlement"). And whoever engages in *'umran* is necessarily concerned with cities.

Of all the lands coming under these gentlemen's hammer, Africa proved the most malleable, the most encouraging. In addition to its having so many raw materials, including gold, diamonds, copper, and ivory, in such abundance, its inhabitants had not created any urban centers or mass religions. Every tribe had its own god, its own chief, its own language. What a crazy quilt it was and so how eminently domitable! Most important, all the natives went about naked. In such heat, one cannot wear clothes. When Stanley, the relatively humane English globetrotter, returned home with this last bit of news, they threw celebrations in Manchester. If each man and woman in the Congo could be induced to buy the three meters of cloth a year required to make a shirt to wear to church services and so grow "civilized," that would come to three hundred twenty million yards of cloth from the factories of Manchester.+ And we know that the vanguard of colonialism is the Christian missionary. Beside every trade mission around the world they built a church, and by every sort of chicanery they drew the indigenous people into that church. And today, as colonialism is uprooted from those places, when each trade mission is boarded up, a church likewise closes.

*Colonel Paul W. Tibbits, Jr., who piloted the *Enola Gay* over Hiroshima. See Robert Laffont, ed., *Avoir détruit Hiroshima*, a collection of the man's correspondence with an Austrian writer, with an introduction by Bertrand Russell. A translation of this book by Iraj Qarib was serialized in *Firdaus* magazine in 1342/1963.

+Livingstone and Stanley, *Du Zambeze au Tanganyika, 1858- 1872*, Paris, 1959.

Africa proved inviting to the gentlemen also because its peoples served as raw material for every sort of Western laboratory. Thousands of sciences-anthropology, sociology, ethnology, linguistics-were compiled on the basis of research in Africa and Australia. Professors of any of these fields in Cambridge, the Sorbonne, or Leyden owe their chairs to these peoples. They see the other side of their urbanity in the African's primitiveness.

But we Middle Easterners were less receptive, less encouraging. Why? To bring the question closer to home, let me ask why we Muslims were less receptive. The question contains its own answer:

in our Islamic totality, we seemed unsusceptible to study. Thus in encountering us, the West not only attacked this Islamic totality (in inciting the Shi'a to bloodshed in Safavid times, in playing us against the Ottomans, in encouraging Baha'ism in the middle of the Qajar era, in breaking up the Ottoman Empire after the First World War, in confronting the Shi'i clergy during the constitutionalist uprising, and so forth), but strived to hasten the dissolution from within of a totality only apparently unified. It sought to reduce us to a raw material like the people of Africa. Then it would take us to the laboratory. This explains why foremost among all the encyclopedias written in the West is the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. We remain asleep, but the Westerner has carried us off to the laboratory in this encyclopedia.

India reminds one of Africa as a linguistic Tower of Babel and agglomeration of races and religions. Think of South America becoming Christianized with one sweep of the Spanish sword or of Oceania, a collection of islands and thus ideal for stirring up dissensions. Thus only we in our Islamic totality, formal and real, obstructed the spread (through colonialism, effectively equivalent to Christianity) of European civilization, that is, the opening of new markets to the West's industries. The halt of Ottoman artillery before the gates of Vienna concluded a process that began in 732 C.E. in Andalusia.*⁸ How are we to regard these twelve centuries of struggle of East against West if not as the struggle of Islam against Christianity? In the present age, I, as an Asian, as a rem-

*I refer to the defeat of 'Abd ar-Rahman the Umayyad (the first representative of the caliphal dynasty in Spain) at the hands of Charles Martel, French commander in Poitiers, and hence the end of the expansion of the Caliphate in the West in the early eighth century, C.E. And remember that today "Martel" is the name of a well-known cognac!

nant of that Islamic totality, represent just what that African or that Australian represents as a remnant of primitiveness and savagery. We are all equally acceptable to Westerners, the makers of our machines, as contented museum pieces. We are to be objects of research in the museum or the laboratory, nothing more. Watch that you don't alter this raw material! I am not speaking now of their wanting Khuzistan's or Qatar's oil, Katanga's diamonds, or Kirman's chromite, unrefined. I am saying that I, as an Asian or an African, am supposed to preserve my manners, culture, music, religion, and so forth untouched, like an unearthed relic, so that the gentlemen can find and excavate them, so they can display them in a museum and say, "Yes, another example of primitive life.*"

If we define *occidentosis* as the aggregate of events in the life, culture, civilization, and mode of thought of a people having no supporting tradition, no historical continuity, no gradient of transformation, but having only what the machine brings them, it is clear that we are such a people. And because this discussion will relate primarily to the geographic, linguistic, cultural, and religious background of its author, I might expand on the definition by saying that when we Iranians have the machine, that is, when we have built it, we will need its gifts less than its antecedents and adjuncts.

Occidentosis thus characterizes an era in which we have not yet acquired the machine, in which we are not yet versed in the mysteries of its structure. *Occidentosis* characterizes an era in which we have not yet grown familiar with the preliminaries to the machine, the new sciences and technologies. *Occidentosis* characterizes an era in which the logic of the marketplace and the movements of oil compel us to buy and consume the machine.

*Samin Baghchaban, my musicologist friend has among his unpublished memoirs an account of the conference in music held in Tehran in March 1961:

For [Alain] Danielou [the French delegate] nothing was so interesting as how we lived in the Sasanian epoch; he, coming from the heart of the twentieth century, sought to use the most advanced recording equipment to find his way back to the Sasanian court and record the artistry of Barbod and Nekisa. Then, at the airport next to the Sasanian capital, built for the benefit of orientalists, experts on art, poetry, and music, he took an Air France jet back to Paris.

How did this era arrive? Why did we utterly fail to develop the machine, leaving it to others to so encompass its development that by the time we awakened, every oil rig had become a nail driven into our land? How did we grow occidentotic? Let us turn to history to find out.

2

Earliest Signs of the Illness

We have always looked westward. We even coined the term "Western" before the Europeans called us "Eastern." Consider Ibn Battuta, "the Westerner [*Maghribi*]," or, from an earlier date, Gibraltar, the extremity of the Islamic "West."⁹ From the dawn of Islamic civilization to the time every value and belief collapsed before the triumph of technology, we as part of that civilization saw the world through a screen of our own conceptions; we gave it our own brand before others in turn came to give it their own brand. Every rise is followed by a fall.

If we go back a couple of millennia and look about us, we see that it is our own region—the Middle East, extending from the Indus Valley to the Nile Valley, giving birth to Chaldea, Assyria, Elam, and Egypt, to the Hebrews, to Buddha and Zoroaster, to the sources of all that Western civilization contains. Of course, this observation is not meant as a boast. Over these ages, before "we" (this motley of peoples) became engrossed with the Far East (India, China, and Indo-China), eager to receive their chinaware, printing, *kursi*,¹⁰ gnosis, painting, asceticism (Yoga), meditation (Zen), saffron, spices, *samanu* juice,¹¹ and so on, we looked to the West: to the shores of the Mediterranean, to Greece, to the Nile Valley, to Lydia (Central Anatolia),¹² to the far West and the ambergris-bearing seas of the north. Why did we do it? In speculating, I shall confine my discussion to Iran.

Perhaps it was in flight from mother India—our first turn west. Flight from origins? I don't know. This is something for ethnology and Indo-European studies to clarify. I only conjecture. There is no question how warmly this mother has embraced us in time of need. Once India gave a refuge to those few Zoroastrian

holdouts who were unwilling even to pay the Islamic poll tax. The Parsees of India are their descendants. They collaborated scandalously with the English in the years of imperialism and still dominate the industrial aristocracy of India. Other times India accommodated those fleeing the Mongols and those fleeing the sword of the pseudo-Sufi Safavids' fanaticism.¹³ What treasuries of thought were saved through this flight in these last two instances!

Although this warm maternal embrace has always been there for us strayed children, what child has ever gotten anywhere in his mother's arms? Islam got nowhere in Mecca-hence the migration first to Medina, then to Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, Seville, Cordoba. In those places, the foundations were laid for imperial splendor. And Christianity, proclaimed from Galilee and Nazareth, straightaway raised its banners in the midst of idolatrous Rome. Manichaeism arose in Ctesiphon and was buried in Turfan. And the Buddha, who grew up in India, carried his message to the Land of the Rising Sun. And we likewise, having fled India (if this be the case) or at least turned our back on it, have looked to the West. And if we have had some friendly associations with India, as in Buzurgmihr's comings and goings,¹⁴ the mystics' perambulations, or pilgrimages to Sarandib,¹⁵ as well as unfriendly encounters, such as the raids of the accursed Mahmud of Ghazna¹⁶ or the attacks of the barbarian Nadir Shah,¹⁷ we have never sought close relations with India. I see one probable cause for what I have termed occidentosis in this flight from warmth.

Then too we may have always looked to the West because the nomads to our northeast have driven us in that direction, just as the arriving Aryans drove the peoples called in the *Shahnama* the *divs* from Mazandaran to the Gulf coast. Think of the Turanians in the same work, and the Hephthalites. Every few decades some tribe (Iranian or Turkish) would pack up and overrun these parts in search of pasture, to escape the recurrent unseasonable droughts of the surrounding wastes. Even Cyrus died pursuing the Scythians through the far deserts. There the Ghuzz, the Seljuqs, the Mongols took to the saddle. There Afrasiyab spilled the blood of Siyavush.¹⁸ Not a century passes from legendary to historical times without the hooves of northeastern nomads' horses leaving prints across its face.

With a few exceptions, all the ruling dynasties of the Islamic period were founded by the nomad's sword. This holds true even

for pre-Islamic times. Who do you suppose the Parthians were? These tribes, not the settled powers, have always made our history. Whenever we had just built a house and were finishing the roof, some hungry folk would attack us from the northeast and not only pull the ladder out from under us but destroy the whole thing. Our cities on this vast playing field, the Iranian plateau, have always been like pieces on a chess board, like polo balls for drought-stricken nomad horsemen to knock here and there.*¹⁹ The dome at Sultaniya, with all its architectural grandeur and its gargantuan scale, today smiles through hundreds of gaping chinks on the vicissitude-filled landscape of our history.²⁰ Only a few of our cities have had the chance to pass through a normal life span, to grow, flourish, stagnate, decay, and regenerate, phoenix-like, as Baghdad from the ruins of Ctesiphon.²¹ Thus "This too will pass has become ingrained in our nature. "Everyone has his turn under the sun" has informed the depths of our being, and "Whoso comes, builds anew" has become our standard.

Thus scarcely ever in our recorded history have we been able to become urbanized in the precise meaning of the word: we have never attained to urban (bourgeois) civilization. And if today you see us, under the blows of the machine blackjack, growing accustomed to urbanism and all it entails, this rapid if belated movement necessarily has the aspect of a cancerous growth. Our cities everywhere grow like malignant tumors. Should these tumors' threads reach to the rural areas to infect them, it will be a tragedy.

One cannot seek for the continuity of our urban civilization in pillar and wall, house and bazaar. (Such places as Shush [ancient

* One unacknowledged historical fact is that although we have been taught fear of Russia and communism since the October Revolution, only since the establishment of Soviet Russia and its dependent republics, such as Turkmenistan, Kirghizia, and Tadzhikistan, has our urban population been spared the ever-present threat of attacks by these nomadic peoples. The establishment of republican governments in these areas after 1917 has led to the settling of these nomads and to increased agriculture, urbanization, and industrialization. There is no question of mass nomadism, and even if there were, there would be no object in riding thousands of miles to Khurasan. One would need go no farther than the nearest farms and towns. Thus have attacks from the northeast by nomads lost their meaning. Their place has been taken in the twentieth century by attacks of civilized foreigners from the west and the southwest, industrial attacks, raids for oil.

Susa] in Khuzistan, or Isfahan, Kashan, and Ray on the central plateau are exceptional.) Each dynasty, in setting up shop, swept away all the paraphernalia of its predecessor, from the Sasanids, who made a clean sweep of all that remained of the Ashkanids, to the Qajars, who plastered over everything of Safavid origin. Even today the Bank Melli is erected on the site of the state *Takya*²² and the Finance Ministry on the site of Karim Khan Zand's tomb.²³ Everywhere schools are being built on the sites of mosques and *imamzadas*.

I am astounded at how miserly we are for all our wide horizons. Only during the Achaemenid and Safavid periods do we see son pursuing what father has begun. Otherwise, "Whoso comes, builds anew," with the materials left by the dead. Only yesterday Muslims' marble tombstones from Abarqu were being brought to build royal palaces in Tehran. Wherever you go in the country, you see every building set on a foundation of tombstones and every little bridge built of stones from some ancient fortress.

Thus our semiurban civilization is not founded on the work of successive generations, laying the foundation, building the superstructure, adding the trim, enlarging, and so on. Our so-called urban civilization, which in principle accepts centralized government, rests on tent poles and pack saddles. The Achaemenids migrated from summer to winter quarters, as did the Sasanians; thus it is that we have both Shush and Hegmatana, both Ctesiphon and Firuzabad (all of them capitals).²⁴ Archaeologists have gone so far as to see in the roof lines of many periods much resemblance to a tent. If I suppose this to be one reason we remained behind while the West rushed ahead, I shall not be far wrong.

Throughout our history, we have spent our summer nights on our roofs, under a roof of stars. Our climate is dry. Except during the flooding that goes with such a climate and the very short winter, protecting oneself from it is not so hard. None of our large cities endure more than three months of rain, snow, and ice. Tibor Mende's observation that the great urban technological civilizations have arisen only on the cold regions of the globe between the Tropic of Cancer and the Arctic Circle is relevant here.*

However, we have not always been attacked from the northeast. Alexander attacked from regions northwest of the Iranian plateau, and Islam, from the southwest deserts. Despite the brief or long

*Tibor Mende, *Entre la peur et l'espoir*.

suspension of Iranian identity during the period of Alexander's descendants and all the philhellenism of the Parthians, the first manifestation of occidentosis in our recorded history, he and his soldiers were not nomads but mercenaries and adventurers from Mediterranean coastal towns, emboldened by Xenophon's *Anabasis* to pursue the legendary wealth of the Shahanshahs and the treasures of Hegmatana, Shush, and Persepolis. These were the first imperialists of history, apart from the Phoenicians. They built cities with a passion. If they leveled Tyre, or Persepolis, with their army camps, they sowed the seeds of so many Alexandrias from the mouth of the Nile to the mouth of the Indus that two thrive even today along the shores of the Mediterranean to witness the comings and goings of more recent upstart peoples across its blue waters. If these mercenaries engaged in pillage, we had preceded them in that. Whatever we suffered from the nomads of the northeast we dealt out to the peoples of the Mediterranean. The burning of Persepolis was retribution for the burning of Athens.*

Islam, which became Islam when it reached the settled lands between the Tigris and the Euphrates, until then being the Arabs' primitiveness and *jahiliyya*, had never risen up in slaughter.²⁵ We have indeed heard so much of the sword of Islam, but insofar as this sword was bared, it was in the West, against the Christian world. I believe this legend arose mainly from the confrontation of Islam's jihad with the early Christian martyr cult. And we know to what lengths Christianity would go once it had established itself! Take the Inquisition in Spain, the conquests of South and Central America or of Africa and Southeast Asia, or the destruction of the Khmer civilization.⁺²⁶ From every standpoint, Islam's *salam* is the most pacific religious motto in the world.

*See Parviz Daryush, "Iskandar-i Gujasta ya Buzurg" [Alexander the Accursed, or the Great], *Kayhan-i Mah*, Khurdad, 1341/June 1962.

+Concerning the Inquisition, refer to any history of Europe. Concerning South America and the conquistadors who destroyed the Aztec and Incan civilizations in the name of Christian love and peace, and concerning Africa, Southeast Asia, and India, respectively, refer to Andre Gide, *Le retour du Tchad, suite du Voyage au Congo, carnets de route*, Paris, 1928; Andre' Malraux, *La voie royale*, Paris, 1930 (*The Royal Way*, New York, 1935); and, most importantly, Aime' Cesaire, *Discours sur le colonialisme*, 4th ed., Paris, 1962 (*Discourse on Colonialism*, New York, 1972).

Furthermore, we invited Islam to come. Let us leave aside Rustam Farrukhzad's desperate defense of Sasanian chivalry and of a petrified Zoroastrianism.²⁷ The people of Ctesiphon thronged in the lanes of the city, bread and dates in hand, to meet the Arabs as they went to plunder the royal palace and the "Baharistan" carpet.²⁸ And Salman Farsi had fled from Jay near Isfahan and taken refuge in Islam years before Yazdigird fled to Marv. Salman had a role in the creation of Islam unrivaled by any the astrologer Magi had in the creation of Christianity.²⁹ Accordingly, one cannot consider Islam a conqueror in the sense Alexander, for instance, can be considered one. Every one of the Macedonian's mercenaries and freedmen was an exile come in search of treasure. None had tucked away in their quivers the belief that led the barefooted Arabs on to the Oxus and the Jaxartes.

Despite what the venerable scholars have said up to now, they being the latter-day Shu'ubiya,³⁰ and despite 'Umar's book burners in Ray and Alexandria,³¹ Islam was an answer to the call of Mani and Mazdak three centuries earlier on this parched waste of rival powers, a call silenced with mouthfuls of molten lead. On closer examination, Islam proves to be a new call based on the needs of the urban populations of the Euphrates region and Syria who, tired of the interminable wars between Iran and Byzantium, like rain-soaked wolves of the plains, were potential helpers for any movement that could establish peace in the region. We know of the Prophet's commercial activities in his youth, of his meeting with the monk at a monastery in Syria, and so forth.³² And could a religion be more simply propagated than by "Say, 'There is no god but God' and prosper"? In the final analysis, do we not turn to the West in turning to Islam? One may give a precise answer to this question when one has read the full measure of the people's suffering in the text of fossilized Sasanian customs.

Perhaps we have turned to the West because, in this parched plain, we have always expected Mediterranean clouds. The light rises in the east, but for us denizens of the Iranian plateau, the rain-bearing clouds have always come from the west. Thus we fled from the deserts of the south and the northeast in search of water and verdure, in a move opposite the northern Europeans' flight from the cold and rain and ice of their homes to the warm southern seas. Their search for aphrodisiacs in Africa, India, and America gradually took the concrete shape of imperialism. This mutual attraction is

evident throughout the history of human civilization. The Aryans' entry into Iran represents another such flight from the frozen north, from the Var-e Jamkard and Arya Vaejah.³³ If the Russians had reached these southern seas, if they had been able to realize Peter the Great's dream and (at the cost of plundering the possessions at the southern and southeastern extremes of their present territory) increase the wages, insurance, and pensions of the workers of St. Petersburg and Baku to the levels enjoyed by the workers of Manchester and Lyons, if those Russian workers had not had to slave away in the ice fields of Siberia or the gravel fields of Turkestan, the October Revolution might never have confronted us. That Russia should export its revolutionary traditions to Africa and Southeast Asia (apart from the movement of the Chinese, the most recent political transformation we have witnessed) bespeaks a dream that was stifled for long years before arising in a new garb.

Looking more closely, we see many traces of this turn to the West. The water of life was in the Eastern darkness, but Alexander, who went in search of it, was a Westerner.³⁴ Our own Nizami of Ganja called him a prophet, confounding him with Dhu'l-Qarnayn.³⁵ The Garden of Eden is in the West, and ambergris always comes from the northwestern seas. Baghdad, the Mecca of the Manichaeans, was at the western edge of the Iranian plateau. The Zangi and Byzantine armies were compared to night and day or to the locks and the face of the Beloved.³⁶ Perhaps for that reason no Eastern harem lacked for Byzantine slave girls, the heralds of day, imbued with whiteness and white luck. Regard gnosis for all its orientosis (if one may so term it): Sheykh San 'an, the anchorite of the desert, falling for a Byzantine slave girl, apostasizes and dons the zunnar.³⁷ Even Nargis Khatun, mother of the expected Mahdi of the Shi 'is, is a slave girl of Byzantine extraction. There are many other examples we could quote.

For us, never a callow, bigoted people, the way west has always been open. Like Sa'di, we went to Mecca via Tripoli to be set to corvee labor.³⁸ Or we went to Karbala and Najaf to lay down our burdens.³⁹ Or now we go to Europe to live it up.

All this traffic with the West is natural for a people who want every day to live better, know more, and die more at peace than the day before. There's nothing extraordinary about it. It is inter-course with neighbors near and far. It is to seek to widen one's humanity in other existential molds. What is strange is that, al-

though until some three hundred years ago our westward regard had, as its sole aspect, motive, and cause, hatred, jealousy, and rivalry, these have since been replaced by rueful, worshipful longing.

We had always felt jealousy or hatred toward the West. We competed with her. We fought for her verdant lands, busy ports, placid towns, and steady rainfall. All through those bygone times, we regarded ourselves as worthy of possessing such bounty and our own beliefs and customs as true. We called them unbelievers; we saw them as lost souls. If despite the Sasanians' fanatic Zoroastrianism we gave refuge to their scholars fleeing Alexandria and Constantinople, we evaluated these by our own criteria. At times we went so far as to declare open season on their lives and goods; thus we raided westward all we could.

All this rancor and competitiveness was a justification or motive for us to further extend the Assyrian domains, while tempering Assyria's crudity. We thus brought cedar from Lebanon and gold from Lydia. We propagated the works of Aristotle during the European dark ages through our translations. We imported the Roman legion and Roman architecture. Whatever may be said of these two thousand years of transactions with the West, for all the reciprocal destruction (itself emblematic of life), each side came out the winner. Neither lost a thing.

If we have not dealt as two friends, we have certainly met as two rivals. And what could be better? We contributed silk and oil. We provided a passage to India, to Zoroaster and Mithra. We traveled in the quiver of Islam as far as Andalusia. We placed turbans from India and Khorasan on the heads of Islam. We transformed the divine *farr* into the halo and set it about the heads of the saints of Christianity and Islam.⁴⁰ The list goes on and on. But for these last two or three centuries, we have known the other side of the coin: envy and regret.

We have forgotten the spirit of competition and come to feel in its place the spirit of helplessness, the spirit of worshipfulness. We no longer feel ourselves to be in the right and deserving. (They take the oil, because it is their right and because we cannot stop them; they manage our politics, because our hands are tied; they take away our freedom, because we're unworthy of it.) If we seek to evaluate some aspect of our lives, we do so by their criteria, as prescribed by their advisors and consultants. Thus do we study; thus do we gather statistics; thus do we conduct research. This

makes sense insofar as science has universal methods: scientific methods bear the imprint of no nationality.

But what is curious is that we marry just like the Westerners. We pretend to be free just like them. We sort the world into good and bad along the lines they lay out. We dress like them. We write like them. Night and day are night and day when they confirm it.' One would think our own values had been abrogated. We even pride ourselves in thus being their one-eyed offspring. One of the two ancient rival wrestlers has been demoted to the position of ring keeper; the other owns the ring. And the ring is filled with lust, stupidity, boasting, and vanity. What has happened in these last couple of centuries? What has happened to turn things upside down? Let us again turn to history to find out.

3

Wellsprings of the Flood

In the last three centuries, the Western world jelled in the mold of the industrial revolution, feudalism giving way to urbanization, but we in Iran spun about ourselves the cocoon of a government of "national unity" based on Shi'ism and grew steadily more self-absorbed. Whatever ferment occurred took the form of Batinis, Nuqtavis, Hurufis, Baha'is.⁴² For every school and laboratory built in the West, we created a secret sect and burrowed deeper into the Seven Inner Meanings and the Supreme Name. Over these three centuries the Western industrial behemoth matured and came to need global markets: to obtain cheap raw materials and to sell its manufactures. Over these three centuries we slept behind the shields we had raised against the Ottomans. Meanwhile the West not only devoured the Ottomans and made a club of their every bone (lest the peoples of Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon ever rise up) but soon came after us.

Here I see the roots of occidentosis: on the one hand, the far reach of Western industry, and on the other, the short reach of a national government risen to power on the basis of the slaughter of Sunnis. When our clergy were incorporated into the ruling body to become agents of oppression, when Mir Damad and Majlisi served the Safavid court,⁴³ at least with their silence, in order to have a free hand in promulgating Shi'ism, we were transformed from travelers in the universal caravan of Islam into guardians of tombs, into beggars picking crumbs from the tables of departed martyrs. When we gave up the chance for martyrdom to content ourselves with glorifying the martyrs of the past, we became the gatekeepers of graveyards. I have spoken of this subject in *Nun va'l Qalam* (The letter nun and the pen).⁴⁴

There are two sides to the case, both of which I must at least mention, although this is no essay in the philosophy of history. However, I will not pursue the causes of the industrial revolution in the West; the Westerners themselves have already done so in great detail. We ourselves, in the fever of our *occidentosis*, have been trumpeting this foolishness for years in our schools and publications and on the radio: the Renaissance, the discovery of the compass, the conquest of America, the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope, the invention of the steam engine, the opening of India, the discovery of electricity, and so forth. One even learns these things in fifth-grade geography.

When the West—the world of medieval Christianity—was encircled to the utmost possible degree by Islam, that is, when Islamic powers confronting it from two or three directions (east, south, and southwest) threatened it with extinction and forced it to retrench in a few northern Mediterranean kingdoms, it was shaken wide awake and moved out of desperation, like a cornered cat. This was towards the end of the sixth/twelfth century, when the world of Islam stretched from the University of Cordoba to the schools of Balkh and Bukhara. Jerusalem and its environs, and all the eastern, western, and southern shores of the Mediterranean were in Muslim hands. Even Sicily was a Muslim base. This is when the pacific Christians who would vilify Islam's jihad turned into crusaders who, in the course of their long wars, carried west the germ of the Islamic sciences, which were to transform the Christian West after five or six centuries into the center of science and capital and after seven or eight into the center of industry, the machine, and technology. Thus if the Christian West, faced with overthrow and extinction at the hands of Islam, could suddenly awaken, dig in, and fight back, inevitably deliver itself, is it not now our turn to awaken to the danger of extinction at the hands of the West, to rise, dig in, and fight back?

As regards our untimely sleep and apathy, I will address a couple of points that may be unfamiliar to you. For the other points, refer to the histories of civilization.

Prior to the discovery of the sea routes, across the Iranian plateau passed the greatest, if not the only, routes from Far East to Far West, from China and India to the Mediterranean shores: the Silk Road, the road of spices, paper, goods - for the West. Along the route of these caravans laden with riches, our opulent cities

raised their ramparts and sheltered the caravaners from across the world under their shady verandas. This road created a ferment in town and village. The route passing through Qandahar, Herat, Tus, Nishapur of the Hundred Gates, Rey, Qazvin, Tabriz, Khuy, and Erzurum, to terminate at Trabzon or at Diyarbekir and Tripoli: this was the northern Silk Road. Then there was the road that joined the coast of Sind to Hurmuz and Qishm by sea and then ran to Kirman, Yazd, Isfahan, Varamin, Sava, Hamadan, Kirmanshah, and Mosul, finally also to reach the eastern ports of the Mediterranean. There were also the coastal plain of Mazandaran and the plain of Khuzistan. The oldest civilizations of the Iranian plateau are in these cities or buried in the hills around them.

But when the sea routes opened and sailors found the courage to ply the open sea out of sight of land and safety, not only did the West conquer the new continent of America, itself a bridge to the Far East, but trade deserted our lands, our half-empty cities, and our civilization like a snake shedding its skin, leaving a hollow shell of caravanserais, of cities, of manners and culture, of religion and beliefs, of economic principles. Then we came to know poverty in the precise sense of the word. We were lost to the world of the living, a graveyard of sweet memories of open roads and caravans loaded with goods.* When wealth turned away from our cities and took to the sea to carry China and India to the West, we were forgotten, and we wrapped ourselves in the cocoon of Sufism Safavid-style and a government of national unity on the basis of Shi'ism.

*We still have many such cities: Hurmuz, Bandar 'Abbas, Bushire, Kirman, Yazd, Abarqu, for example. I have seen most of them. Note these lines from a manuscript of *Rahnama-i Iran* [Guide to Iran] by Farrukh Ghaffari:

Istakhri in 340 [951] found Abarqu a flourishing city, and twenty-five years later Ibn Hauqal considered its bazaars to be prosperous. This city was situated on one of the major branches of that trade route of the Mongol era which ran from Hurmuz through Kirman, Yazd, Kashan, Sultaniya, and Tabriz on to the Mediterranean. Hamdullah Mustaufi saw it in 740 [1339]. Toward the end of the fifteenth Christian century (the ninth of the Hijra), this road completely lapsed from use with the discovery of the Indian Ocean route by the Portuguese. The caravansaries, houses, and mosques of Abarqu fell into ruin. The attack of the Afghans in 1335 [1723] so devastated the city that today the name Abarqu stands for the most desolated settlement in the country.

If the world was going to turn away from us, we would turn away from the world. We looked upon the West as unclean. When the ends of the world gained access to each other by means that dispensed with the need of the hospitality of our caravanserais, we became just a neutral region near India, an area obliged to remain calm and unobtrusive, whose only duty was to abstain from creating trouble for India or becoming a seedbed for threats to the East India Company. This went on until oil reared its ugly head in Khuzistan, when we again took center stage and became a bone of contention for East and West, America and England. At any rate, I have yet to see this point referred to in connection with Western advance and Middle Eastern backwardness over the last three centuries, although it certainly deserves investigation.

The second point is that the dukes of the republics and the vanguard of the trading Christians, or Christian traders, were not the first to seek alliance with the pagan nomads of our northeast to repel the threat posed by the Muslims, their rivals from the time of the Crusades. The caliphs of Baghdad had already struck up this particular tune in seeking to quell rebellions in Khurasan and Iraq. Their intrigues extended as far as the Karakorum mountains; in time they granted various nomadic bands -Ghuzz, Seljuq, Mongol- rights to transit, pasture, and settlement across the eastern Islamic world.⁴⁵ Toward the end of the Samanid period, all the generals of Khurasan and Balkh and Iraq were tribal chieftains: the Atabegs and Arslans and Sabuk-takins. The search for allies against the eventuality of a confrontation with Islam began long before the towers and ramparts of Genoese and Venetian trade missions went up.*

*When Hasan II (Jalal ad-Din Hasan), head of the Isma'ilis, learned that the Mongols were coming, in fear he sent a mission to France, to enlist the cooperation of the "People of the Book" in defeating the unbelievers. But the "People of the Book" were disinclined to help; so the ambassador, despairing of the French, crossed the sea to England with the same message. He reached the English court in 636 [1239]. Matthew Paris relates his lamentable meeting with the king of England in his history [*Monachi Albanensis Angli*]: Bishop Winchester, who was present, recalled the king's reply: "Let these dogs fight each other and devour each other. We will finish off the survivors when we go to war with the enemies of the Saviour." From Mihرداد Samadi, "Mah va Aftab" [Sun and Moon], *Kitab-i Hafta*, 13 Mihr 1342/1963, pp.65-66.

Here is what one European has said on the subject:

Christianity among the Turks is of great historical import. We know that Soghdia, where western Turks were settling from 565 on, was one of the greatest centers for the Nestorian Church. It was from here as well as from Balkh that Nestorian missionaries set out to Christianize Asia. It appears that by about the year 1000 the Nestorian missionaries had accomplished the task of Christianizing the rear guards of the Turkish tribes in Central Asia. These tribes consist of the Ongots of Inner Mongolia, the Kereits of central Mongolia, and the Naimans of western Mongolia. Apart from the Uigurs, who had been inculcated with Christian manners much earlier in the Gobi desert, one cannot make out the half-Christian mien of Chengiz Khan's empire without considering the Nestorian faith of all these western Turks who wielded swords in his van.*

Thus it was probably no accident that the Islamic world came under attack on two fronts in the seventh and eighth centuries of the Hijra (the thirteenth and fourteenth Christian centuries): from the Mongols with their "half-Christian mien" on the east and from the wholly Christian Crusaders on the west. Thus did Marco Polo and his companions enter the arena.

The Europeans of the fourteenth and fifteenth Christian centuries- who fought the Ottoman Turks, discovered the west coast of Africa, rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and fought the Muslims in the Indian Ocean, all in the mistaken supposition that there across the ocean they would find their ancient ally against the Muslims, that is, the chief of the Mongols- were all descendants of the original crusaders.+

The third point is that the Crusaders who took to the saddle to pack away the soil of the Islamic world came from all across Europe, from Sweden to Rome. All had orders in hand from the pope. All were supplied with horses, rations, fodder, and money from the commercial houses of Genoa and Venice. And who fought them in the name of the world of Islam? It was not all the Islamic

*Rene Grousset, *La face de l'Asie*, Paris, 1962, p. 55.

+Parviz Daryush, trans., *Tarikh-i Tamaddun-i Gharb va Maban-yi An dar Sharq* [History of the civilization of the west and its bases in the east], Tehran, 1338/1959, p.333. [Wang Khan, the head of the Naiman Mongols, was widely identified in Europe with the legendary custodian of the Holy Grail, Prester John. (Tr.)]

countries together, just the Mamluks of Egypt-the nominal appointees of a vanishing Caliphate. I don't believe even Sa'di was serving as a volunteer in the jihad against the unbelievers in that trench at Tripoli when he was captured. In those days no one in this part of the Islamic world was willing to abandon the childish games of petty kings in order to face danger. No one would leave the chance to dust off an adversary in the endless debate over whether the Qur'an is eternal or created for such a purpose-not to mention the fact that the Mongol invasion had so wholly ruined the Islamic world that no field remained for a man to seek glory on.

It was in such an age that Marco Polo, ostensibly a merchant and in reality an emissary of the pope, traversed all these ruined lands, saying "Where now are those kings?" He went to congratulate the Great Khan on thus signally levelling a road for the penetration of Venetian trade. The most immediate result of this Venetian's peregrinations was the establishment of the silk and spice routes to which the two Venetian houses of *Romeo and Juliet* fame owed their splendor: "In consequence of the efforts of the Mongol ilkhans and the Venetian merchants, two great routes were opened: one the Greater Armenian Road (Tabriz - Khuy - Malazgirt - Erzurum - Trabzon) and the other the Lesser Armenian Road (Tabriz - Erzurum - Sivas - Iskenderun)."* But the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople and the fall of Byzantium in 857/1453 cut off these newly secured roads, and a Christian Europe grown accustomed to Eastern riches went sniffing out new routes. This very search led to the discovery of America and the passage of the Cape of Good Hope. Just fifty-three years after the conquest of Constantinople and fourteen years before the founding of the Safavid state (893/1488), Bartolomeu Dias navigated the Cape of Good Hope; five years later Vasco da Gama sailed around it to the warm seas to turn up at the Indian port of Calicut. Seven years later Afonso de Albuquerque assumed governance of the mouth of the Persian Gulf from the rulers of Hurmuz by force of cannon so that he might later drive the first nail of imperialism into Goa, India, which was to be pulled five hundred years later, in our own time.+

*Abbas Iqbal, *Mutala'ati dar bab-i Bahrayn va Jazayir va Savahil-i Khalij-i Fars* [Researches on Bahrain and the islands and coastlands of the Persian Gulf], Tehran, 1328/1959, p.5.

+Jalal Al-i Ahmad, *Jazira-yi Kharg* [Kharg Island], pp. 71-72.

This is all history, true enough in its way. But the West has sought out ways and means beyond these. This brings us to my final point: if Christian activities in the far deserts did not pave the way for the Mongol invasions, if they did not constitute one of the principal causes, we at least see in Timur's incursions much evidence of proddings by European holdovers from the Crusades in need of the wealth of the bazaars of the East. I shan't make use here of works by Europeans, who are so careful to cover their traces in such instances. Rather, I shall look at a book written by one of us, a Muslim, where one can see more of a mute simplemindedness.

Ibn Khaldun, who toward the end of his life met Timur, writes:

Before this, when I was in the Maghrib, I had heard many predictions concerning his appearance. Astrologers who used to discuss the conjunction of the two superior planets were awaiting the tenth conjunction in the trigon, which was expected to occur in the year 66 of the seventh [*sic*] century. One day, in the year [7]61, I met in Fez in the Mosque of al-Qarawiyn the preacher of Constantinople, Abu 'Ali ibn Badis, who was an authority on the subject.⁴⁷ I asked him about this conjunction which was to occur, and its implications. He answered me, "It points to a powerful one who would arise in the northeast region of a desert people, tent dwellers, who will triumph over kingdoms, overturn governments, and become masters of most of the inhabited world" Ibn Zarzar, the Jewish physician and astrologer of Ibn Alfonso [el Infante], king of the Franks, wrote to me similarly.*

Of those relating this news, one is a preacher come from Constantinople, freshly conquered by the Ottomans, and the other is a Jewish physician at the court of a European king! Surely we can interpret this clear footprint, this historical fact, as a sign that the Mongols hadn't yet done enough to break the back of Islam. In the West, they always dreamed of another goon to finally lay low these warriors! Not a spark from the ruinous Mongol firestorm, nothing of Timur's holocaust, reached the Christian world. If Russia was chastized a little, it was in punishment for the sin of being "Orthodox" and not resting its head on the threshold of the Roman pope. Just fifty years after the Muslim conquest of Constantinople, the Safavid state was established at Ardabil, right at the Ottomans'

*Walter J. Fischel, ed. and trans., *Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1952, pp.35-36

back,*⁴⁸ just the place to insert a dagger. Nearly five hundred thousand Muslims were massacred at Chaldiran.+

I am not defending the Ottoman Turks. I am saying that it is in consequence of this inglorious and sanguinary regional strife and the resulting anemia that we Middle Easterners are in such a fix today. I want to see by what right our venerable historians defend these sectarian policies. Perhaps had the Ottomans been victorious or the Safavids not followed a different drummer under the banner of Shi'ism, we would today be a province of the Ottoman caliphate. But are we Iranians not today a subjected province of the West? Then, too, were we not to all appearances similarly a province of the Baghdad caliphate for the first six or seven Islamic centuries? While being apparently only a part of the Islamic totality, what a totality we bore of Islamic civilization! Was it not we who, in the darkest days of Umayyad domination, relying on our national identity, on what of our Iranian heritage we had conveyed to Islam, carried the black banner of the 'Abbasids from Khurasan to Baghdad and so thoroughly imparted the distinctive stamp of our civilization to Islam that even now fledgling orientalist find it difficult to dis-

*907/1501: Shah Isma'il's coronation. 857/1453: the conquest of Constantinople. Also note this other historical event: "Uzun Hasan's wife was the daughter of Kalo-Ioannes and sister of David, the last emperor of Trabzon. Her name was Despina Catherine. . . . Uzun Hasan had one son and three daughters by her. One daughter, named Martha, married Sultan Haydar. . . . She was the mother of Shah Isma'il the Safavid and the daughter of Despina Catherine, the Greek Christian." From 'Abd al-Husayn Nava'i, "Uzun Hasan," *Mahnama-yi Farhang* [Cultural monthly], 4, 1341/1962.

+ "The national revival of Iran on the basis of Shi'ism was supported not just from within the country; the hardline opposition of the Ottomans who called the Shi'is heretics also helped. Sultan Selim I went so far as to proclaim that the killing of one Shi'i was rewarded [by God] as much as killing seventy Christians. On the basis of this fatwa, in a few days forty thousand Shi'is had been massacred in Ottoman domains." From Grousset, *La face de l'Asie*, p. 112, where this subject is developed for three further pages. Let us not forget that twice this number of Sunnis were killed in Iran. I heard with regret that the Martyrs' Cemetery in Ardabil, where Iranian soldiers fallen at Chaldiran were buried, was recently demolished and replaced with a "new foundations" school, as usual. [Chaldiran is a plain in northwestern Azarbaijan where, in August 1514, the Ottomans won a decisive victory over the Safavids. (Tr.)]

cern what percentage of Islamic civilization can be traced to extra-Iranian elements?

We should display breadth of vision and tolerance, rise above these incendiary and divisive politics and see how ruinous for us so-called Middle Easterners they have been, how bloody, inglorious and interminable, covertly supported by the clergy of the time and cheered on by the European Christian ambassadors, who have disseminated the Sunni-Shi'i conflict. We must see what disasters have come in the wake of it to the East, or to all of us the Westerners call the Middle Easterners. We should see what a chronic anemia we have inherited from that era. And we should see how smugly and self-servingly the European writer speaks of us! As Rene, Grousset says:

Here is how Iran finds its place among the great administrative states of the world. The first reason is the relations the court in Isfahan had with the Mongol Great Khans on the one hand and with the Western powers on the other.⁴⁹ These ties with the West in particular have a great importance in world history, in that through them Iran, quite unlike the Ottoman Empire, emerged as a natural ally of the Christian world. It was owing to this historical role that the great European statesmen of the seventeenth century set out for the court in Isfahan: first the Sherley brothers, those marvelous English adventurers who became personal friends of Shah 'Abbas, and then Tavernier and Chardin.*

Ibn Khaldun ("Let me never complain of foreigners, etc.") says of Timur, "Some attribute to him a mystical temperament, regard him as a Rafizi, because they note his preference for the 'members of the House [of 'Ali].'"⁺ The murmuring started long before the Safavids. And what did this alleged Rafizi, Timur, do? He pulverized the Islamic world another time, until nothing remained of garden or gardener. If, in 657 [1258] Hijri, Hulagu the Mongol, in the face of fear that heaven and earth would collapse and God grow enraged, ordered the 'Abbasid Caliph wrapped in a felt rug and kicked to death, this second ruffian, Timur, put the last Seljuq ruler of Turkey, Yildirim Beyazid (lightning bolt), in a cage like a tiger for the amusement of Christian onlookers.⁵⁰ It was after these events that the eighth-century (fourteenth century C. E.) world of the petty kings

*Grousset, *La face de l'Asie*, pp. 116-117

+Modified from Fischel, *Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane*, p.47.

fell into such utter savagery and ruin that the Safavids were able to attract widespread allegiance without resort to slaughter.

In all this analysis I mean no regret for the past or arguments over the origins of long-dead heroes. I want to know how the worms infested the tree. In the midst of the Mongol invasion, just a year before the killing of the Caliph, Sa'di said,

That hour which we spent but pleasantly,
Was in the year six fifty-six Hijri.

Or take Ibn Khaldun, a man who as judge, minister, and secretary had free access to governors across the Western Islamic world and who wrote such a spectacular work on the philosophy of history. How he resigned himself to fate! How he despaired and succumbed to exhaustion from the endless struggles among the Muslim rulers of Andalusia, so much so that with his fabrications of traditions he stood expectant of any thug who promised to unify the world - even if by destroying it.

4

The First Infections

Contemporary with the appearance of the Renaissance in the West, the demon of a medieval type of inquisition reared its head in our Middle East and the furnace of religious differences and religious wars was ignited. Thus, as Mr. Fardid⁵¹ says, where the West ends, we begin. As the West stood, we sat down. As the West awoke in an industrial resurrection, we passed into the slumber of the Seven Sleepers. Let's leave aside the fact that we're on the same intellectual seesaw that the West set in motion in the early eighteenth Christian century, that we had our Constitutional Revolution at the beginning of the twentieth century, just as the West was beginning to move to socialism, to styles of economic, political, and cultural guidance.

Flip through the travel diaries of any of the (mostly Jesuit) individuals who came to these parts ostensibly as travelers, traders, leaders, or military advisors throughout the Safavid era.* See what patient and encouraging witnesses they were for those tribes that were striking roots and how they greased the rails for Shah 'Abbas's career of homicide or Sultan Husayn's aimlessness. In that period we first lent an ear to the cheerings-on of the Europeans sitting ringside, who in truth have been the principal mentors of our governors and leaders over these past three hundred years. All these

*Their names are legion. The best source on them is Nasrullah Falsafi, *Zindagani-yi Shah 'Abbas* [The life of Shah 'Abbas], in three volumes. [The work was actually completed in five volumes; two more were published after Al-i Ahmad finished *Gharbzadagi*. (Ed.)] These travel diaries are the first and foremost source for the science of orientalism. Most orientalist are just pint-sized versions of these gentlemen. Read Falsafi's book to see what I mean.

cheerings-on are like a spell whispered in the ear of the tired old guide so he will sleep soundly as the caravan is being attacked.

These are the wellsprings of the flood of occidentosis. Unfortunately, we still lend our ears to the self-interested cheerings-on of agents of foreign ministries who come here every few years in the guise of orientalists, ambassadors, and advisors and in time weave their spell of sycophancy over us, we who have been afflicted with delusions of grandeur and enamored of ceremony since the time of Khusrau Anushirvan.⁵² In the course of this new sort of comings and goings, the Europeans have familiarized themselves with our character and learned how to keep us guessing, how to make loans and then take control of the customs. Or how (in the Safavid era) to break the reigning shah's silk monopoly through their own competitive market and then, when their scheme had taken effect, how through the Afghan cutthroats to rid themselves of the picaresque Safavid knight, who gradually had degenerated into a scarecrow. And then Nadir Shah comes along to attack India so rudely. Just when the East India Company, meaning Western imperialism, is so busy setting up shop in South India, Muhammad Shah's court in the north must be kept occupied. And after Nadir had been taken care of came the Treaty of Turkomanachay (1243/1828), the last gasp of this heedless one in the lion's skin.⁵³ And there follows the Herat War (1273/1857), in which a siege of Bushire tore the last bit of wool from this fake beard. Thus was the knight's corpse cast to the ground.

Fifty or sixty years ago oil reared its head, and so we found ourselves figuring in the scheme of things again. Because of all these intrigues and other prior reasons, we were destined to see our politics, economy, and culture fall into the hands of the companies and the European states that protected them. The clergy was the last citadel of resistance against the Europeans, but in the Constitutional Era, with the onslaught of the first wave of the machine, the clergy drew into their shell and so shut out the outside world, wove such a cocoon about themselves that it might not be rent until the Resurrection. They did this by retreating step by step.

That the foremost clerical partisan of rule in accordance with Islamic law was hanged is itself a sign of this retreat.⁵⁴ I agree with Dr. Tundar Kiya, who wrote that the martyred Shaykh Nuri was forced to mount the gallows not as an opponent of constitutionalism, which he had defended early on, but as an advocate of

rule by Islamic law (and as an advocate for Shi'i solidarity).* This is why they all sat waiting for the fatwa from Najaf to kill him-this in an age when the leaders among our occidentotic intellectuals were the Christian Malkum Khan and the Caucasian Social Democrat Talibov!⁵⁵ Now the brand of occidentosis was imprinted on our foreheads. I look on that great man's body on the gallows as a flag raised over our nation proclaiming the triumph of occidentosis after two hundred years of struggle. Under this flag we are like strangers to ourselves, in our food and dress, our homes, our manners, our publications, and, most dangerous, our culture. We try to educate ourselves in the European style and strive to solve every problem as the Europeans would. + If in the beginning of the Constitutional Era the danger brushed up against us, it has now touched our souls-from the peasant who has fled to the city and never returns to his village because the itinerant barber there has no Brilliantine among his equipment or because there is no cinema there or because he can't buy a sandwich, to the minister who seems al-

*Paraphrased from Tundar Kiya's biographical essay on Shaykh Nuri in *Shahin*, Tehran, 1335/1956, pp.210-319.

+See Sayyid Fakhr ad-Din Shadman, *Tashkir-i Tamaddun-i Farangi* [Mastering European civilization], Tehran, 1326/1947. Sayyid Shadman has the merit of precedence over me in having sought a remedy for "Frenchification" years ago. He advocated serious study of the mother tongue, as well as translation of Western works of philosophy, science, and manners. But though he diagnosed the condition well, his remedy was not reliable. Since his time, thousands of European books have been translated, and each of us has read through the whole gamut of European conceptions; yet we turn more "Frenchified" by the day because this "Frenchification," or what I call "dandification," is just a symptom of the underlying illness of occidentosis. Perhaps no one has so well understood the underlying cause of the problem as Muhammad Baqir Hushyar, who, although well-known for his Baha'ism, was able to write in 1327/1948: "You saw through the chink in the door that the Europeans are all literate, but you did not see how their manners and customs are in place; you do not know that the system of their learning, from the nursery school to the university, is based on the church. And in the name of Western intellectualism, you have long since cast out this basis from your land, trying to be more royalist than the king." M.B. Hushyar, "Amuzish-i Hamagani va Rayigan" [Free universal education], *Amuzish va Parvarish* [Education and upbringing] (annual), 1327/1948.

lergic to the dust of our country and spends the year knocking about the world. This estrangement came about because the two generations that have cropped up here since the Constitutional Era to become professors, writers, ministers, lawyers, general directors, and so on, only the doctors among them having any true specialized competence, all have been attentive readers of Aqa Khan Kirmani's *Three Letters to Jalal ad-Daula*, as well as being engrossed in the memory of the dissipations of their youth spent in Paris, London, or Berlin. They have also been under the influence of Malkum Khan and Talibov, and other first-generation occidentotics of the Constitutional Era.*⁵⁶ So far as I can see, all these homegrown Montesquieus of ours fell off the same side of the roof. They all agreed on this much, and they all had an instinctive feeling that our ancient society and tradition could not withstand the onslaught of Western technology. They all went astray in opting for "adoption of European civilization without Iranian adaptation," but in addition to this vague and unproven remedy, each sought a different cure.+ One thumped the tub for foreign embassies; another believed one must, in imitation of the West, revive ancient tradition through a religious "reform" like Luther's; a third called for Islamic unity in an age when the Ottomans' ignominy was being trumpeted about the world with the slaughter of the Armenians and Kurds.⁵⁷

At the beginning of the Constitutional Era, the leading figures were basically motivated by a belief that "Islam = rule in accordance with Islamic law = religion," whether they were for it or against it. It was seen as standing in its totality as a defense against or barrier to the penetration of the machine, of the West. Thus one attacked it and another rose to its defense, and rule in accordance with Islamic law and constitutionalism emerged as the two contradictory

*Works such as *Islam, Akhund, va Hatif al-Ghayb* [Islam, the akhund and the voice of the unseen], *Haftad u Do Millat* [Seventy-two nations], *Risala-yi Yek Kalima* [One word], *Siyasat-i Talibi* [Talibi Politics], and *Siyahatnama-yi Ibrahim Beg* [The travels of Ibrahim Beg] pave the way to occidentosis in equating religion with superstition.

+Quoted verbatim from Malkum Khan, *Majmu'a-yi Asar* [Collected works], ed. Muhit Tabataba'i, Tehran, 1327/1948. See also Firidun Adamiyyat, *Fikr-i Azadi* [Free thought], Tehran, 1340/1961, where the author adroitly attacks one group of Freemasons while exonerating another. I believe the Freemasons are all cut from the same cloth.

concepts of religion and irreligion. Their approach to the matter now seems erroneous, but perhaps, if we had lived back then, we, too, would have fallen into one of these two courses rather than judging the men of that age as harshly as we do now. These gentlemen were closer than we to a time when the great Mirza Shirazi could set aside the tobacco concession (to the English Regie Company) with a simple fatwa and indicate what a support-and likewise what a danger!-was the power of the clergy.⁵⁸ They failed to see that the god technology had for years exercised absolute rule over Europe mounted on the throne of its banks and stock exchanges, and it no longer tolerated any other god, laughing in the face of every tradition and ideology.

Thus constitutionalism, as the vanguard of the machine, attacked the clergy. Starting then, over a twenty-year period, the *madrasas* would be exiled to one or two towns; their influence ceased to be felt in the legal and notarial system, and the wearing of their garb was forbidden. At that point not only did the clergy fail to react to this pressure, but they engrossed themselves in the finer points of prayer and ritual purity or grew lost in doubt between two and three. When they really exerted themselves, the best they could manage was to forbid radio and television, although these have spread until it would be beyond a Rostam's power to hold them back. Actually, the clergy could and should have armed itself with the weapons of its enemy and countered the occidentosis of governmental and quasi-governmental broadcasting by installing its own transmitters in Qum and Mashhad, just as the Vatican has done. If the clergy knew what a precious seed for rebellion against every government of the oppressors it had implanted in the hearts of the people with its doctrine of "the non-necessity of obeying the holders of rule," if it were able to make clear to the people the real nature of these rulers and translate general religious principle into specific injunction through its own media outlets (newspapers, radio, television, film, and so forth), and if it were able to give its work some impetus through participation in international religious organizations, it would never get caught up in these minutiae in a way that leads to being so uninformed and uninvolved.*⁵⁹ Enough said on this subject.

*Between the first and second editions of this work, a book titled *Marja'iyat va Ruhaniyyat* [Religious leadership and the clergy] (Tehran, 1341/1962) was published. Although written in the familiar bombast of the

As a final piece of historical evidence, I'll now examine the role of one oil company in our politics and society over the last sixty years. The oil concession was given in 1901 by the Qajar Shah to the Englishman, William Knox D'Arcy, who sold his interest to the well-known company. In 1906, the constitutionalist fracas began. The region contracted out is on the southwest slopes of the Bakhtiyari Mountains. The remains of the first oil well can still be seen at Masjid-i Sulayman. The southwest slopes of the Bakhtiyari Mountains had to be cleared of the Bakhtiyari tribespeople who would winter there so that the first drillers could dig up the land, mountain, and plain of Masjid-i Sulayman in peace. This set the Bakhtiyaris on a course that would carry them on to conquer Tehran, with the help of the *mujahids* of Tabriz and Rasht.* And if our con-

clergy, it shows a relative awareness of these problems and responsibilities and of the possible solutions. This is especially true of the articles by Muhandis [Mehdi] Bazargan and Sayyid Mahmud Taleghani, the Imam of the Hidayat Mosque. In place of a single authoritative guide (*marja'-i taqlid*), they propose a sort of council for delivering fatwas. And if we accept that this work, for all its defects, anticipated the events of 15 Khurdad 1342/ 5 June 1963, now may I offer the following suggestions to the religious leadership: (1) If the clergy should go on ignoring their own principles, one of which I have mentioned, and (2) go on contenting themselves with minutiae and with banning and declaring an unbeliever this and that thing or person, and (3) if they should forget that, owing to the principle of *ijtihad*, the road to the acceptance of social change is more open to the Shi'i than to the Sunni (although it was Shaykh Mahmud Shaltut, head of the Azhar Mosque, and not the Shi'i 'ulama, who issued the fatwa for the emancipation of women), if the clergy cannot rend that cocoon they wove about themselves in the Constitutional Era and attend to the conditions of the time, we must conclude that this last line of defense against occidentosis has lost its elan and degraded into a fossil fit only for a museum or at the most into one of the last refuges for all reactionary forces.

*Remember that one of the shareholders in British Petroleum was Colonel As'ad Bakhtiyari. Another was Mushir ad-Daula (Nasrullah Khan). And if in the Reza Shah Era this Colonel As'ad was eliminated, don't you suppose that he, like Shaykh Khaz'al, who laid claim to lands in Khuzistan, probably had claims in the oil-rich Bakhtiyari winter pasture lands that got in the way of the government of the time, just as the Hayat-Davudis of Kharg Island had such claims and so were slaughtered? For enlightenment on these questions, refer to Abu'l-Fazl Lisani, *Tala-yi Siyah, ya Balayi Iran* [Black gold, or Iran's downfall].

stitutionalism is half-baked, it is because the khans rose to the defense of a movement that denied the principle of feudalism upon which their lives were based. Thus we remained bemused with issues of constitutionalism and tyranny until the outbreak of the First World War. But the company had struck oil, and the British Admiralty, official holder of the concession in the south, had an assured supply. You see that I am not writing history. I am establishing some points in all haste. Go dig up the evidence from the histories yourselves.

Then in about 1300/1920, the war ended, with the owners of the company victorious and the furnace of war cooling. Oil consumption abroad was necessarily reduced, and markets within Iran were needed. So a strong central government that could secure all the roads and remove the blocks, so tankers could readily reach places as remote as Quchan, Khuy, and Makran, had to be established. They had to be able to set up a gas pump in every village. Most important, because the concessionaire was then the British Admiralty, there could be no internal disturbances. The admiralty didn't care to deal with all these khans and assemblies and publications; it wanted to deal with one individual only. So we have the coup d'etat of 1299/1921 and the ensuing autocratic military government, the forced settlement of the Kurds, the elimination of Shaykh Khaz'al⁶⁰ (if he had acted a little intelligently, we might now have had a duplicate of the Shaykh of Bahrayn in Khuzistan), and the feeble last gasp of Simitqu.⁶¹

By 1311/1932, D'Arcy's original concession was more than halfway to its expiry. The British Admiralty, that is, the British government, had to use the existing centralized power (one man speaking for the whole establishment: the assembly, the ministerial body, the army, the security forces), while the iron was hot to renew the concession. Thus Taqizada becomes instrumental once again.⁶² The puppet Majlis votes, and D'Arcy's concession is first canceled, then renewed, with enough fanfare to prevent even experienced old-timers from suspecting anything or wishing to dig deeper. Not one of them raised his voice in protest to exonerate himself before history, not until later, when all was said and done and when the whole herd had gotten corraled by the events of Shahrivar 1320/1941 and its aftermath.⁶³ It was necessary, of course, to conceal the ugly truth by means of games suited to the spirit of the times. The truth was hidden by bludgeoning the people into a uniform mode of dress

through snatching the traditional felt hat off the men and the veil off the women, as the ultimate in progress, and by building a railroad across the country-not with oil income but with taxes on sugar-whose major *raison d'etre* turned out to be supplying the front at Stalingrad during World War II.

Then, in 1320/1941, Europe was at war; there was the threat posed to the allies by Rashid 'Ah Gailani⁶⁴ and the flirtation of our government of the time with the Axis Powers as a token not so much of maturity as of senility. (If the cows in a barn don't all have the same temperament, at least they all smell the same.) So things got serious, and we all know how it ended. All that might, that army, the Second Division, the police forces, all that power and glory, fell apart in one day. If Napoleon, a French colonel, could accept an island, St. Helena, an Iranian could make do with Mauritius.

The United States recovered much faster from World War II than it did from the First World War. It had needed to refuel its warships in the Persian Gulf. Unwilling to pay the British oil company to fuel the ships that were going around the world to defeat fascism, that is, to get England and Russia out of hot water, America first found a basis for intervention in the question of oil in the south and then, in the case of Azarbayjan in particular, it was only the weight of American policy that compelled the United Nations to act and the Soviet Union to evacuate Azarbayjan. There necessarily followed confusion, demands for freedom. The oil concession in the north came under discussion, and what the English saw as the specter of the Americans taking over their monopoly. This taste of freedom lasted until 1329/1951, when oil was nationalized, America checkmated the British, and the pieces on the board were changed one after the other. One had to be consigned to the chess box of oblivion, and another was mated so that American capitalism could grab 40 percent of the consortium stock--exactly the portion the British Admiralty holds. This is the story of the uprising of 28 Murdad 1332/19 August 1953.

This is what we call *following* in politics and economics. To follow the West-the Western states and the oil companies-is the supreme manifestation of *occidentosis* in our time. This is how Western industry plunders us, how it rules us, how it holds our destiny. Once you have given economic and political control of your country to foreign concerns, they know what to sell you, or

at least what not to sell you. Because they naturally seek to sell you their manufactures in perpetuity, it is best that you remain forever in need of them, and God save the oil reserves. They take away the oil and give you whatever you want in return- from soup to nuts, even grain. This enforced trade even extends to cultural matters, to letters, to discourse. Go flip through our half-dozen so-called heavy literary publications. What news do you see of our part of the world? Of the east in the broadest terms? Of India, Japan, China? All you see is news of the Nobel Prize, of the new pope, of Francoise Sagan, the Cannes Film Festival, the latest Broadway play, the latest Hollywood film. This is not to mention the illustrated weeklies, which are quite notorious. If we aren't to call this occidentosis, what are we to call it?

5

The War of Contradictions

We now resemble an alien people, with unfamiliar customs, a culture with no roots in our land and no chance of blossoming here. Thus all we have is stillborn, in our politics, our culture, and our daily life. We are about nineteen or twenty million people, 75 percent of whom live in the countryside, or in tents or huts, following ways from the dawn of creation, ignorant of new values, condemned to the relations of lord and serf, unfamiliar with the machine, having primitive tools and the corresponding food, fuel, clothing, and housing: the plow, barley bread, cow dung, tent cloth, and straw huts, respectively. The only things Western that have penetrated this region are the transistor radio and the draft, and these with more deadly effect than dynamite.

The first step in the machine transformation is when the stove replaces the *kursi*.⁶⁵ But in these rural regions, even charcoal is unknown, let alone oil. For all we are an oil-producing country and have striven to expand oil consumption, our per capita annual oil and gasoline consumption comes to only two hundred fifty liters - this despite all those four-wheeled junk heaps that prowl through our towns eating gasoline and causing accidents.* One can't cook even a bowl of *eshkane* a day with that amount of fuel.⁶⁶ So the logic of occidentosis demands that we subject these peasants to the various tractors that we must buy with our oil incomes. These tractors then throw all the ancestral estates and boundaries into chaos. Go

*The total consumption of petroleum products (exclusive of tar and petroleum-derived pharmaceuticals) throughout Iran in 1342/1963 was five million metric tons. Divided by twenty million persons, this yields two hundred fifty liters per annum, that is, a little over half a liter per day, per capita.

see the mayhem when this blind twentieth-century plow transgresses into an adjoining plot by three hand spans. I have compiled an archive of these bloody encounters, heads broken open with shovels and the like, for a story. And now, under such circumstances, to break up estates, to enlarge the class of small landowners, is looked upon as the latest thing in progressive reforms! That is, every bit of arable land is to be converted into a spiderweb of individual plots to strangle a machine in its warp and woof and render it useless. Then go see what a graveyard for scrapped tractors the country's farmlands have become—where there are no repair stations to maintain them, no open horizons and open land to use them on, and no highways to take them to town for repair. And for all this, the people of a village are out of work at least three months of the year and exposed to cold, floods, drought, and locusts. Who ought to solve these problems?

Although 9 percent to 15 percent of the population of a developed industrial nation is engaged in producing the food for that nation, we have set 60 percent of our people to the task of filling our bellies, and still every year we import grain from America and sugar from Formosa—we who supposedly live in an agrarian nation. What are these proud villagers doing for those nine months of the year that they work? They are reaping grass, sun-drying dung, watering cattle and sheep, and praying for rain. "Where is it all getting us? The radio says that they're shoveling out the money in the cities. On Wednesdays. So let's go." Thus they are fleeing the land for the cities in droves: the cities to which the villages used to send their usable young to serve in the army as batmen, or to do forced labor, the cities that have kept the remaining 25 percent of the proud people immune to the vicissitudes of the age, behind their massive walls, under their adobe roofs, to the cities that are mostly inflated villages (or, as my friend Husayn Malik puts it, each is a knot tied somewhere on the slender thread of a highway). So each of these cities becomes a trade fair for Western industrial goods. You can see fifty years' production of England's Raleigh bicycles brought together in Yazd, a month's output of the Mitsubishi factory at Turbat-i Haydariya, and ten years' production of Fords, Chevrolets, and Fiats in Tehran. Meanwhile you can't get any butter in Kirman and you have to eat canned food from Australia in Tabriz. I have seen all this for myself. In the precarious urban jungle, we tend parked cars, sell lottery tickets, or, at the very best, work in

construction. Someone in construction earns 7 to 10 *tumans* a day - an hour's wage for such work in the industrialized nations.

This urbanization will proceed in any event, but have cities ever survived without the countryside? The way we're going, soon, instead of cities and countryside, we'll have only junkyards across the land, junkyards like in America, as big as all Tehran! And you cannot put an automobile on the back of a mule like a mortar used to defend this and that mountain and hill as the tribe migrates. Even if you've bought a Peugeot, you're obliged to provide it with shelter at night lest the radiator burst from the cold. And then how will you meet the payments? Thus we have many taxi drivers in town who sleep in 2-tuman-a-night inns, while their cars rest in 1-tuman garages; our climate necessitates this.

The logic of machine consumption compels urbanization, which follows from being uprooted from the land. To migrate to the city, you must be uprooted from your ancestral lands, flee a landlord's village, or tire of tribal migrations and forsake them. This is the first contradiction ensuing from our occidentosis: to respond to the machine's call to urbanization, we uproot the people from the villages and send them to the city, where there's neither work nor housing and shelter for them, while the machine steps into the village itself. Although each machine displaces ten workers and an ox, it still needs attendants, even in the village, skilled attendants. And where do you obtain them? You see what a sorry mess things become!

Other contradictions also arise from this occidentosis. First, the new urban resident attends initially to the wants of his stomach and then to those of the region beneath his stomach, and for sake of the latter, to his grooming.* When we lived in the village, we had no access to these things. Thus the first bases for the newly arisen bourgeoisie are the food industry (sugar, baked goods, vegetable oil, compote, pasteurized milk), the construction industry (cement, concrete blocks, tiles, and so forth), and the clothing in-

*"Exact statistics show that Iran ranks sixteenth among nations in beauticians and hairdressers or barbers. . . . In Tehran there are 2200 licensed men's barbers and women's hairdressers and 2500 unlicensed ones. ... Comparing this with London's 4300 barbers and hairdressers, or Moscow's 3900, one can appreciate how much the people of Tehran have devoted to maintaining their appearance in recent years." *Firdaus*, Tuesday, 21 Khurdad 1342/12 June 1963, p.2.

dustry (textiles, synthetics[!], General Mode, and so forth).⁶⁷ Starvelings that we are, having been chronically undernourished for centuries, this in itself is an advance. Such a starveling who has had a lifetime diet of bread and buttermilk in the village can fill up on sandwiches in the city and go find first a hairdresser and a tailor, then a shoeshiner, then a whorehouse. Political parties and societies being prohibited (and what can one say of our so-called cultural clubs?), and mosque and mihrab forgotten or remembered only during Muharram and Ramazan, the movie house replaces them all,* as do television and the magazines that every day inspire thousands of our proud citizens to copy the features and gestures of some film star! And where is the food for all these people to come from? From the depopulated countryside, the slaughtered cows, the silted irrigation channels, the deep well pumps with bolt number 5 broken, the rusted tractor-drawn plough, the spare parts on order from abroad that won't arrive for at least a year. One can't fill a whole city on powdered milk donated by America or on Australian grains.

A second contradiction is that urban life demands security, in the city or in the village. Most of the villages and many of the towns that are emptying are situated on the route of tribal migrations. The tribes graze their flocks and allow them to trample pastures; they ruin streams, throw dead dogs in irrigation canals, steal fowl, and bring lawlessness. For this reason alone, we are not secure even in our smaller cities, let alone in the villages. Thus the people of this region distrust and dissemble and double-deal from behind their high walls of adobe or of concrete thrown up against the vicissi-

*The cinema in Iran ranks with opiates and cigarettes as a refuge for those fleeing anxiety, home and family, school, and sexual and other deprivations: in Tehran alone, figures for cinema attendance reach thirty-three million a year and ticket receipts, 500 million *rials* a year." From "Sinema va Mardum az Yekdigar Che Mikhahand?" [What do the cinema and the people expect of each other?], in *Masa'il-i Iran* [Problems of Iran], Azar 1342/November 1963. The same article quotes some material from *Iran*, a study by sixteen American specialists, on the subject of film: "In the movies, the Westernized Iranian finds modern culture of the kind promised in his education but denied in his life. Movies provide escape from a society of frustration into a dream world where his Western values are seen actually to take place." Herbert H. Vreeland, research chairman and editor, *Iran*, New Haven, 1957.

tudes of the age. There was a time when the high walls around towns obviated the need for high walls around every house. Because today we have torn down the town walls and gates to allow for broad streets, passages for bulldozers, tractors, and buses, now each house must have its own surrounding wall. And what high walls! Our country is the country of the Kavir-i Lut and of high walls. The walls in the villages are made of mud; city walls are made of brick and cement. This applies not only to the external world; walls have been raised to the sky within each person as well. Each seeks refuge behind ramparts of suspicion, mistrust, and isolation.

An urbanite or peasant living in town has fled the landlords, the path of the annual predations of migrating tribes, or tribal membership itself, seeking security in city or town. This person may fail to anticipate that the tribal chief may enter the government in another ten years and start his own minor dynasty (see what we said above concerning the historical role of the tribes). Then the whole village or town where one might have sought refuge from him, or the village that has just managed to repair its irrigation canal, finds it has him for its liege lord. It's the same thing all over again. All the little fiefdoms were last classified during the Constitutional Era. With all the present feudal organization and welter of wandering tribes, God knows how long we shall be faced with the consequences: insecurity, rootlessness, pessimism, despair about the future-and all this in an age when the machine not only is itself the greatest feudal lord, sitting on the throne of the Great Khan, but demands security, open doors, open borders, as well as naivete (or rather credulity), obedience, trust in others, and confidence in the future.

A third contradiction is that 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. Then we, who had a halfway viable market in these local crafts, not only carpets, but also hand-printed fabrics and canvas shoes, find ourselves at a loss to explain what happened. What happened to the overseas market for these goods? In our honeymoon with the machine, we failed to see what misfortunes were in prospect when the machine would move into the village (and with what a vengeance!). I have seen with my own eyes that all the windmills from Qa'in to Gunabad are stilled, like the discredited demons in the

old fables or like the old guards dozing in the villages and settlements. In Dizful alone, with all its beautiful brickwork and exemplary architecture, I counted about a hundred windmills, all in disuse. When the machine sets foot in the village, it destroys all the accoutrements of the pastoral and rural economy, that is, all the local craft industries.

This has its positive aspects for, after all, the hands and eyes and lungs of village children should not be ruined producing carpets to adorn the homes of the high and mighty. The greatest virtue in the machine's invasion of farms and villages is not the necessary disruption in relations of lord and serf or in the traditions of the tribes and nomadism, but the abolition of these local crafts. (They could, of course, be preserved if there were a program to support them with sufficient funds, to value them adequately, for then new buyers for the handicrafts, new markets for the shoes and so forth, could be found, and wages could be raised correspondingly.)

A fourth contradiction is that primitive implements, from plow, *kursi*, canvas shoes, and oil lamp to sickle, spinning wheel, and carpet loom, engender a primitive mode of thought (or vice versa). Drumming a copper tub during eclipses of the sun and moon; special prayers and talismans for averting the evil eye and avoiding diseases and calamities; and reciting the sayings of Kulsum Nana all evince common superstitions.*68 And, of course, when the machine comes, this sort of thinking must go. But these superstitious, prejudiced folk are the very people swarming into the cities and becoming machine tenders or driving tractors and bulldozers right in the villages. We don't bring a new person straight down from heaven, nor do we import one with the machine. At the very least, a whole course is needed to accustom these people to the machine. I saw a man grading Kharg Island with a monstrous bulldozer with a blue bead hanging from the steering wheel!⁶⁹ Our taxis are filled with these talismans, and our shops are filled with prayers and imprecations and such sayings as "This too will pass" and "This trust has been given us for the sake of our sustenance."

It is in such an environment that someone suddenly turns into

*On New Year's of 1340/1961, my brother-in-law, Manuchihr Danishvar, witnessed a prayer for rain at Aghajari, one of the oil-producing centers! Each woman held aloft a lamb or a kid and, looking up, called out, "O Lord, if we are sinners, what sin have these dumb animals committed?"

a gangster and robs a bank. A primitive man, having come to the city and been enlisted into the service of the machine, for all his thickheadedness, languor, and fatalism, must respond to and keep pace with the machine. This bibliomancer with his pocketful of lucky gemstones and bellyful of votive soup must now deal with a machine that knows nothing of fate and refuses to run smoother or brake faster in response to his monthly sacrifices of sheep. So when these monthly sacrifices prove ineffective and he keeps getting into accidents, he comes to the end of his tether and forgets everything, turning into a criminal, a complete cynic, or an outright opportunist.

A fifth contradiction is that one of the necessary conditions for occidentosis or one of its necessary consequences is the emancipation of women. We apparently have felt that we need their labor power because we have called for the obstacles preventing the arrival of their caravan to be swept away. But how did we set about it? Do women and men now have equal rights in all matters? We have contented ourselves with tearing the veil from their faces and opening a number of schools to them. But then what? Nothing. We believe women cannot be judges, cannot serve as witnesses, and as for voting or serving in the Majlis, the whole idea is idiotic, since even men have no such right, really-no one has the right to vote. Divorce, too, is the male prerogative. "Men are endowed with authority over women."⁷⁰ How well we interpret this! So we really have given women only the right to parade themselves in public. We have drawn women, the preservers of tradition, family, and future generations, into vacuity, into the street. We have forced them into ostentation and frivolity, every day to freshen up and try on a new style and wander around. What of work, duty, social responsibility, and character? There are very few women concerned with such things any more. Unless the work of men and women and their services to society are equally valued and paid, unless, alongside men, women assume responsibility for administering a sector of society (other than the home, a private function shared between men and women), unless material and spiritual equality is established between the sexes, we will have succeeded only in swelling an army of consumers of powder and lipstick-the products of the West's industries-another form of occidentosis. I am speaking here of the cities, of the nation's leadership, from which women

are excluded. In the countryside and among the tribes, women have borne the greater burden of life for countless centuries.*

Another contradiction, which is very involved and to which no one has paid any attention, is that 90 percent of the people of this country still live according to religious criteria, including the whole rural population, some of the urban tradesmen, *bazaris*, some civil servants, and those making up the country's third and fourth classes.⁷¹ The poorer these people are, the more they must rely on religious beliefs as the sole means of making life bearable. Those enjoying no success in the present necessarily seek it in heaven, in religion and the afterworld. In many ways they are fortunate. They may drink at times, but then they rinse their mouths and pray; they repent in Ramazan and even make sacrifices for the Imamzada Da'ud.⁷² Some villager, because he finds himself with ten seeds in a year instead of seven, may gather up his family and make the pilgrimage to Mashhad, or at least to Qum, or, if he stands on good terms with his neighbors, to Karbala, or, if he has accumulated enough money, to Mecca.

And they're all awaiting the Imam of the Age. Well, we're all awaiting him, each in our own way; and we have a right to because none of our ephemeral governments has lived up to the least of its promises, because oppression, injustice, repression, and discrimination are pandemic. This is why we have a festival on 15 Sha'ban that puts New Year's to shame.⁷³ It is by reference to this belief that 90 percent of Iran's population look upon the state as the agent of oppression and the usurper of the rightful rule of the Imam of the Age- "His Majesty the Lord of the Age, may God Almighty hasten his return." So they are right not to pay taxes, to deceive government officials, to avoid conscription under a thousand pretexts, and not to give an honest answer to any census taker. And although the newspapers may be full of congratulations from the proud inhabitants of Mazliqanchay to the new registrar of vital sta-

*Certain events have transpired in this country between the first and second editions of this work, such as the nominal emancipation of women. Women even participate in the puppet assembly and senate. But this is equivalent to whitewashing the walls of a street along which the Shah is going to pass: hollow, just words, just ostentation, designed to deceive foreign politicians. But don't you think a barrier may after all have been broken down?

tistics, none of the proud inhabitants of this village has ever recognized any organization as representing the state except the gendarmerie and the radio.⁷⁴ The saying is still current in Bushire and Bandar 'Abbas: "Never sleep beside the Persian's wall."* This "Persian" is the state or the official who comes from Tehran. One must not serve the state, and one must not trust its agents or its institutions. Thus all the religious organizations, from the public fountain and the corner mosque to the shrine outside town, are covered with various indications of this lack of trust in the state and what it's about and full of signs of expectation for the return of the promised Mahdi, the Lord of the Age, whose return we sincerely beseech God Almighty to hasten! In the everyday speech of the people, in the inscription on the wall, on the lips of the preacher, in prayer, in the call to prayer and in supplications, in the poets' odes, in the huge celebrations of 15 Sha'ban, on wedding invitations, everywhere we encounter, "In the shadow of the ministrations of the Lord of the Age."

Among such a people the state wishes to propagate the idea of "national government" through its organizations and schools, its barracks and offices, its prisons and the fanfare of its radio broadcasts. (To itself it hums another tune.) From such a people it demands taxes at gunpoint and impresses soldiers by force, encouraging bribery while it does so. Its embassies are the grandest of embassies; they proclaim another "Majesty." It deafens the heavens with ever-augmented boasts. Its guns are arrogantly brandished in front of the people.

Because of this contradiction, every schoolchild, in learning the "Imperial Anthem" as the national anthem, forgets the prayers. In setting foot in sixth grade, he departs the mosque. In going to the movies, he consigns religion to oblivion. Thus 90 percent of those of us with a secondary school education are irreligious, or rather, indifferent toward religion. They are suspended in a void. They have nothing to stand on, no certainty, no faith. When they see that the state, for all its pomp and circumstance, its organization and budget, all the foreign aid, all the artillery and tanks, is incapable of solving a social problem such as the unemployment of graduates, and when they meanwhile see what a refuge an ancient religious

*Related to me orally by my dear friend Isma'il Ra'in, who comes from there.

faith is for the army of the poor and helpless, how they rejoice on 15 Sha'ban, they find themselves at a loss. The radio keeps murmuring spells in their ears; the cinema sets the worlds of our betters before their eyes. True, they are confronted with another reality, the reality of the content of religious faith. But how long can one sit around thinking and fretting and seeking to discover truth? Why not give up these fantasies and be like the others, be socially adjusted? So let's all be cynics; let's not bother with religion or the lack of it, or what the future holds in store. Just live in the moment.*⁷⁵

Everyone knows that our schools either turn out government employees- or deliver unemployed graduates. More importantly, our schools also make occidentotics, people with no more substance than ripples on the surface of the water. They supply the cultural milieu for the breeding of occidentosis. This is the greatest threat posed by our schools and educational system. Contrary to our venerable historians' opinions, our religiopolitical Shu'ubiya movements (those extremist religious and nationalist movements) have never gotten us anywhere.⁷⁶ Or, if they got us anywhere, they laid the cornerstone for the ramparts raised in the Safavid era, when religion and national government, the clergy and state power, put on the same cloak, each reaching a hand out of one sleeve. I previously alluded to the historical consequences of this collusion. We also had such a situation in the Sasanian period, which led to the uprisings of Mani and Mazdak and concluded with the advent of Islam. But now that today that single cloak is rent and each of the two rivals has its own organizations, salutations, customs, and conventions, we are in even worse shape than in either of those previous eras. Today the division between religion and its chief adversary has reached a point where our governments, resting on occidentosis and urging us on to increasing imitation of foreigners, every day advance farther on a road that leads to nothing but decline and penury, to extinction. On the other hand, religion, with all its customs and institutions, relies as well as it may on superstitions and retreats to the shopworn customs of the past. It contents itself with serving as gatekeeper to graveyards. In the twentieth century, religion relies on the criteria of the Middle Ages. The more the national

*Khalil Maliki was the first of us to notice this "shapelessness" of our young. See issues of *Mihrgan* over the years 1332/1953, 1333, and 1334. Then see the numerous articles under the same heading in the magazine *'Ilm va Zindagi* [Science and life], from 1338/1959 through 1339.

government clings to the West's coattails to reinforce its position, the more the internal government of religion, in opposing it, looks back, turns back, to perpetuate itself. *

When the government, the state, sees that 90 percent of the population are not listening to its incantations but are joyously congratulating each other on the birth of his Majesty the Lord of the Age, when it sees that religion has appropriated its official titles while rejecting it, when it sees itself standing on such shaky ground, it has no recourse but to draw all the closer into the embrace of the West: to rely on its military aid, on American offers of guns and tanks, on European publications, their newspapers and their reporters, on their politicians-just to buy a day or two of time. Our Eastern states proclaim a national government while secretly working to smash the secret government of religion.+ To distract the people, our government lays claim to Bahrayn while its claims to the Hirmand and the Shatt al-'Arab have remained unresolved for two hundred years.⁷⁷ This, in an age when the machine demands an end to borders, an end to all gates, and the internationalization of everything and everywhere. It demands common markets, open borders, and closed customs houses. It carries the flag of the United Nations and drives wherever it can find the corporations' gasoline. We have retreated into the shell of the national state, drawn aside from our neighbors behind fortifications more extended and massive than the Great Wall of China, severed our

*The radio debates between the Shah and the religious leadership (Isfand 1341-Farvardin 1342/February-March 1963) confirmed the soundness of this view, as did the ruthless massacre of 15 Khurdad 1342/6 June 1963, which even Radio Moscow hailed gleefully as the suppression of a reactionary uprising!

+From 15 Khurdad onward, they have worked openly to crush this secret government. Now both the state and the religious institution are remnants of past centuries. At any rate, no two institutions stand in greater need of each other. These two rivals, after three hundred years of sweeping their differences under the rug, are again in open struggle. This certainly marks the opening of a new stage, in which the spread of education and intellectualism will take the decisive role away from both these rivals. What will this confrontation that, in the age of Mirza Shirazi, culminated in the assassination of [Nasir ad-Din] Shah and in the Constitutional Era culminated in the dethronement of Muhammad 'Ali Shah and a new regime, culminate in today? It is up to the intellectuals to supply the answer.

ties with Iraqi, Afghani, Pakistani, and Russian, and grown ignorant of our neighbors in an age when great diamond and copper mining companies in the heart of Katanga shoot down Hammarskjold as he flies over. In such an age, we try to promote the nation-state through schools, the national anthem, the secret police, military aid, a twenty-five hundredth anniversary celebration, and pasteboard leaders. We attempt these things in a time when boundaries throughout the world serve only to distinguish the domains of various corporations, to say that up to here belongs to General Motors, to here to Socony Vacuum, to here to Shell, British Petroleum, Pan American, or Agip Mineraria. These days, nations, languages, races, and religions, if they are not mere playthings of the orientalists (and I will attend to them presently), are at least questions for the laboratory, for scholars, students, and researchers. *

Nobody cares to go sputtering over such questions in the twentieth century. But if the Afghan and I, united in our religion, language, and racial stock, know nothing of each other or if to travel to Iraq or India is harder than to penetrate the Iron Curtain, it is because we are within the sphere of influence of one corporation and the Afghan, in that of another. In such an age, the more closed the national borders, the more amplified the traditions of race, the more earnest the callow boasts of the Shah, the worse the oppression, and the more influential the commandments and prohibitions of religion, the deeper grows the dungeon of nations and peoples. What border or domain can stand up to the influence of Pepsi Cola, or to the comings and goings of the oil brokers, or to Brigitte Bardot's films, to heroin smugglers, or to the dubious orientalists who are the official go-betweens for imperialism? The best examples of these borders and domains, that is, the most blatant ones, those whose form best exhibits their nature, today must be sought in Africa. There was a time when France held Cameroon, Chad, and the Central Sahara and England held a territory alongside each of them. Now that the French and the English have gone, as the independent African states have gotten under way, each has set its own national boundaries precisely at these colonial borders established by one or another foreign state. Think of all the African

*Two or three Swedish academics are currently compiling a linguistic atlas of Iran and Afghanistan. Is this good news or bad news? The section treating Afghanistan is finished, that on Iran unfinished, for reasons I cannot explain here.

peoples, races, and religions that thus have been made mincemeat of, parceled out among the allegedly autonomous and independent states of present-day Africa. Perhaps it is for all of our sakes that our leaders made such use of the religious wing, the invisible government of religion, in the struggle to nationalize the oil industry. The leaders of the time were smart enough to so order the struggle that, with the aid of the religious leaders, any ordinary unschooled person could see that the ruling party was the agent of oppression, giving away oil to the company and drawing sabers against the people. This is the greatest lesson the intellectuals and leaders must draw from that event.*

As to the last contradiction arising from occidentosis, and the most dangerous of all, let me remark in the most allusive of ways that we are situated in a part of the world in which significant events are under way just to our north, of which we necessarily remain ignorant and by which we remain unaffected. And if we are affected, it is only superficially, in response to a given occurrence, whereas Cuba, about thirty kilometers from the United States, is affected by these events without raising a ripple. Perhaps this is why our borders are so massively fortified and our governments, oblivious to the secret government of religion (itself a fortification within a fortification and a government within a government) and resting on occidentosis, constantly build up these walls they've confined themselves within and insist on greater bondage to the West. Perhaps they suppose that, with such a wolf at our door, our only recourse is to withdraw into the womb of the immobility, the fanaticisms, the feuds, and the ignorance of the Middle Ages. While today the fates of the world's governments, flags, and boundaries are determined on the bargaining tables of the great powers, our

*According to Grousset, *La Face de l'Asie*, p.132: "In Iran's revolt against Anglo-Iranian Oil, it aroused the support and laudation of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Arab League. This was the first time Iranian Shi'ism, for so many centuries a barrier to cooperation among the Islamic nations, joined in Islamic unity. And why? Because the time had passed when, in the face of the Ottoman Sultan-the Caliph of the Sunnis -the Safavid Shahs and the defenders of Shi'ism were obliged to join with Europe." Or, as I would say, Europe was obliged to act by proxy. Is this good news for us Asians of the Middle East or does it signify a danger for the oil consortium, in which the French have no large share? Whatever the case, what I have suggested, this gentleman has said a little more plainly.

governments content themselves with serving as border guards for the corporations. Thus while our governments attack religion and take refuge in irreligiosity and Western airs, because they need to fool the people, they generally try to remain on speaking terms with religion and the clergy and flirt inconclusively with religious circles and personalities. These are all signs of desperation, and if we within the country who are close to such great events do not move to close this cultural gap somehow, no matter how strong our national boundaries and fortifications and no matter how well by seducing the religious leadership we keep the world of religion from undermining these fortifications, finally, because water will seek its own level, the water in this swamp will rise and wash away all these sand castles.

No threat is intended. I described at the beginning of the book how the locus of this threat has been transferred. I speak of solidarity with progressive human societies. Pardon me for not speaking more clearly.

6

How to Break the Spell

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

To remain only consumers of the machine, to submit utterly to this twentieth-century juggernaut, is the road we have followed thus far. This road has led us to our present circumstances - occidentosis. We live on handouts from the West, which comes around every few years to give credit and aid so we can go on buying its industrial goods and replacing the junked machines. This is an easy road and one that solves the problem of our indolence, aimlessness, and idleness. And if this road led us to a point where we were free of disorder in our affairs and the threat of bankruptcy, there would be no need to say much about it. And as for retreating into our own cocoon, this is something no cricket has ever done. We are a nation engaged in transformation and if we suffer from such a confusion of values in both life and thought, it is because we are shedding our old skin. You might say we are studying the conditions of our permit to enter a new realm.

Dread at the approach of the machine has palsied us, but suppose we remain fanatically in the bonds of tradition and return to the primeval means of production, like those of most of our villagers. Is it not true that, under the compulsion of politics and economics and in consideration of the interdependence of our interests with those of other human societies, we have already placed

half the nation's lands at the disposal of the shovel and drill of the foreign corporations? They thus come, explore, excavate, extract, and carry away. How long can one sit by the highway and watch the caravans go by or sit beside the stream and watch life go by? Even Ibn Sa'ud, amidst the ferocious beheadings and hand-cuttings of his own era of ignorance, has surrendered to the machine's transformations. So the road is closed to return, and there is also no stopping.

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

When we rode horses, we had pastures, ever fresh and green, where we raised the most comely, the most thoroughbred horses. Then we built corrals where we branded the horses with the brands of human ownership. Then we built stables to house, breed, and raise the horses. Then we had caravansarais where a tired horse could be exchanged for a fresh one. Then we began racing and betting on private contests to exercise the animals' muscles. Is the machine anything but a horse humanity has domesticated to its service? And if our kind didn't have a hand in the embryonic development of the horse, the original formation of its frame, we did implant the embryo of the machine within the cylinder and the piston. Thus first we need an economy consistent with the manufacture of machines, that is, an independent economy. Then we need an educational system, then a furnace to melt the metal and impress it with the human will. Then we need schools where these skills may be practically imparted. Then we need factories to convert the metal into machines and other industrial goods. And then we need markets to make them available to the people in the towns and villages. (Please don't ask me to go into the details; this isn't my line or the function of this book.)

To achieve control of the machine, one must build it. Something built by another -even if it is a charm or a sort of talisman against envy- certainly carries something of the unknown, some-

thing of fearsome "unseen worlds" beyond human access. It harbors a mystery. The one who carries that talisman does not possess it but in a sense is possessed by it in living under its aegis, in taking refuge in it and living in constant dread of giving it offense. Don't let the open sky see its color! Don't let it get underfoot! But if the child who has been given this talisman to wear grows up and someday Out of curiosity opens it, if he sees what it is, and especially if he can read what triangles, squares, and stars are inscribed on the piece of oil paper within, what "O Most Holys" and "O Powerful Spirits,"⁷⁸ if he can apprehend the meaning of the words and the significance of the numerals, or their want of meaning or significance, is he going to harbor any special reverence or dread of it any longer? The machine is a talisman to us occidentotics, who shelter ourselves under its protective shadow and there look upon ourselves as immune to the vicissitudes of the age. We fail to note that this is a talisman that others have hung about our necks, so as to intimidate and exploit us. Let us be curious; let us grow up a little; and, finally, let us open this talisman and get hold of its secret.

Of course one may ask, if the answer is that simple, why haven't our best minds hit upon it already? Or if they have, why haven't they actually opened the talisman? First, we still harbor this reverence and fear. We know that reverence and respect are due to the forbidden because they are from the same root.⁷⁹ Dread of the machine is just like dread of the talisman. It is forbidden us to pry into the machine's secrets and learn them. One cannot tell whether this dread gives rise to occidentosis or grows out of it. It's the story of the chicken and the egg. We're still living in the age of the forty thieves of Baghdad. From behind a wall or peering through a crack in the door we saw the thieves come and say a formula three times. A wall receded like a door, and what treasures were revealed behind it! So now our greatest aspiration has become to pronounce those thieves' formula. With the greatest pains we have learned the formula, and now we repeat it, parrot-like, and the wall falls back. But the slyboots have carried off the treasure! When we have shaken off the spell of that treasure and that formula and applied ourselves solely to the question of why the door opens, when we have struggled to understand the action of the door and the nature of the effect of that formula, then we

will have acquired the scientific method and will be worthy to discover the talisman of the machine.

This is our present situation: We have the machine working for us from morning to night, even cooking our daily fare, but we dread it like the child afraid of his own mother when she has put a pot on her head and turned into a demon. We see the machine as a demon, a demon compounded of that same pot the child's daily meals cook in and that same mother in whose warm embrace he daily takes refuge. It is owing to this dread that most of our university students in Europe study medicine, psychology, or other human sciences (if not because there are scarcely any openings for technicians in this country), that we have so many agricultural engineers who are land assessors in mortgage banks, or that so many of our chemists are directors-general, or that so many of our geologists work as contractors. In our schools we have for years been tiring our children's minds with the formulae and equations of physics, chemistry, and mathematics while all but eliminating literature from the curricula of our high schools and colleges. The brain of every graduate is stuffed with formulae, equations, and laws. But to what result? Because no experimentation has been specified to follow up these theories and equations, because we have not led these students from thought to action in any laboratory, now we are forced to take every bit of rock and earth and tar to some European laboratory for analysis.

We who prove so meticulous in our local crafts of carpet weaving, tile making, fabric printing, and miniature painting are apathetic when it comes to machines. This apathy toward machines, technology, and the new sciences is the outcome of our confidence in the permanence of our oil resources and in the uninterrupted flow of the machines we buy with our oil money and credits. Some of our leaders are theorizing on this subject, too. Their thinking seems to run, "Now that we're an oil-producing country and the European brings us everything from soup to nuts on a silver platter, why should we go to the trouble of building factories, heavy industry, with all the attendant problems of training technicians, enduring the inevitable inadequacies of the first industrial goods we produce, getting embroiled in labor disputes, insurance, pensions, and the rest?" This is just the way we have acted. That is, this most novel theory has been public policy in this country for

years. This is one of the reasons for our occidentosis, or one of its main consequences. Again, the story of the chicken and the egg.

If we are exacting in the practice of our national and local fine handicrafts, while we prove otherwise with respect to machines, it is because these crafts are passed on personally and over a period of many years, father to son, master to apprentice, generation to generation. The imparting of a trade, a work, and an outlook, somewhat like the imparting of a fine art, assumes traditions, principles, and details. It goes back to the depths of the years. But the machine has just hit town. It has no tradition. There is no classroom training for it. The degrees of mastery in it are as yet unspecified. In such a situation, it seems appropriate for us, if we are building a big dam or if one of our oil wells (meaning one of their oil wells) catches fire, to call upon a foreign expert who is more experienced than we. But, unfortunately, we resort to such foreign experts not only in exceptional instances. In setting up a sugar mill, a cement factory, a textile mill, a spinning mill, or an elastic plant, not only do we import the machinery whole and entire from Europe or America, but we bring along with it the total labor force, from simple laborer to engineer and chief engineer, with astronomical salaries. And we play host to them for three or four or ten years so they can fuss around until the cement furnace is ignited or the sugar syrup pure, or the wool or cotton comes out properly threaded. Of course, if we think it over, there is nothing surprising in this. Apart from these people, we have no one; or, if we have anyone, it's to no point because those who sell us the factory have included in the sales contract the provision that its proper functioning is guaranteed only if their own experts have delivered it and set it up. This is what the retarded economics of the occidentotic entails! "If you can do it better, go to it. Make them yourself so you can assemble them. If I am doing the building, I must bring along my expert and do right by him, with trips to the sunny south, with tours and entertainments, with new experiences, with a wider and more cosmopolitan view in this machine-consuming world!"

The second reason we have failed to open the talisman arises from or complements the first: so long as we go on buying the West's industrial goods, the vendor will be unwilling to let go of a customer so easy to deal with. So long as we are only buyers, only consumers, in the give and take of this world, there must be a maker and vendor who knows how to arrange the ins and outs

of the business so as to keep this one-sided relationship of buyer and seller always in balance, never in danger of collapse. In fairness, the West is right to withhold from us permission (that is, credits) to build, or systematically prevent us from building, our own machines one day-this same West out of consideration for which our governments claim democracy and form legislatures in which men and women participate together, this same West that brings us our governments and takes them away again, that keeps them on their feet, that butters them up, forms congresses of orientalists for them, and eulogizes them weekly or at least monthly in its newspapers and in its radio programs. They have heard, after all, that the nation has its ear cocked to listen to the incantations of Europe!

From the standpoint of the economic interests of the makers of the machine-that is, from the standpoint of international economics-the longer it takes us to lay hold of the machine and technology, the better. UNESCO says as much and acts accordingly, likewise ECAFE, likewise the FAO, likewise even the UN. All our ruin and disorder spring from this one point, from the fact that, in global terms, they have forced us to act for the sake of the economic interest of the makers of the machine. If our politics generally has been a function of the politics of the Western chameleon over these last two or three centuries, it is because our economics likewise has been a function of its economics. The case of oil offers an example of this. The only exception is provided by the years 1330-1332/1951-1953 (the Musaddiq Era), when even beans found an export market. In this period, our overall economic policy in running the country did not rely in the least on anticipated oil income. And how apposite it was! This is a course that can always be taken up again. But as long as the oil pump turns, owing to its income and the way it has of nurturing parasites, things will remain as they are. (See Table 1 on page 84.)

The Westerners extract, refine, transport, and compute the cost of the oil themselves and figure our annual share at, say, forty million pounds sterling, given us as credits toward purchase of their manufactures and deposited in their own banks in our accounts. We are necessarily compelled to return these credits by buying from them. Who are they? Forty percent is America and its satellites, 40 percent, England and its adherents, and the rest, France, the Netherlands, and other Western European nations. In

TABLE 1. EXPORTS AND IMPORTS,
1331-1340/1952-1961

Year	Weight (tons)	Exports Rials (thousands)	Weight (tons)	Imports Rials (thousands)
(1331)1952-3	354,079	5,831,528	232,236	5,031,394
1953-4	443,764	8,425,632	424,445	5,424,266
1954-5	490,478	10,288,171	503,226	7,425,015
1955-6	507,873	8,033,726	637,132	9,125,439
1956-7	463,529	7,930,690	744,876	20,981,288
1957-8	436,641	8,352,922	743,784	25,229,342
1958-9	445,398	7,940,615	986,092	33,458,260
1959-60	397,231	7,701,017	1,201,950	41,630,135
1960-1	446,307	8,359,875	1,913,514	52,657,139
(1340)1961-2	551,384	9,593,450	1,619,234	47,170,707

SOURCE: *Iran Almanac*, (Tehran, 1963), p.298.

NOTE: "Over nearly 32 years, only twelve banks with multiple branches had operated in Iran, and five of those were specialized. But from 1335/1956 to 1339/1960 (the open-door government era), fourteen new banks with branches, representatives, and agents were established. Their business was to pay the workers in factories abroad whose goods we were buying. Over the six years 1333-1339/1954-1960, our imports necessarily rose from 7 billion *rials* to 52 billion, 600 million *rials*, that is, about eight times over." (Mr. Khushkish [one of the directors of the bank], *Bank-i Milli-yi Iran* [National Bank of Iran] magazine, #254.)

return for the oil they take, we must import machines, and in the wake of the machines, specialists in the machines, and in the wake of the specialists in the machines, dialectologists, ethnologists, musicologists, and art historians. Thus Morrison-Knudsen brings whatever it likes from America, from bulldozers to wire to nuts and bolts; the same holds for Agip Mineraria from Italy, John Mowlem, the highway contractor, from England, and Antar Petroles from France.

The under-the-counter transactions are more interesting yet. John Mowlem met with scandal, packed up, and left - never mind that he's up to the same thing elsewhere. In the pages of *Time* magazine, he's thumping the tub for the then head of the planning organization who brought him to this country. * And who was John Mowlem's chief in Tehran? The estimable Peter Avery, the English orientalist and Persian scholar, such a charming and likeable person, who has taught oriental languages at Cambridge and Michigan. I went to see him at Cambridge in the winter of 1962. He had wanted to see me, and my gracious host had scheduled an appointment for me. I stuck a copy of the first edition of the present work under my arm and went to meet him. So I was welcomed, we talked amiably, and in the course of the conversation, I said to him, "Do you know, sir, that Edward Browne never was chief to a John Mowlem in Tehran!"⁸⁰ He broke into tears and went on about how "he was rich and I was poor." I had a realization that people are similarly small around the world. Now he has written a book called *Modern Iran* and has referred to me in it in this way: "Recently a book appeared about the 'disease' of Westernism; it was, incidentally, banned by the authorities. Men who think like its author are probably in a minority among educated Iranians, but history shows that no intellectual movement in Iran, however small its beginnings, can be totally ignored." + Yes, the gentlemen are observing events that closely.

The Ford Motor Company and the Rockefeller family have educational foundations. They fund this and that person, for the dissemination of knowledge. Bunyad-i Iran (The Iran Foundation), relying on the same funds, sets out to build the hospital and uni-

*See *Time*, 28 February 1964, p.40, last column, concerning Abu'l-Hasan Ibtihaj.

+Peter Avery, *Modern Iran*, London, 1968, p. 468.

versity in Shiraz. But go see what a prop to the ruling class they have built-how, next door to the graves of Hafiz and Sa'di, their faculty of letters has English as its official language, what an observatory they have to study America's artificial satellites, how they have imported the whole thing from America, down to the nuts and bolts, the whole layout!-or how Ford and Rockefeller pay the Franklin Book Program in Tehran to print school textbooks. Go see what a great enterprise they built, what a monopoly of the textbook business, how they have crushed every local publisher.*

I went to Firuzabad (on New Year's 1341/1962 with Muhandis Sayhun, Farrukh Ghaffari, and Muhandis Muqtadir) and wandered around the plains of Shiraz and Kazarun. I heard Mr. Ghirshman was excavating at Shapur-i Kazarun. I said, "Let's go to say hello and check this out." He wasn't in, or if he was in, he was sleeping and we weren't admitted. But tents were set up on the ruins, and the logo and name of the oil consortium were on all the tents, machinery, and goods. The archaeological excavations at Shapur-i Kazarun were an outgrowth of the oil industry! Mr. Ghirshman wants to prove with his pickaxe that Kharg Island was a center for Christianity.+

This is how the oil goes and the machine, with all its concomitants, comes in return - everything from orientalists and specialists to films, manners, and books. Who profits from this exchange? First the corporations profit. (Whatever income they make from investments outside of the countries they are based in is exempt from taxes.) Then the middlemen profit. I have identified some of the middlemen; you will have to guess who the others are. (Thus we have ministers, members of parliament, governments, and states

*See my "Balbahu-yi Kitabha-yi Darsi" [Textbook shambles], *Seh Maqala-yi Digar* [Three further essays], Tehran, 1337/1958.

+See my *Jazira-yi Kharg* [Kharg Island], as well as what R. Ghirshman has written on the same subject. You must bear in mind that oil was discovered in Khuzistan by one of this same breed of archaeologist/orientalist: the Frenchman [Jacques Jean Marie] de Morgan, who came to Iran even earlier than D'Arcy ostensibly to conduct excavations at Shush. He published the results of his excavations in the periodical *Mines[?]*, published in Paris, and what a stir it created! See Mustafa Fatih, *Panjah Sal Naft dar Iran* [Fifty years of oil in Iran]

that undergo shakeups in the wake of these exchanges, and cabinets come and go. The West guides our politicians, or flatters and applauds them. So it is natural that our politicians should pay more attention to Reuters, UPI, and *Time* than to the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, the Commission on the Aim of Education, or the Birjand Municipal Association [if there is such an association there]. When the country's economy is thus in the hands of others, and those others are the makers of the machines, we must always be the buyers, the ones with the needs. Fortunately, the cars, the tractors, and the bulldozers are not yet paid for when they break down or rust through, and the corporations have not guaranteed them for more than five years.*

It gets interesting when this relationship breaks down one way or another somewhere in the world. The stringers for UPI and Reuters file the first reports. Then the Red Cross cries out that maybe two of its nurses have been wounded! Then the foreigners living there pack their bags. Then the pope prays for an end to the disaster in that region. Then prices plummet at the London and New York stock exchanges. Then the *Times* and the *New York Times* begin printing equivocal articles, with suggestive instructions for local agents. Then comes the severing of political relations. Then the mercenaries are brought on the scene, and the Seventh Fleet in the Mediterranean gets under way, or some other fleet in the Persian Gulf, the waters of China, or off the coast of Africa. We have witnessed these things many times over: when the Iranian oil industry was nationalized, during the Suez Canal crisis, in Cuba, in the Congo, in Vietnam.

But one must say in all fairness that our own politics and economics have not been without a role in this process. The occidentotic economists sit and discuss; the foreign advisors come and go;

*Charles Malik, the Lebanese philosopher and former president of the United Nations General Assembly, has accused Western capitalists of having only material means in store for the developing nations: "Roads, dams, efficiency and the smile of rulers-that is all that matters; but spirit, freedom, joy, happiness, truth, man-that never enters the mind. A world of perfect technicians is the aim, not a world of human beings, let alone of beings divine." From *Time*, 27 September 1963, p.79, from a report on the thirteenth International Management Conference. This conference was held in Manhattan; forty-two hundred persons from eighty-four countries participated.

suddenly you see that a Jeep or Fiat assembly plant has opened, or a plastic molding plant, or an army battery plant, which has landed some army commanders in jail for embezzlement. And with what a fanfare they open, with what a burst of tricolor ribbon-cutting glory. But the reality is that it is no longer profitable for the corporations to send us even chintz and satin, batteries, or unbreakable ewers. They profit only by exporting heavy machines. If the foreign corporations can export the separate components of a machine as parts, the customs duties are less, the costs of packaging and shipping are less, and the labor costs of assembling these parts in a country like Iran are less than in Europe or America. This is why assembly plants for Jeeps and Fiats, radios, batteries, and other intermediate industries have found homes in developing nations where they have no roots. But for a backward country, even this constitutes a step. If it is not a correct, considered step, at least it gives one something to crow about. One can issue an annual report saying that this year the work force increased x percent, national capital investments, y percent, foreign investments, z percent. (See Table 2. on page 89.) And it is on the basis of such verbiage that we conduct seminars and design the second and third Five-Year Plans. And the foreign advisors keep coming and going. But, in truth these are all annexes to the West's industries; to assemble a machine is something on the order of running a repair shop. It is not industry. It is not to build a machine.

If there is need for the second and third Five-Year Plans, if the World Bank brings pressure to bear, if public opinion in the Western nations (meaning that of the corporate directors) allows for an Iranian government's having an outwardly more codified, detailed, and polished plan, it is mainly because the West's industries need to know what quantities of Western industrial goods Iran will buy. Their operations aren't spasmodic like ours; they are according to plan. And we all know that surplus products lead to crisis, conjure the specter of unemployment, and heighten the danger that the regime may fall. After all, M. de Gaulle has aspirations, Mr. Macmillan is not yet ready to retire, and President Kennedy is in the prime of his youth.* The West must know how much to load onto the back of this quiet and submissive customer over the

*Bear in mind that the first edition of this work was published in Mehr 1341/1962.

TABLE 2. NUMBERS OF INDUSTRIAL UNITS,
WORKERS) & LEVELS OF CAPITAL INVESTMENT

Province	Number of Industrial Units	Number of Workers	Capital (in thousands of rials)
Western Azarbayjan	152	2,676	902,473
Kirmanshah	366	4,062	844,373
Khuzistan	272	3,044	1,465,025
Fars	347	4,642	1,987,831
Kirman	208	1,963	682,093
Khurasan	845	11,069	3,278,087
Isfahan	899	24,006	5,842,838
Sistan and Baluchistan	89	304	62,010
Tehran	2,844	48,556	22,297,274
Gilan	856	7,659	2,802,233
Mazandaran	883	16,504	4,621,189
Eastern Azarbayjan	393	6,229	728,363
Total	8,156	130,714	45,513,789

SOURCE: *Iran Almanac*, (Tehran, 1963), p. 405.

NOTE: This means workers constitute one hundred thirty thousand persons out of a national population of twenty million.

period of the Third Five-Year Plan and what additional percentage of its share of the oil revenues to hold in payment for refrigerators, radios, and pressure cookers.

The principal overseers for all these commissions, seminars, and conferences, industrial or cultural, are the Western advisors.* They have ascertained goals and definite motives. The United Nations and UNESCO are neither disinterested nor high-minded. We saw how, after the gold and copper companies in the Congo snapped their fingers at the late Secretary-General Hammarskjold, this honored organization emerged a defender of the interests of those same Belgian and British gold and copper companies. Iranians, too, participate in these seminars and planning commissions:

The cream of our intellectuals -the cream of our occidentotics- do. But -this may sound discourteous- I believe most of the Iranian participants at these planning seminars never advance beyond serving as interpreters. If they do so, if they offer an opinion, it is not accepted and they lose the right to sit and rise with the big shots. Thus if our politics and economics follow the West's politics and economics, one of the reasons is that most of our intellectuals, those who have made their way into the leadership apparatus of the country, see it as their moral duty to serve ultimately as interpreters for the Western advisors, as administrators and executors of their decisions and goals. After all, do we ourselves not know how many villages we have, how much arable land, how many rivers running to waste, how many irrigation canals in disuse, how many thousands of unemployed illiterates, or people without schools or health services?+ We do not need constant dependence on foreign advisors and consultants to find this out. If only this depend-

*I don't have the official figures, but in 1341/1962, thirty thousand foreign experts, engineers, and specialists were rumored to be busy serving the country.

+I here cite some statistics to illustrate. In 1341/1962, we had 5,915 doctors, but 9,500 were needed; 1,000 midwives and paramedics as against a need for 38,000; and 19,000 hospital beds as against a need for 190,000. In terms of education, instead of 9,500 high-school instructors with degrees in various fields, we had only 4,200, and of the 50,000 communities in the country, only 7,000 to 8,000 at the most had schools. For all this educational impoverishment, in 1342/1963, all the teachers' colleges (forty-three) and preparatory schools in the country were closed on the grounds of excessive costs of boarding and such.

ence would solve anything for us. If only a day would come when we saw we had no further need of this army of advisors and consultants!

Today it is by relying on these occidentotic intellectuals participating in the government that the West's political representatives and the body of consultants behave toward us just as the British ambassadors behaved toward the Atabak and Amir Kabir⁸¹ - supposing our occidentotics to be worthy of comparison with those two figures. Whereas in that age there were only these ambassadors who were imparting counsels, today the consultants are legion. Whereas in that age there were only the Atabak and Amir Kabir to hear the counsel, each a seasoned elder statesman drawing on the experience of his life, traditions, and standards in the East, anchored to the beliefs, customs, and manners of this part of the world, today the association and counsel of the Western advisors is directed to a lot of occidentotic intellectuals who haven't either the foundations of the Atabak and the Amir Kabir or even the competence of Hajji Mirza Aqasi, whose reputation for incompetence is based on I know not what.*82

This is how a nation is being governed: left to the fate decreed by the machine and to the leadership of occidentotic intellectuals, to these seminars, conferences, second and third Five-Year Plans, relying on "grants and absurd investments in rootless industries.

We have discussed sufficiently the fate the machine decrees. Now let us see what goes into the makeup of our leaders, these occidentotic intellectuals. It is true that I will be generalizing, but you can decide to which of them these generalizations do not apply.

*Abdullah Mustaufi, in *Sharh-i Zindagani-yi Man* [My life], pp.45-50, defends this old man, showing that the spiteful motives of Qa'immaqam gave rise to this repute.

7

*Asses in Lions' Skins, or Lions on the Flag*⁸³

An occidentotic who is a member of the nation's leadership is standing on thin air; he is like a particle of dust suspended in the void, or a shaving floating on the water. He has severed his ties with the depths of society, culture, and tradition. He is no link between antiquity and modernity, nor even a dividing line between old and new. He is a thing with no ties to the past and no perception of the future. He is not a point on a line, he is rather a hypothetical point on a plane or even in space, just like that suspended particle. How, then, has he reached a position of leadership? Through the inexorable logic of the machine and of a policy that has no recourse but to follow larger policies.

On this side of the world, and especially in the oil-producing areas, whatever is lightest rises to the surface. The waves of events around such oil deposits swirl only straw and shavings to the water's surface. They lack the power to touch the seabed and toss pearls to the shore. In addressing this occidentosis and the ills arising from it, we are concerned with these featherweights floating on the waves of events. Certainly the ordinary man in the street is not to blame; his words go unheard; no offense is reckoned against him. He goes any way you point him. That is, he assumes any form you train him to.* In fact, we're in such a mess essentially because this man in the street cannot affect his own destiny, meaning we don't seek out his views as to how his destiny is to be deter-

*It has been objected that in this work I have overlooked the role of the people's struggle in political events, from the Constitutional Era to the present. I have not overlooked this struggle; I have simply kept silent about it. If the leadership of this struggle had been correct (for all the losses through imprisonment, killing, and exile), we would be in much

mined. Instead we consult these foreign advisors and consultants. This is why we are stuck with occidentotic leaders, who may even be educated, perhaps in Europe or America, at that.

Would that we had only to deal with those of the nation's leaders who have studied abroad. Instead - to put it allusively - the lumpens from every trade and class customarily come to power - that is, the misfits, the idle, those with no will of their own. The most unreliable merchants of the bazaar manage the chamber of commerce. The most idle of the cultural elite are directors of culture. The most bankrupt money changers are the bankers. Either the most lifeless members of society or the most gangsterlike end up as the representatives to the Majlis. (As I have said, set aside anyone you regard as an exception.) The general rule in this land is to give power to the shiftless, the characterless, if not the crooked and the depraved. Whoever holds the right, speaks the truth, sees rightly, and keeps to the straight and narrow finds no place in this system. According to the rule that one must follow the West, here to attain to leadership one must be unscrupulous, must not be steadfast or principled, cannot have roots or have his feet planted on the ground of this land.

Thus our occidentotic leader rides the waves and never comes to rest on solid ground. It is never clear where he stands; he can't seem to take a stand on any issue or problem. He is bewildered and unsteady. He has no will of his own. He doesn't come to grips with anything. He flatters and appeases to get around every obstacle. Accordingly, no crisis or upheaval threatens him. One government goes - there's always the next. If I don't get on this commission, there's always that seminar; if not for this newspaper, then for television; if not in this office, then in that ministry; if not as an ambassador, then as a minister. Thus however much the situation changes and governments come and go, you see the same old occidentotic leader sitting in his place like the Rock of Gibraltar.⁸⁴ This occidentotic leader is devious as well. No matter what, he knows where he is living in the world. He knows one dare not breathe. He knows the wind blows ever from a new quarter. Without a compass, he knows to which direction the magnetic lines of power are aligned. Thus he is everywhere - in the party, in society,

better shape than we are now. And, of course, the people are not to be blamed for all these setbacks; it is the incorrect leadership of these struggles that has led to such outcomes.

in the newspaper business, in the government, on the educational commission, in the Majlis, in the contractors' association. And in order to be everywhere, he must consort with everyone. And in order to consort with everyone, he must be polite and know how to handle people, not step out of line, be humble and tractable, and forbearant. He must even write articles against factiousness.* He should be versed in philosophy and speak of "freedom." For these reasons, perhaps to show off as well, sometimes he gets the idea of showing some character and doing something. But because he rides the waves of events, by the time he gets up steam, the time to act has passed. He is left beached. And he learns from this that he must not show the least sign of life.

The occidentotic is a man totally without belief or conviction, to such an extent that he not only believes in nothing, but also does not actively disbelieve in anything-you might call him a syncretist. He is a timeserver. Once he gets across the bridge, he doesn't care if it stands or falls. He has no faith, no direction, no aim, no belief, neither in God nor in humanity. He cares neither whether society is transformed or not nor whether religion or irreligion prevails. He is not even irreligious. He is indifferent. He even goes to the mosque at times, just as he goes to the club or the movies. But everywhere he is only a spectator. It is just as if he had gone to see a soccer game. He is always to be seen off in the grandstands. He never invests anything of himself -even to the extent of moist eyes at the death of a friend, attentiveness at a shrine, or reflection in the hours of solitude. In fact, he is not accustomed to solitude at all; he flees it. Because he is in terror of himself, he turns up everywhere. He offers opinions, if it is appropriate, and particularly if it is fashionable to offer opinions, but only to someone from whom he hopes to gain some further benefit. Never do you hear from him any outcry or protest, any but or why or wherefore. He will explain everything with the utmost gravity and grandiloquence. He will feign optimism.

The occidentotic seeks ease. He lives in the moment, although not in the sense the philosophers intend. If his car is running and he looks debonair, nothing troubles him. If in some distant age, concern for offspring, bread, clothing, and provisions held Sa'di back from spiritual wayfaring, the occidentotic, with his head sub-

*See *Sukhan*, Khurdad 1340/June 1961.

merged in his own fodder, will do nothing for the sake of anyone else. He doesn't go looking for any headaches for himself, and he easily shrugs things off. Because he has figured out just what his job is, because he doesn't take an unconsidered step, because he sees every action as the product of an equation, he doesn't stick his nose into others' affairs, let alone feel concern for their welfare.

The occidentotic normally has no specialty. He is a jack-of-all-trades and master of none. But because he is schooled, literate, and perhaps educated, he knows to use polysyllables and to bluff his way into every company. Perhaps once he had a specialty, but he has seen that in this country one cannot, with a single specialty, grasp the horn of plenty. Therefore he necessarily has involved himself in other lines of work. He is just like the old women in a household who in the course of lifetimes of experience have learned a little about everything, although their knowledge is limited by the perspective of illiterate women. The occidentotic too knows a little about everything, and his knowledge is limited by the perspective of the occidentotic. He has tabs on the topics of the day-what will be useful on television, what will be useful on the educational commission and at the seminar, what will be useful for the mass circulation newspapers, what will be useful for talks at the club.

The occidentotic has no character. He is a thing without authenticity. His person, his home, and his words convey nothing in particular, and everything in general. It is not that he is cosmopolitan, that the world is his home. He is at home nowhere rather than everywhere. He is an amalgam of singleness without character and character without singularity. Because he has no security, he dissembles. In the very act of being so polite and sociable, he mistrusts whom he is speaking to. And because suspicion dominates our age, he must never open his heart to anyone. The only palpable characteristic he has is fear. In the West individuals' characters are sacrificed to their field of specialization, but the occidentotic has neither. He has only fear: fear of tomorrow, fear of dismissal, fear of anonymity, fear of discovery that the warehouse he has weighing down his head and tries to foist off as a brain is empty.*

*For corroboration of this portrait, see the piece by my dear friend Muhammad 'Ali Islami, "Iran ra az Yad Nabarim" [Let us not forget Iran], *Yaghma*, Isfand 1340/1962.

The occidentotic is effete.* He is effeminate. He attends to his grooming a great deal. He spends much time sprucing himself up. Sometimes he even plucks his eyelashes. He attaches a great deal of importance to his shoes and his wardrobe, and to the furnishings of his home. It always seems he has been unwrapped from gold foil or come from some European “maison.” He buys the latest prodigy in automotive engineering every year. His house, which once had a porch and a cellar, a pool, awnings, and a vestibule, now looks like something different every day. One day it resembles a seaside villa with picture windows all around, and full of fluorescent lamps.+ Another day it resembles a cabaret, full of gaudy junk and bar stools. The next day all the walls are painted one color and triangles of all colors cover every surface. In one corner there is a hi-fi, in another a television, in another a piano for the young lady, in others stereo loudspeakers. The kitchen and other nooks and crannies are packed with gas stoves, electric washers, and other odds and ends. Thus the occidentotic is to most faithful consumer of the West's industrial goods. If he should rise one morning and find that the hairdresser, the tailor, the shoeshiner, and the repairman have all closed shop, he would turn to the *qibla* in desperation (that is, he would do so if he knew where the *qibla* was).

All his preoccupations and Western products are more essential to him than any school, mosque, hospital, or factory. It is for his sake that we have an architecture with no roots in our culture,**

*Concerning this effete-ness or overdress, see Sayyid Fakhr ad-Din Shadman, *Tashkir-i Tamaddun-i Farangi*.

+ Consider these sentences from a full-page color advertisement in *Ittila'at* (19 Urdibihisht 1342/9 May 1963, p. 12) concerning the beauty of a newly built suburb on the outskirts of Tehran: "The special mechanisms and marvelous features of this little town truly have brought something of the European and American architectural style to our nation. The modern villas of this town in the country... charm those enamored of Western civilization [*sic* (author's insertion for *shiftagan-i tamaddun-i gharb*)] and those educated there, so that they will always feel they are living in Europe or America." Can one put it more plainly than this?

**I went to buy a house for a friend. There was a house in Durus that was an exact copy of a church Le Corbusier built, known as Notre Dame du Hout. It only lacked the belfry. But it did have the same nooks and crannies, the same arches, etc.

and counterfeit cities! It is for his sake that our city streets and intersections have turned out looking like barbers' shops with all their brazen fluorescent and neon lighting. It is for his sake that a cookbook called *The Way to the Heart (Rah-i Dil)* has been published, full of detailed recipes for all the doughy and meaty dishes that one absolutely cannot eat in this sort of hot, dry climate, dishes that are no more than a justification for using gas stoves made in Europe.* It is for his sake that they are destroying the bazaars' roofs.+ It is for his sake that the state *Takya* is demolished.** It is for his sake that the senate building has such a monstrous design. It is for like reasons that soldiers wear so much gaud and gook, that enough goods to stock a haberdashery hang from their chests, shoulders, and aiguillettes.

The occidentotic hangs on the words and handouts of the West. He has nothing to do with what goes on in our little world, in this corner of the East. If perchance he is interested in politics, he is cognizant of the faintest right or left tendencies in the British Labour Party and is more familiar with the current U.S. senators than with the ministers in his own government. And he knows

*It is a very fancy and expensive book by, or translated by, Mrs. Yusufi and put out by Ibn Sina Publications.

+Refer to my ""Chand Kalima ba Mashshataha" [A few words with beauticians], *Andisha va Hunar* [Thought and art], Aban 1337/1958. See also "Abd al-Husayn Sipanta, "Karavansaray-i Safavi-yi Isfahan ra Chiguna Kharab Kardand" [How they have ruined the Safavid caravansarai of Isfahan], *Armaghan*, Farvardin 1342/March 1963.

Additionally, my dear mentor Taqi Fidakar has related from his childhood memories how the Shahrstan minaret of Isfahan -a two-staired minaret on the road to Yazd along the Zayanda Rud- was demolished early in the Reza Shah Era, despite all its unique features and historical importance for architecture, so they could use its bricks to build a barracks at the site of the ruins of the Farahabad Gardens in Isfahan. This act was by orders of the Swedish general, Gloorup, who at the time was chief of staff or something of the sort in Isfahan. Fidakar said that they shored up the minaret on one side and dug out the foundations on that side. Then they wrapped blankets around the lower ends of the beams of the shoring, soaked them in oil, and set them on fire. As the beams burned through, the minaret slumped to that side, and . . . voila!

**According to the maxim, "Whoso comes, builds anew," and through the initiative of the likes of Muhandis Furughi, the National Commercial Bank is now slated to be built not at this site, but far beyond it.

more about the staff of *Time* or the *News Chronicle* than about some nephew way off in Khurasan. And he supposes them more veracious than a prophet because all these have more influence on the affairs of his country than any domestic politician, commentator, or representative. If he is interested in letters, his only concern is knowing who won this year's Nobel Prize or who was awarded the Goncourt or Pulitzer prizes. And if he is interested in research, he folds his hands and closes his eyes to all the problems within the country that could be studied. He seeks to learn only what some orientalist has said and written about the questions within his field. If he is one of the ordinary people who read the weeklies and the pictorials, we have seen what a sorry lot they are.

If there used to be a time when one could silence opponents and end all arguments by citing one verse of the Qur'an or one tradition transmitted in Arabic, now one does so by relating one sentence by some European, whatever the subject under discussion. This matter has reached such scandalous proportions that the predictions of Western fortune-tellers and astrologers throw the whole world headlong into tumult and dread. Now revelation is sought not in scriptures but in European books or from the lips of reporters for Reuters, United Press, and so forth—these great corporate makers of news (counterfeit or otherwise).

Granted that one may seek to familiarize oneself with the scientific method, the methods of machine manufacture, and the basic assumptions of Western philosophy only through European or Western books, but an occidentotic has no concern with the basic assumptions of Western philosophy. Even when he wants to learn about the East, he resorts to Western sources. It is for this reason that orientalism (almost certainly a parasite growing on the root of imperialism) dominates thought and opinion in the occidentotic nations. On the subject of Islamic philosophy, the customs of Yogis in India, the prevalence of superstitions in Indonesia, the national character of the Arabs, or any other Eastern subject, the occidentotic regards only Western writings as proper sources and criteria. This is how he comes to know even himself in terms of the language of the orientalist. With his own hands he has reduced himself to the status of an object to be scrutinized under the microscope of the orientalist. Then he relies on the orientalist's observations, not on what he himself feels, sees, and experiences.

This is the ugliest symptom of occidentosis: to regard yourself

as nothing, not to think at all, to give up all reliance on your own self, your own eyes and ears, to give over the authority of your own senses to any pen held by any wretch who has said or written a word as an orientalist.*⁸⁵ I haven't the foggiest notion when orientalism became a "science." If we say that some Westerner is a linguist, dialectologist, or musicologist specializing in Eastern questions, this is defensible. Or if we say he is an anthropologist or sociologist, this again is arguable to an extent. But what does it mean to be an orientalist without further definition? Does it mean to know all the secrets of the Eastern world? Are we living in the age of Aristotle? This is why I speak of a parasite growing on the root of imperialism. This orientalism attached to UNESCO has its own organizations in turn, its biennial or quadrennial congress, its member bodies, its comings and goings. The misfortune is that our contemporaries of prominence-especially those engaged in both politics and letters (this happens to be one of the characteristics of politics and politicians in the occidentotic countries, that politicians generally are drawn from among the literati, and the venerable ones, and accordingly that the converse is also true, that every leading politician must write books)-are often those who have been taken for a ride by the Western orientalists. These orientalists having no vocation in their own Western country, knowing nothing of any science, technology, trade, or talent, learned an Eastern language, secretly or openly entered the service of their country's foreign ministry, and were exported to this part of the world along with the European-made machine, or as an advance party for it, along with the technical specialists, to hum some poem to himself while the goods were being sold. Then the faithful purchaser could say, "Did you see? Did you hear that? How well so-and-so speaks Persian!" This is how we come to have orientalists, with books, researches, excavations, poetics, musicologies. In such a going market for the machine and the transformation it offers, the Western orientalist writes a study of Mulla Sadra,⁸⁶ pontificates

*For the latest specimen of this sort of thing, refer to Jan Rypka, "Dar Mahzar-i 'Arif-i Irani," [In the presence of an Iranian mystic], trans. Ahmad Ahmadi, *Rahnama-yi Kitab*, 1-3, Farvardin-Khurdad 1342/1963. This is an article heaped with accolades for the mystic vision, miracles, and so on of Shaykh Shams al-'Urafa. And remember that Mr. Rypka came to Iran during the Reza Shah Era as a translator for the Czech technicians of Skoda and then wrote his *History of Iranian Literature* for us!

on belief and want of belief in the Imam of the Age, or does research on the wondrous deeds of Shaykh Pashm ad-din Kashkuli. Then not only do all occidentotics everywhere invoke this opinion, but many a time I have heard in the mosques, from the pulpits (supposedly the last bastion against the West and occidentosis), Carlyle, Gustave La Bon, Gobineau, Edward Browne, or others cited as the final authority on the veracity of some person, course of action, or religious school.

We might say that the Westerner, with his university and research facilities and well-stocked libraries, has a better grasp of the scientific method, a freer hand, and a broader outlook than his Eastern counterpart even when it comes to the study of Eastern languages, religions, and customs. Thus his opinion is necessarily weightier than those of the Easterners themselves, who lack this scientific method and these research facilities. Perhaps also, because the museums, libraries, and universities of that side of the world have been packed with the plundered relics, antiquities, and libraries of this side, a Western researcher necessarily has more material at his disposal than his Eastern counterparts. For this reason, one must turn to the West to consult most Eastern sources. It may be because the Easterner has yet to attain to these worlds or is still caught up in problems of obtaining daily bread and clothing that he has yet to find time to discourse on the spiritual and the worldly. There are a thousand more maybes. I accept them all as inevitable. But what do you say of those cases in which both the Easterner and the Westerner have offered views-and with one method but two separate outlooks? Do you not concede that, in the eyes of the occidentotic, the view of the orientalist or the Western researcher is in every case preferable to that of the Eastern specialist? I have experienced this time after time.

Finally, the occidentotic in this country knows absolutely nothing about the oil question. He doesn't sound off about it, because his own well-being is not involved. Even if in some cases he does gain his living through this means, he never gives himself a headache over oil. He has utterly given up when it comes to oil. If the opportunity arises, he will work as a servant and broker for the oil interests. He writes magazines for them (see *Kavish* [Exploration]) and makes films for them (see *Mouj va Marjan va Khara* [Wave, coral, and granite]). But they just look the other way. The occidentotic is not an imaginative man or idealist. He deals with reality,

and reality in this country means the easy and automatic income provided by oil.

8

A Society in Collapse

Now let us see what the characteristics are of a society run by such leaders. We have seen how from social and economic standpoints society is afflicted with an incongruous and patchy organization, an amalgam of a pastoral economy and a rustic or newly urbanized society dominated by great economic powers from abroad, having the nature of trusts or cartels. We are a living museum of old and new social institutions. At present at least about one and a half million inhabitants of this country are nomads. And these are the official statistics, that is, the adjusted statistics. One must go to the Ministry of Defense and the Office of Tribes (attached to the Court) to find out that the tribes actually include over three million persons not settled on the land but causing ruin to whatever settlement lies in their path.* They live from their herds; 95 percent of them are poverty, affliction, and vagrancy incarnate and may spend the whole year wandering in search of that most elementary of the world's blessings- water - from summer to winter quarters and back. Now their chiefs pull the strings in all our internal and external policies. They are officially the guardians of the borders and devotees of the Shah, and this is the tribute they receive in

*"According to the census carried out in November 1962, the number of nomads in Iran has been reduced to 15% of the total population, (25% urban and 60% rural). Due to certain historical factors, feudalism and tribal system [*sic*] grew together in Iran, and the only power that could manifest itself in the feudal society was the tribal one. It is not accidental that all the dynasties that came to power belonged to the tribes. Even at the time of the constitutional uprising, tribal chieftains (Bakhtiaris) and great landlords (Sepahsalar Tonekaboni and others) directly participated in the issue." *Iran Almanac*, 1963, p. 419.

return. But they bring insecurity in their train and sow ruin and fear. The chiefs participate in ceremonial events and telegraph their congratulations on every occasion. But they are a constant menace to whoever aspires to a tranquil settled life in their domains. The Khan of the Basht still collects a certain amount of annual tribute from the oil company. The Khan of the Hayat-i Davudi tribe claimed to govern and to be in a position to make over Kharg Island to the consortium, and with good reason. The Khan of the Qashqa'i tribe reigns from Switzerland and awaits the opportunity to return home and knit earth and sky together. (We saw how government agents wrecked their palace and their lives at Firuzabad on New Year's 1341/1962.) If the Bakhtiyari are quiescent, it is because so many of them from the close of the Constitutional Era onwards entered court circles, became senators, headed SAVAK, and so forth.

To get anything under way in this country, one must first settle the tribes, but not in the way we have been attempting up to now. They can never be settled by force, but by a precise, logical, considered method: by specifying a certain amount of water and arable land per capita, by obtaining modern agricultural implements for every tribe and grouping, for which their surplus livestock could serve as payment, by compelling the individual members of every tribe to participate in constructing their future homes, and by establishing clinics and cultural centers and workshops in all the newly founded villages. So long as the tribal tent poles are not transformed into the foundations of rural houses, so long as tribal men and women remain unacquainted with agriculture, and so long as tribal children do not study under schoolhouse roofs, every step to reform in this country will be a lie, demagoguery, or infantile pretension. Despite this being the situation, our government's policies regarding the tribes has consisted in leaving them to their own devices, to rot in their chronic poverty and disease and to tremble in the face of the recurrent droughts until not a breath remains to them, not a trace of their existence.

Sixty to 70 percent of our proud people live in the sort of villages I briefly described earlier in this work, and in my *Tatnishinha-yi Buluk-i Zahra* and *Aurazan*: villages that grow leaner and more depopulated by the day while the new cities expand like malignant tumors. Such urban expansion fans out across the plains in every direction, like a fungus, without any planning for water,

power, streets and lanes, telephones, and sewers. We uproot the people from those villages and bring them to the cities. But these cities essentially do not differ from those villages, except that there is the rare job in the cities, if only seasonally. In the village there is nothing. With this virtual masquerade of a transformation they've been putting on over the last decade, adding to the class of small landowners, things have gone from bad to worse. If we had built up this class two hundred years ago, by now we would have at least a genuinely constitutional form of government. What is needed now is the institution of cooperatives. The practice of dividing lands with the aim of building up a class of small owners is obsolete. To so divide lands is to set the greatest obstacle before the mechanization of agriculture. The machine doesn't tolerate an ownership pattern of small plots, and the small owner isn't in a position to obtain new mechanized agricultural implements. Given our distinctive individualistic ethos, one can scarcely imagine a majority of villagers coming together on their own initiative to invest capital and bring machines to their village. For more details, refer to the very precise plan for agriculture my friend Husayn Malik has set forth for public consideration in various issues of *'Ilm va Zindagi* (Science and life).

So long as the evil of military service is not lifted from the villages, so long as the lure of the city works its spell, and so long as the terror of passing tribes remains, the countryside will not flourish. So long as highways and electricity do not reach the village, its houses will remain dark. So long as there is no more than one repair station for agricultural machinery for every thirty or forty villages, agriculture will remain unmechanized. And so long as we try to promote the idea of small landowners, so long as we fail to establish a mechanics class in every village school, the machine will remain a stranger to the village, will not enter the village as anything but an agent of destruction, agitation, and turmoil.

The cities, these cancerous members that grow by the day with no pattern, with no authenticity, daily demand more food processed by Western industry. Daily they sink further into decline, rootlessness, and ugliness: every intersection with a statue in the middle of the square according to the directive; the bazaars' roofs in ruins; neighborhoods widely scattered; no water, electricity, or telephone service; no social services; no social centers and libraries; mosques in ruins; no functioning parties, no clubs, no places of

entertainment; nothing more than a cinema or two that serve only to excite the lower members, places where one can only kill time or amuse oneself to no point; and religious centers crumbling, *takyas* grown meaningless. Our cinemas do not instruct or aid in the intellectual transformation of our people. Every cinema in this part of the world is nothing more than a child's bank into which every city resident drops two or three *tumans* a week so that the principal stockholders in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer will become millionaires.* Our city dwellers' thoughts are molded by these cinemas, by the government radio, or by the illustrated weeklies. These all follow a road that leads to conformism, everyone turned into carbon copies: identical houses, identical clothes, identical luggage, identical plastic tableware, identical airs, and worst of all, identical ways of thinking. This is the greatest danger in our new wave of urbanization.

If conformism in life and thought is such a danger in an advanced machine-making society, dangerous enough to make one a slave to the machine, it is doubly dangerous to us, who are only consumers of the machine; it enslaves us to the machine twice over. A Western machine tender at least has heard of democracy, in that the political party comes in the wake of the machine. But here we are with no party, with our religious societies whose schools shrink day by day, and with a government out of the dark ages. If we, in this situation, are slated to become machine tenders and carbon copies, then woe upon us! Nothing at all will remain. In such a country, the great systems for molding opinion must not be controlled by the great corporations (such as television-this is not America) or by the state (such as the radio-this is not one of the countries behind the Iron Curtain). In a developing country such as ours, such apparatuses must be for the benefit and at the disposal of the public, through elected councils of writers and intellectuals; they must be run without any material or propagandistic motive.

For some time, people have been proclaiming the danger of the great landed estates, the great immovable estates, unaware of

*"The people of Tehran spend 23 million *tumans* a month at the cinema. The owner of the theater makes seven times the original cost of every film in profits." This is the heading to an article in *Khandaniha*, 96, 30 Mordad 1341/21 August 1963, quoted from its sister publication *Raushanfikir* [The intellectual].

the fact that these are no longer profitable. Everyone, including the first person in the land, is contemplating the division of estates and erroneously presenting it as the key to solving all our problems. What is dangerous these days is the great accumulation of movable assets; it is money; it is stocks and bonds; it is bank credits; it is the capital that has been deposited in foreign banks and the powerful individuals who are gaining control of the workings of industries; it is the great shareholders and the national trusts, especially those that manage what one might call the cultural industries. One must consider the danger all of these pose and draft plans to nationalize or socialize them.

From a political standpoint, we live under the banner of a government that is at once autocratic and lax for all the halfhearted displays of freedom it decks itself out with. It is autocratic in that there is no refuge from it, no hope, no freedom, no justice. It is lax in that one may heave a sigh now and then or emit a harmless and ineffective yell (which is what I am doing right now) because every ordinary man-in-the-street, though he may be in the dress of an armed servant of the government or may be a censor, is in the depths of his heart the same old lukewarm unfanatical subscriber to "This too will pass." The inexorable logic of the machine has not yet turned him into a solitary, cold, hardened nut and bolt in the hands of the organizations (woe be upon us the day when we give up this last advantage of backwardness and primitiveness).

The armed forces dominate everything in this country; they are the final arbiters of all situations and are the first to benefit from all the country's advantages. Officially, 30 percent of the budget and, covertly, something like 54 percent of the national budget is spent to maintain the armed forces-this on top of all the foreign aid that in the face of our general misery goes only to foster them. Let us pass over the facts that the nation's legislature was stricken with apathy for years before its present attack, that the judicial and executive powers interfere massively in each other's work, and that the administrative organizations still function as lethargically as in the age when couriers rode mules. The essential fact is that this frail body is not equal to the task of supporting such a great, pretentious, and ailing head.*

*These days (1340/1961) discussion of the armed forces has been carried even to the mass-circulation newspapers-perhaps owing to pres-

When we ask what all these armed forces are for, they answer, to defend the borders and to maintain security and national unity. But what is the underlying motive? We have seen how permeable our borders are to the penetration of the corporations, and we have seen how our national unity has crumbled from within. What further attack could there be that we might be obliged to defend ourselves against?

All these soldiers and all these armaments accomplished nothing in Shahrivar 1320/1941 or on 28 Mordad.⁸⁷ To arm one hundred fifty thousand of the cream of our youth to the teeth (this is the official figure), to feed and train them so that one may rely on them to secure and perpetuate the rule of an individual—this is the whole meaning of our government's military establishment. But in the climate for transformation and ceaseless building that is before us, it can never be well advised to constrain all this labor power to activities that do nothing to aid in the capital development of the country. In our circumstances, one must not thus drain the villages of the best of their labor force through conscription, sticking these people into barracks and setting them to learning the art of combat against some unknown future enemy. One cannot fold one's hands and constrain at least three hundred thousand well-exercised shoulders to bearing arms and practicing tactics that have availed us nothing since the siege of Herat⁸⁸ - and that in an

sure from abroad. See Daryush Humayun, "Arzyabi-yi Naqsh-i Artish" [Evaluating the role of the army], *Ittila'at*, 19 Khرداد and 16 Tir 1341/June 9 and July 7 1963.

The organization of the army in Iran is too broad relative to the interests and possibilities of the country to stand aside from the general course of economic and social growth. Considerations of defense are of course valid, but the overall role of the army is internal....

In a country such as Iran, the force exerted by the operations of the armed forces cannot be ignored in the act of building the nation....

The Iranian Army, with its nearly 150,000 men under arms, a large portion of the budget and national income, and tens of thousands of men who enter or exit from its ranks annually, is no separate social institution that one may leave alone to its task of preserving our independence and security.... In our country, has it not been perceived that without reliance on international defense arrangements, the capacity of our military amounts to nothing?

age when collective defense heads the agendas of even the advanced industrial states.

In an age when the destinies of the governments and borders of the world are settled at the conference table, not on the battlefield, to talk any longer of the greater range of new foreign-aid artillery is laughable. To parade with tanks and artillery or to train platoons of paratroopers and commandos only makes it possible to suppress demonstrations of university youths or to quell disturbances by the religious students at the Fayziya Madrasa.⁸⁹ And there is never a need for so many arms and soldiers to quell such minor disturbances.

Let us take a disinterested look at Japan and Germany. Only through their forced disarmament at the end of World War II did they gain the power to rebuild their utterly wrecked economies, so that after not quite twenty years the threat of economic competition they offer the victor states has alarms sounding over all the world's markets. If either of these two governments had squandered the greater part of its economic and human potential on armaments, as they did in the prewar era, would it have so succeeded in renovating its economic and political structure and organization? In an age such as ours, when the ultimate cure for Algeria's malaise after eight years of war and bloodshed was to take over the desert oil and gain independence, what further use - except fratricide - is there for soldiers and weapons? If France, for all its might, all its paratroopers and commandos, was finally unable to crush ten million Algerians, who are we to oppose one hundred fifty thousand soldiers? We should content ourselves with the police and gendarmerie for security forces. If at present one cannot commit oneself to such a bold plan, one absolutely and emphatically must turn all the barracks into centers for instruction in the techniques and trades necessary to revitalize the countryside: to acquaint today's soldiers - tomorrow's villagers - with the techniques, technologies, and general and specialized studies necessary in each locality.*

Another point to be considered under the heading of political matters is the show we make of Western democracy, that is, our

*Between the first and second editions of this work, the minister of education formed the "Army of Knowledge" [*Sipah-i Danish*] with a lot of fanfare and hooplah. This means that high-school graduates selected by lottery, after four months of service in the ranks, instead of further simple

pseudodemocracy. We know nothing of Western democracy or of its preconditions and implications: freedom of speech, freedom of expression of belief, freedom of access to the media, which here are monopolized by the state, freedom of publication of views contrary to those of the government of the time. None of these exists; yet our governments feign democracy, if only to shut the mouth of this or that foreign power which is due to give them a loan. Western democracy relies on parties, and parties follow an advanced economy, without which they degrade into the political cabals we have in such abundance. These partylike cabals of ours, if not ephemeral creatures of fiat, and if not put together for purely material reasons, certainly do not ever become more than factions, factions that in not having a free hand to act, to struggle politically (there being no clubs, no free press, no authorization for party and street assemblies), have contented themselves with cloak-and-dagger

soldiering, are sent in uniform to teach in the villages at wages of 150 *tumans* a month. Up to now, this program has operated over two or three periods; each period, two to three thousand "soldiers of knowledge" have been sent to the villages, with extensive ceremonies in city and village. In appearance this is a constructive measure to prevent a few of this horde of graduates (twenty thousand a year) from seeing their time go to waste, but in fact it is a giant step toward the militarization of the nation's educational system. Be it glory or be it treachery, the idea originates with Parviz Natil Khanlari, the erstwhile poet, former senator, and one time minister of education! The results of these steps by the Ministry of Education would be useful if they were carried out under the aegis not of the army but of the teachers' training colleges, if more volunteers were accepted, and if these volunteers were exempted from military service. From my point of view, the measures actually carried out have been ruinous for the following reasons:

1. Through this plan, some of the 30 percent of the budget going to the War Ministry, slotted to be decreased because of political pressure from America, has been put on the shoulders of the Ministry of Education.
2. The teaching profession, which had just begun to become a viable occupation after the salary increases of 1341/1962 (when Dirakhshish was minister, with a 500 *tumans* minimum), once again has become unviable, on a par with forced labor in the army.
3. The Ministry of Education, which of all government organizations functioned at the greatest remove from the army, thus has been thrust under the army's spurs.

activities and a show of martyrdom. These factions, whether having a religious coloration or a political one, are nothing but the seed of an opposition that may one day amount to something. Because they are cut off from the people and are uninvolved in their struggles, they have no means to engage public concerns and their outcry lacks conviction. The most that can come of these factions is that they provide an opportune basis for action for some foreign political force that needs to provide regional and national underpinnings to its activities. Most of the coups d'etat and rapid changes of government in this part of the East are carried out in the name of these factions, if not at their hands, while in reality furthering foreigners' policies.

Under such circumstances, we cannot lay claim to Westernstyle democracy. We are not permitted to imitate it, and our best interest does not lie in doing so. To make what is no more than a display of Western democracy is itself another symptom of occidentosis. If there was a time when the great landowners forcibly trucked voters from the villages right to the ballot boxes, we have seen how, in the referendum of 6 Bahman⁹⁰ and the elections that followed, the city ballot boxes have been put right at the doors of the ministries and departments and how directives have been issued that salaries will be paid after poll vouchers have been presented. It truly has been a case of "bring the heavy load to the donkey," as the proverb has it, and what claims have been made of free elections and huge voter turnout!

One may speak of democracy in this country-that is, one may say that the will of the people has been expressed-only when the following conditions have been met:

1. The great local powers, the landlords, and the surviving tribal chieftains are denied free rein and influence to interfere with voting.
2. The media and propaganda organs are not monopolized by the governments of the time but are made available to their opposition.
3. Parties have appeared in their real form, not in the form of contemptible political factions, and have taken on a far broader scope.
4. The security forces, SAVAK in particular, have been severely restrained from intervention in the affairs of the nation.

There was a time when there was a general outcry against the absence of freedom, because the last person who held the people's votes - that is, after the village headman, gendarme, judge, landlord, and district governor, had all had their say - was the one to convey the people to the polling place and back and to compensate them for their half-day of lost wages. But now, when SAVAK stuffs the ballot boxes somewhere and then issues a list of the elected representatives, what is one to say? Now it no longer does any good even to cry out. The failures of the nation's intellectuals have been the triumphs of SAVAK. Whatever threads the intellectuals have spun have become new strings for that freshly blossoming organization to pull so that, through intimidation, threats, enticements, imprisonment, and exile, they can so arrange things that nothing raises a ripple and that at just the appointed time the two houses of the Majlis may open, like two bouquets. This has come about because the people have had no notion of what democracy means. Or if they have had, they must have gained nothing from all those who claim to be working for freedom, because they have so quietly and passively surrendered their own destiny to these successors to the intellectuals. As long as the meaning of democracy is not made to penetrate the depths of society through a sustained effort at education, as long as the people remain unfamiliar with the party system, to speak of democracy in this country befits only an assembly of men who have it made and need elections as a rationale to justify their positions.

9

The Role of Education

Now let us take a look at contemporary Iranian society from an educational frame of reference—a frame of reference that I myself always view things from.

From an educational standpoint, we resemble wild grass. There's a patch of ground; a seed rides the wind or a bird's beak to fall on it; a little help from the rain, and something grows. Vegetal life - released by chance and growing by itself. We build a school any way we know how, for any reason that comes to mind: to raise the price of land around the school, for the sake of ostentation as some crook's attempt at expiating the injustices he committed in a political upheaval, through the righteous strivings of the people of a village, or through the endowment of a third of the wealth of someone deceased. Once the school is built, one of the brittle branches of the educational organization reaches out to embrace it. What scurrying and headaches are involved! There is no advance planning, no consideration of what kind of school is needed in a given place or what schools are just a diversion. Those in charge of education are still dominated by considerations of quantity.

The final aim of education is to foster occidentosis, to award worthless certificates of employability to those who can only be the future fodder of the administrative organization and need a diploma to be promoted to any position. There is no harmony in the functioning of the schools, of which we have every variety—religious, Islamic, Italian, German, schools that produce halfway religious types, those that produce students of the religious sciences, technical schools, and trade schools. But the utility of all this diversity is nowhere on record. Why do all these schools exist? Whom do they educate? What are their graduates doing after ten years?

Diversity itself-if in the sense of division of labor and in response to the diversity of interests, tastes, capabilities, and outlooks among the people-is very useful, is the hallmark of freedom. But the diversity in the way our schools operate is the diversity of wild grasses. It is this one seed that somehow grows where it falls. Government employees and the rest of the people-the Tehranis and the provincial folk-are worlds apart. In both cases, there is the same program, and there may even be the same kind of teacher. But in the one case, there are classes of twenty-five and, in the other, classes of eighty. In the schools' programs there is no trace of reliance on tradition, no imprint of the culture of the past, nothing of ethics or philosophy, no notion of literature - no relation between yesterday and tomorrow, between home and school, between East and West, between collective and individual. How could a tradition that has grown so moribund influence the schools' program? How could a home whose own foundations are crumbling serve as their foundations?

Our approximately twenty thousand graduates a year are future candidates for all manner of unrest, complexes, crises, and (probably) insurrections, people without faith, without any spark of enthusiasm, the unwitting tools of governments, all accommodating, timid, and ineffectual. This may be why the religious schools and the Islamic schools have suddenly begun to flourish over the last decade. In schools of this sort, no threat is perceived to the faith of the students coming from strict religious households; they have not been immobilized by the pestilential breath of occidentosis. But what is the use? The petrification that has overtaken religious milieux will turn these students into fossils in another way. And likewise, what is the point, in that this problem of religion and irreligion, or of education and its lack, is a problem of the cities alone?

Of the fifty thousand village communities in the country, at least forty thousand still have no schools of any kind.* And one might wish the ones that have them didn't, because then at least the disaster would be uniform and all places would be in the same condition. But now the disaster is a thousandfold, no two places alike: problems with textbooks; lack of teachers; crowded classes; differences in age, intelligence, language, and religion among the students; the teach-

*The Army of Knowledge claims that, with all its pomp and circumstance, it has set up temporary schools in ten thousand more communities. In any event, this is good news, apart from the drawbacks I have recounted.

ers' training or want of training in educational methods; schoolhouses like tombs; the vague status of physical education and music. Most important are the aimlessness of education and the confusion prevailing in curricula.

It is not yet clear why one must go through grade school, to what end, to acquire what skills. And what of high school? And what of the university? The university ought to be the center for the liveliest and most outstanding research in science, technology, and letters. We have the University of Tehran, the National University, the University of Shiraz, the one in Khurasan, the one in Jundishapur, and so on. The National University is a storefront for those occidentotic intellectuals who have returned from Europe and America and have heard so much grumbling about the so rapidly fossilized traditions of the University of Tehran that they have set up shop for themselves elsewhere, on higher authority. I find it hard even to speak of this establishment as a university.

Pishavari⁹¹ built the University of Tabriz as a sign of the independence or autonomy of that province within the limits of the Provincial and State Assemblies Law (*Qanun-i Anjumanha-yi Iyalati va Vilayati*) (of which nothing is heard or felt any more). Then when the insurrection in Azarbayjan died down, the government saw that it was impossible to bury amid execration this last legacy of that system. But they could not retain it, because it was nothing if not the last remnant of the *Dimuqrati Firqasi*. "So what are we to do? Let's go build universities in the other provinces too." Thus we came to have all these universities. At least work has been found for all these professorial candidates who have returned from Europe. But what is each university supposed to do? What specialization should each have? What sort of specialized field may the climate of a given province be expected to sustain? Which of them does the best work? What do they produce? Only God knows when these questions will be answered.

As to the University of Tehran: for all its venerability and importance, for all its lost traditions and crumbled independence, it would seem that it ought to remain the center for the most lively, outstanding, and distinguished researches it once was. But is this the case? Those university fields that involve applied science, technology, and the machine (the colleges of applied sciences) in the advanced levels of their programs produce nothing more than good repairmen for Western industrial goods. There is no original re-

search, no discovery, no invention, no solutions, just these repairmen, start-up men, or operators of Western machinery and industrial goods, calculators of the strength of materials, and such absurdities. What little scientific research and investigation are to be found are being done at the Razi Institute and the Pasteur Institute. I don't know if these should be regarded as attached to the university and the College of Agriculture, to the Ministry of Health, or to the main Pasteur Institute in Paris. The School of Medicine likewise does not fall so far short of other schools of medicine on the international level. But I must add at once that this superiority is due to the very high mortality rate in this country. I have a physician friend who studied in Paris. In the course of discussing the effects of the endemic disease called the Aleppo boil, however much the professor and his assistants searched, they could find no one afflicted with such a boil, until finally my friend showed the effects of this boil on his own face. They decided that the effects of this disease on the skin of his face constituted an adequate presentation of it. But here God only knows how many unclaimed cadavers have passed through the hands of each medical student. I am thus positive that a medical student in Tehran, Shiraz, or any other Iranian city comes out much more experienced and practiced in dissection and surgery than his counterpart in Europe or America, and this is a point of strength of Iranian medical students, resting on the point of weakness consisting in the abnormally high death rate.

Those university divisions not involving applied science and technology deal either with the arts and letters, like the College of Fine Arts and the Colleges of Letters (in Tehran and the provinces), or with Islamic studies and Iranian culture, with researches and investigations in them. The College of Fine Arts, embracing only the two fields of painting and architecture, is the sole university institution that trains artists- if one can train artists. A casual glance at the walls of the art galleries that are gradually being opened or one brisk walk along any street or lane will enable one to take in these artists' work.* With a few exceptions, these consist in the

*Concerning the fruits of the labors of these artists, refer to *Kitab-i Mah*, or *Kayhan-i Mah*, the first and last issues, Khurdad and Shabrivār 1341/June and July 1962, the various articles by Simin Danishvar or Jalal Muqaddam, as well as the article "Miz-i Gird-i Naqqashan" [The painters' round table].

consumption of paint, canvas, glass, and iron—that is, more consumption of the West's products. One can but rarely find Iranian painters and architects who do not imitate Westerners but whose work is distinguished by artistic authenticity and originality, who add something to the sum of artistic endeavor in the world. Things have reached the point that we bring critics and judges from Europe to judge our painters' work.

In the Colleges of Letters, not only is literature in its real and universal sense ignored, but even contemporary Persian literature remains unseen and unknown. The thinking of the late 'Abbas Iqbal, who ordered that only works a hundred years old or more be read, studied, and assessed, remains predominant in them.*92 The result of this approach is that we train only archaeologists of literature. The Colleges of Letters also must be counted among those colleges that deal with research in Islamic law and learning and in Iranian culture, that is, the Colleges of Law and of the Religious and Philosophic Sciences.

The Islamic schools believe that simply by teaching and promulgating religion and religious principles they can avert the danger of irreligion that is just one of the symptoms of occidentosis. The Colleges of Letters, Law, and of the Religious and Philosophic Sciences likewise believe that they can avert this danger by taking refuge in Arabic studies, belles lettres, chains of transmission, and traditions. Thus all the painstaking efforts of, for instance, the College of Letters, with all its learned professors, are spent in literary exhumation, in delving into bygone times, in researching chains of transmission. In these sorts of colleges, one may see, on the one hand, a direct reaction to occidentosis in this flight into ancient texts, ancient lives, and dead literary achievements, this abandonment of the present, and, on the other hand, the greatest and ugliest sign of occidentosis in the way their professors rely on the writings of the orientalist.

The kind of person who teaches in these colleges, traditional minded, educated, sympathetic, preoccupied with the literary and legal fields and with Islamic and Iranian learning, seeing how the onslaught of the West and Western industries and technologies is sweeping away everything, supposes that the more one models

*Refer to the magazine *Yadigar* over the period it was under his direction.

oneself on the ideals represented in *Kalila va Dimna*, the better one can defend one's culture and existence.⁹³ This is why for the last twenty or thirty years the products of all the colleges of this sort have had no effect on society and have been handicapped by comparison with the returnees from Europe. And long live the estimable orientalists who have made an encyclopedia of every *Ilahi Nama* and a dictionary of every *Rish Nama* to keep the *Kalila va Dimna* types busy discussing essence and accident, created and eternal, the principle of guiltlessness, and so on.⁹⁴ With very few exceptions, the sole output of these colleges over the last twenty or thirty years has consisted of distinguished scholars, all of whom know the language, know some biography, are scrupulous workers, write marginalia in others' books, resolve tough problems in language or history, determine which graves lack tenants or which figures lack graves, explore the mysteries of Sura an-Nahl, know who is citing or plagiarizing from whom as much as a thousand years ago, and write treatises on the poets of the tenth century of the Hijra, whom one could count on the fingers of one's two hands. Worst of all, most of them become teachers of literature, educational directors, or civil judges. Bless this last group, whose members have given some underpinnings to the Justice Ministry and some meaning to the idea of the independence of the judiciary and who well distinguish truth from falsity, if conditions allow. But what of the others? All in all, what benefit have we realized from them, besides a deeper plunge into occidentosis?

All these professors and their carefully trained pupils, with their ears stopped like the Seven Sleepers', have retreated so far into the cave of texts, textual variants, and obscure expressions that even the roar of the machine cannot awaken them. Rather, they have plastered these texts to their ears to avoid hearing these most loathsome of sounds. The encroachments of foreign tongues day by day are undermining the importance of the mother tongue and making a sound command of it less necessary. Defections to scientific and technical fields further thin the ranks of those pursuing these fields. With things in such a state, the nation's centers for letters, legal studies, and learning, the Colleges of Letters, Law, and the Religious and Philosophic Sciences have retreated into the cocoons of old texts, content to train pedants, just as the clergy have drawn into their cocoons of fanaticism and paralysis in the face of the West's onslaught. These days, just as the clergy lan-

guishes in the toils of doubt between two and three and explication of ritual purity and impurity, such centers of Iranian, Eastern, and Islamic letters, law, and learning languish in the toils of whether the decorative *beh*⁹⁵ should be joined to the following word or whether the silent *vav* should be written. Those exiled from the world of universals will clutch at minutiae. When the house has been carried off in the flood or has collapsed in an earthquake, you go looking for a door in the debris to bear the rotting corpse of a loved one to the graveyard.

As we speak of educational questions and questions of the university, we meet with another major question, that of the army of returnees from Europe and America, each of whom has returned at least a candidate for a position in a ministry and who collectively form the bulwark of the nation's organizations. Each of these educated persons is a boon-something like finding one shoe in the desert. For look closely. See, after returning and finding a post in an organization and getting entrenched there, what each of these boons turns into. They haven't the authority or the competence to do the job. They are illiberal, apathetic, and for the most part lacking in concern, mostly because they see themselves and their opinions as amounting to nothing next to the Western advisors and consultants who dominate the scene.

Contrary to the widespread view, the greater the army of returnees from Europe, the less their power to act and the greater the distress of the institutions that absorb their impact. Because there has never been a plan for where to send these youths and what specialty, what trade, what technology they should study, they have gone each to some part of the world to study or experience something completely different from others' experiences, on their own choice and initiative, to their own taste. As they return, each having to join some group in one of our country's organizations, it becomes obvious how dissonant they are and how at a loss to carry out anything. Consider the French-educated Iranian, or the English-, German-, or American-educated one: each tunes up and plays in a distinct style.

If I have hope for the future of intellectuals in Iran, however, one reason is this very diversity of methods by which our European-educated have studied, of their fields of study and places of study. This is the wellspring of the wealth of Iran's intellectual environment. Look at the intellectual environment of India, at

how English its majority of Oxford-educated intelligentsia have made it. Under present conditions in this country, these youths generally resemble the lovely tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths we import as bulbs from Holland and grow in the Tehran greenhouses. When they bloom, we put them in exorbitantly priced flowerpots and give them to friends or acquaintances to set in a hot room under the sun where they will survive a week at most. These flowers at the top of society's basket also wither in this society's climate. Or if they don't, they generally fade to the color of the society. Notwithstanding all the propaganda cranked out to lure back students from abroad in Europe, I do not believe that their return promises to be a service to the country so long as no environment suited to their future work is provided. Who is to provide this environment? In this intense cold, those can prepare it who have been both baked in the furnace and acclimated to the icehouse.⁹⁶

Most of these youths, while living in Europe or America, acquire the idea of freedom to various degrees from these environments and societies. They set their student unions astir. They are generally hotheaded and hyperanimated. There are proclamations, actions, demonstrations, publications. But when they return and are yoked to the wheel, all these worlds are forgotten. Perhaps the passing of youth that is accompanied by this burning fervor is itself one of the reasons for this forgetting. But more likely our government's disinclination to hear of such talk, the lack of an outlet for such freedoms, conduces to such a reversion. Whatever the reason, I know of a whole daisy chain of such youths who all upon returning settled down in some corner and contented themselves with whatever crumbs from the table fell their way. You would never imagine they had once been impassioned over issues of freedom. Then there are always the ready excuses of home life, of wife and children, especially if the wife is European.

Although many young men return with European or American wives, very few of the young women return with European or American husbands. This constitutes an additional problem. As we watch crumble the foundation of the Iranian family, an intimate relationship of husband and wife of the same stock, the responsibility of these incongruous households is obvious. The saying, "the pigeon of two towers" means these youths with their families—the firsthand human products of occidentosis.⁹⁷ These youths are kept sufficiently occupied in solving the internal problems of

such families to have no further energy or patience to apply to the solution of external (that is, societal) problems. Such youths fall within two or three categories:

1. Those who have risen from poor families and labored hard to travel to Europe to study. To members of this group, a European or American spouse is a means of severing oneself from one's roots, which no longer allow breathing space for a dignity returned from Europe, and a ladder by which to draw oneself up rung by rung to higher social classes. The terrible consequences of such marriages are plain.*

2. Those who have settled for a European spouse to avoid the petrified and onerous obligations and requirements of marriage in Iran. Now that they have returned with qualifications, degrees, and knowledge of European languages, they see that they are no longer bound by any of these obligations and that they have married a European for nothing. The consequences of such a situation are likewise clear, once the inevitable comparisons begin occurring to them.

3. Those (of either sex) who lost their virginity in Europe or America, who first grew intimate with the opposite sex there. When they return with their foreign spouse, they care nothing for God or man, or they come to see what a terrible mistake they have made.

When an educated Iranian youth marries a European or an American, at least one of two conditions is fulfilled. First, perhaps he or she has married a foreigner because the foreigner's milieu, the foreign milieu, has accepted him or her (for instance, because of the shortage of men in, say, Germany after the war-in this connection, more foreign wives of Iranians come from Germany than from all other nations combined). And is this finding of acceptance in a foreign milieu by means of a foreign wife not in fact tantamount to being uprooted from one's native environment? And

*There is reportedly a popular belief about this less than popular occurrence to the effect that whenever a man with a European or American wife attains a high position, it is no doubt solely because of having such a wife, whatever his qualifications may be.

does not this in itself result for us in a chronic loss of human resources, our trained and cultured human resources, at that? This is almost invariably the case with women who have married foreigners. Second, the youth may be compensating for the feelings of inferiority he or she has felt in comparing Iran with Europe or America,* feelings that embrace almost everything in the two milieux.

Thus marriage to a European or American is one of the most acute symptoms of occidentosis. The time has come to adopt an orderly and appropriate plan covering a period of, say, twenty years and in accordance with the scientific and technical needs of the country whereby we send students to India or Japan and nowhere else, certainly not Europe or America. I mention these two countries in the hope that we might learn how they came to terms with the machine, how they adopted technology (especially Japan), and how they came to terms with the problems that now confront us. Only if such a plan is put into effect and a balance is struck between the orientosis of future returnees from Asia and the occidentosis of present returnees from Europe will it be possible to regard the future of our educational system with hope.

*I thought of this point when Fereydoun Hoveyda's book *Les Quarantaines* came out in Paris in 1962 (in French). In it, a very good Eastern youth (Fereydoun substitutes a Lebanese-Egyptian for himself; it doesn't make any difference), caught in the confrontation between East and West and the spiritual confrontation between these two worlds within him, surmounts his psychological problems, his shame, and his feelings of inferiority in winning a European woman who had won his heart some years earlier. The most interesting point in this book is that even consciousness of this love follows upon its fulfillment; before, the protagonist hadn't the courage to express this love even in the depths of his heart.

10

Mechanosis

The important factors that distinguish a transitional period of society with its characteristic crises are, from one standpoint, the advance of science, from another, the transformations of technique, technology, and the machine, and from a third, the possibility to speak of Western democracy.* We have only a semblance standing for each of these three factors, a sample to display for purposes of ostentation. Given that the machine transformation, the technological transformation, engenders social crises in proportion to its speed, we who are now at the first bend of the road faced with the necessity of undertaking a two-hundred-year journey are in much worse shape than we suppose.+ Our fever-delirium of crises is going to be far more persistent and disheartening than those that have arisen in similar countries.

Suppose nonetheless that one fine morning we've arrived, like Switzerland, Sweden, France, or America-the impossible supposition that is not so impossible. What will our situation be then? Shall we not be faced with the problems that the West first ran up against long ago? What are these problems and what will we do about them?

One basic problem of Western civilization - in the Western countries themselves, in the context of nineteenth-century liberalism - is the constant need for vigilance against the seeds of fascism. In France, where we see de Gaulle wading through the Algerian

*See *Hadaf-i Farhang-i Iran* [The aim of Iranian education], Tehran 1340/1961, a publication of the Center for Study and Promulgation of Educational Materials, Ministry of Education, that same collection in which this work was to be included and couldn't be.

+Ibid.

problem, we have right-wing extremists in and out of the military, led by the gangsters of the Foreign Legion, who daily stain the streets of Paris and Algiers with the blood of those advocating a solution.* In Italy and Germany, we have the remnants of the Brown-shirts, and in America, the new John Birch Society, which regards even Mr. Eisenhower as a communist. And in Britain, there is the Scottish independence movement. There are worms in the apples everywhere else, just as bad.

This Foreign Legion is itself one of this same sort of European problems. We know that many brigands, killers, deportees, and adventurers in Europe volunteer for the Legion when they feel hemmed in and cannot remain in their native country, that is, if they do not go to work for some gold, ivory, or copper company in the African jungles.+ Thus the Bandar 'Abbas of the Belgians was the Congo, and the Qishm Island of the French was Algeria, or Djibouti and Madagascar. For the Italians, there were Somalia and Libya, and for the Portuguese, Angola and Mozambique. For the Dutch, there were South Africa (the Boers who conquered South Africa are of Dutch descent) and Indonesia. So this Legion resembles the mercenary armies of ancient times, and its job is to crush freedom wherever necessary, to serve the oil and gold companies wherever the people have cried out in protest, to serve as thugs on wheels for the benefit of whatever bandit pays the most. From Spain in 1936 to Algeria, the Congo, and Angola, movements have been smashed and bloodied under the hammer blows of these European rogues. More important than exporting brigands along with the machine, the Europeans preserve the security and well-being of their cities, museums, and theaters at the price of denying the freedom of the colonized and backward states.** And now that the colonized nations are gaining their freedom one after the other, let us see what Europe will do with these particular chickens as they come home to roost. One must necessarily expect numerous misfortunes within Europe. But it appears that Angola, Mozambique,

*Bear in mind that the first edition of this work came out in the winter of 1940/1961.

+See Louis-Ferdinand Celine, *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, Paris, 1967.

**This export of rogues is bilateral: from West to East and vice versa. We have seen how they come from Europe; let me now give an example of the reverse trade. Although it is much smaller, just as our exports are much lower than our imports, our local rogues, when they feel hemmed

and South Africa are still the main bases for mercenary types; and we can suppose, moreover, that others of their class will change out of their uniforms to sit beside the Shaykh of Kuwait as advisors, consultants, and experts, perhaps to work for the Shaykh of Qatar, or even to appear in our own country.

Things are like this because adventurism, rebellion against people and laws, and forms of brigandage in thought and action are themselves by-products of the regimentation of people before the machine. The original products are the Western industrial goods, and these are the by-products the machine requires; this regimentation of people is both its cause and effect. To conform before the machine, to be regimented in the workplace, to come and go right on the dot, and to do one kind of wearisome work throughout one's lifetime become second nature to all who are involved with machines. To be active in the party and union, which requires a single dress, manner, greeting, and mode of thought, becomes in time a sort of third nature.

Conformity in the workplace culminates in conformity in the party and union, which in turn culminates in conformity in the barracks—that is, before the war machine. What difference does it make? The machine is the machine. One bottles milk for children, and another turns out mortar rounds for young and old. This standardization of form, dress, and thought first in the service of the machine (Charlie Chaplin had such a powerful attraction, we value him so highly, because he was the first to perceive the danger

in and scandal overtakes them, accept the guidance of the European rogues now resident here (if in the more acceptable forms: orientalist, expert, tour guides to the ruins, reporter, and other agents of the new sort of imperialism), pack their bags, and go to hole up in the best spots in Europe and America until things cool off and they can return. I know of a certain bankrupt banker from Tehran who fled to London after going under and now sells chelow kebabs there. You, too, know a bankrupt politician who was Iran's general representative to UNESCO for two years, and another who was representative at large to students, and so on. If the export of European rogues to the East follows upon the export of machines or is a way of clearing Europe of the restless and adventurers, a way of providing security for the people of those parts, our export of rogues is generally a way the ruling body pampers and rewards those it has rendered compliant. Do you see how vast is the difference? I believe that if all that is off the mark in this work stands refuted, this one point appearing in a footnote will suffice to establish all its claims.

of going like sheep to the slaughterhouse of the machine), then in the union, club, and party, then in the barracks, leads straight to the standardization of form, dress, and thought of the Blackshirts and Brownshirts that in turn leads the Western countries to bloodshed and calls the world to war every twenty years. It leaves all these consequences as memorials to itself. Warmongering - apart from the fact that it appears in the wake of the expansion of heavy industry and the search for new markets for exports - derives even its conventions and customs from the machine, which is itself the product of pragmatism, scientism, and positivism. Nowadays even children know that when the machine reaches the stage of surplus production and gains the power to export its products, its owners (the corporations) enter into hostilities with their competitors as they seek to monopolize export markets.*

Parties in a Western democratic society are forums to satisfy the melancholia of unbalanced and mentally ill persons who through daily regimentation before the machine, rising punctually and arriving on time, not missing the train, have lost the chance to express any sort of will of their own. The fascist parties and other groups that are extremist in principle and rabid in practice take the greatest possible pains to cater to the diseased state of such people: from choosing the reddest of reds for their banners, to employing symbols and devices - eagles, lions, tigers - that are in reality the totems of twentieth-century savagery, to adopting rituals for initiation to their circles and expulsion from them, to abiding by their own strange customs. Here we apprehend the root cause of these diseases and the method of treating them or of preventing their flare-up. These are each among the problems of the West and the mechanotic developed societies that it is up to the thinkers of those societies to solve.

*Such a competitor may be anyone. Western free trade(!) recognizes neither friend nor enemy. Besides the account of the junked tanks that the Belgians bought off the battlefields of el-Alamein and rebuilt to sell to the Egyptians and Israelis to use in another war, note this new item from *Time* magazine: "The Hong Kong Hilton was nearing its opening date when authorities discovered that \$100,000 worth of Chinese furniture and decorations in the hotel had been imported in violation of U.S. law that American citizens cannot deal with Red Chinese," *Time*, 19 July 1963, p. 70.

What is piquant is that we who know nothing of democracy or of the machine have a party and society by fiat. Rather than being regimented by the machine, then being handed to the party and society (democracy), and then lining up in the barracks, we have started from the bottom. We first grew accustomed to lines and regimentation and conformity through the barracks (which, incidentally, are of no use for war, with the exception of street wars) so that we should not be stymied as the machine arrived, that is, so that the machine would not be stymied. This is the most charitable explanation for the reality of our time I can offer. The West progressed through machine and technology to regimentation, party, barracks, and war. We have done just the reverse: from barracks and training for street wars to lining up, then to becoming party members, and then to becoming machine tenders. That is where we are headed.

The West was in one situation in the days of its imperialist contact with the East, Asia, Africa, and South America. It is now in another. The nineteenth-century Westerner who came to these parts of the world in the wake of the first machine-made goods had a free hand. He held sway over khan, prince, and governor. He was obeyed and consulted. His embassy gave refuge to the constitutionalists in Tehran. Whatever house his flag was raised over in Shiraz became an inviolable sanctuary in the uprising of Qavam and the Qashqa'is.⁹⁸ But now that even the tribalist in the Congo has taken heed of the nationalization of oil, of the Suez Canal, and of the sugar companies in Cuba and has learned to recognize the foreigner in whatever garb and not to be such a hospitable guide, the Westerner has changed his skin. He has assumed a new expression so as not to be recognized. If, back in the early days of the Westerner's arrival in the East and Asia, he was the master or sahib and his wife, the memsahib, today he is advisor and consultant; he is attached to UNESCO. Although he has come on the same old mission or a similar one, he has donned a more acceptable garb; no longer does he put on the colonial pith helmet, and he keeps up appearances. But we Easterners and Asians have yet to catch on to the fact that the Western man has understood how, in the latter half of the twentieth century, one no longer can roll back the calendar two hundred years.

Apart from these masters, the imperialistic Westerner occasionally has brought a Gauguin in his caravan, or a Joseph Conrad,

a Gerard de Nerval, a Pierre Loti, or more recently an Andre' Gide or an Albert Camus, each of whom grew enamored of some part of the beauty and freshness of the East and thereby shook to their foundations the West's criteria for judgment in life, art, or politics. Gauguin distilled the essence of light and color on his canvases and in bringing them to Europe gave such a shake to the dark and murky painting of the Flemish school that the mannerisms of Picasso and Dali are already dated. In 1934, Gide exposed the corruption of the ivory and gold companies of the Congo to the world with his *Travels in the Congo*. Andre' Malraux brought word of civilizations in Southeast Asia (Khmer) predating by far the four columns of the Roman Forum or the Acropolis of Athens. Others, in seeking out other ways of life in the East, Asia, and South America, came upon worlds of which Europe, the West, had heard nothing, enclosed within its walls. Jazz, which is another story, is the black African who is roaring under the skies of New York, that same African who once was brought as a slave to serve the newly arisen aristocracy of America and the nascent Western companies in New Jersey or Mississippi by planting cotton and who now shakes Carnegie Hall with his trumpet and drum.⁹⁹ In no time he will make his way into the Gothic churches that prior to World War II admitted none but Bach and Mendelssohn.

Although in launching its career of imperialism, the West, like a leech, only drank the blood of the East (ivory, oil, silk, spices, and other material goods), it gradually perceived that the East also has abundant spiritual goods, what universities and laboratories run on. Their anthropology, mythology, dialectology, and a thousand other "ologies" were founded on material gathered from this side of the world. And now, studying the spiritual goods of the East, of Asia, Africa, and South America, is becoming the intellectual occupation of the Westerner. In sculpture, he retreats to the primitivism of Africa, in music, to its jazz, in literature, to the *Upanishads*, Tagore, Taoism, and Zen Buddhism. Who then is a Thomas Mann, a Herman Hesse? What else is existentialism saying? To build Japanese gardens, set Indian cuisine on the table, and drink tea Chinese--style are the skills of every half-fledged Western youth.

This retreat of the Westerner into Eastern and African aesthetic values in art, literature, life, and morals (which from one standpoint exemplifies the Westerner's estrangement from his own milieu, his own arts and manners, or at least his weariness of them,

and from another standpoint exemplifies the globalization of art, literature, and culture) is gradually encroaching on the political realm as well. The West has reached the stage of turning to Eastern politics. The flight from mechanosis demands it; fear of nuclear war commands it.

Yet we occidentotics leave our own music unexplored, calling it pointless twanging and blathering about symphonies and rhapsodies. We remain altogether ignorant of Iranian painting - representational¹⁰⁰ and miniature painting - but, in imitation of the biennial exhibitions, we regard even fauvism and cubism as dated. We have forsaken Iranian architecture with its symmetries, its ponds and fountains, its gardens, its cellars, its enclosed pools, its guest rooms with their stained-glass windows, its sash windows and lattice windows. We have closed the *zurkhana* and forgotten polo.¹⁰¹ We go with four wrestlers to the Olympics, whose centerpiece is the marathon, itself an allusion to the defeat of that rascal in ancient times, of whom it is unclear why he led an army from this side of the world to that.*

Why shouldn't the nations of the East wake up to see what treasures they hold? Why, just because the machine is Western and we are compelled to adopt it, should we assume all the rest of the West's standards for life, letters, and art? Why must the logo for UNESCO take the form of the Ionian columns of the Acropolis and not, for instance, the form of the winged bull of Assyria or the columns of the Karnak temple or the Abu Simbel temple in Egypt? Why ought not the Eastern nations put forward their own customs at international gatherings-such as their own sports (dance, archery, yogic exercises) at the Olympics?

Another of the problems of Western societies is that, besides making submissive and tractable people, as machine tenders, they are making a new kind of people one might call "prefabricated heroes," like prefabricated houses. One sees this in the lavish lives

*Marathon was originally the name of a village in Greece; it was in that locality that the Greeks defeated the Persians in 490 B.C. The first person to carry word of that victory from that village to Athens was recognized as a hero. It was to commemorate him and that event that the marathon was made one of the main events of the Olympics. Now who among us knows who Aryabarzan was and what a heroic defense, with what sacrifices, he made against Alexander and his soldiers at Tang-i Takab in Fars (or I don't know where else it could have been)?

of the film stars and in the lives of the astronauts, and this is logical enough: when you have homogenized all the people so that no one stands higher than anyone else, you have no choice but to break this uniform pattern of human mediocrity now and then with a prefabricated hero, to show that all is not hopeless. Accordingly, just as, for instance, Ford Motor Company places its annual order with a given American university for so many mechanical and electrical engineers with certain qualifications, a given film studio builds heroes according to plan.

There used to be a time when if a certain act of bravery (called by Plato one of the four virtues) sprang from a person, and not by prearrangement, that person became a hero, and the poets would sing his praises. But today a film studio calls upon a person to portray some historical or legendary act of bravery for some film and then spends fantastic sums to market these heroes for advertising, embroider their lives, their marriages, and divorces, the kidnappings of their children, their participation in the struggles of black and white, their dancing that night with that beauty queen, and so forth. Beginning a year or two before the film appears, the newspapers, radio, and television report this and the news reaches the ears of the media in Tehran, Singapore, and Khartoum. Then it comes time to reap the harvest: the film hits the screens in fifteen world capitals with the participation of leading society figures in a single gala opening night. As a result, another hero has been added to the ranks of the heroes of the silver screen. That is, another historical or legendary hero has been bled dry of any dignity or credibility.

Another example of this new way to fabricate heroes is the astronauts, whom just yesterday even their wives did not take seriously, if they were married to begin with, but who are today's superstars. Meanwhile the scientists who design the rockets and who discover new fuels for space travel pass their lives in complete anonymity, in both Russia and America, because their work and even their very existence are military secrets. But who rides the rockets is no secret. Rather, it is a means of gulling the populace. It is a single crevice in this featureless plain of mediocrity that is the lot of the broad masses - to spark a hope in their hearts: "Yes, you too can be an astronaut." And all the photos, all the verbiage, the postage stamps, the messages - the fawning! All this is to overlook that the astronaut is just a man like any other, perhaps a little

braver or a little luckier, since we know nothing of those who died in space-after all, it's a military secret! But in his episode of space travel, he has become a thing or object like a laboratory rabbit. This is what it means to be diminished in humanity! The gentlemen themselves do not conceal the fact that such-and-such a brave astronaut "is prepared to sacrifice his life for the sake of humanity." And I say, "For the sake of technological progress." After all, there was a time when Abraham took his son to sacrifice to truth, but today a man is sacrificed to technology and the machine. And with all the fanfare both sides generate for these astronauts, you see many in every village from Siberia to Alaska signing up for the chance to make this sacrifice. Is this not itself a kind of flight from the mediocrity that the machine has decreed? This is the latest encroachment of the machine on the human domain!

At first, the space rockets were satirized in the East. We read that Jesus was detained at the fourth heaven because of a needle, but now the rockets traverse the seven heavens, and that sort of thing.¹⁰² Such satire sought to hide the fact that these heavens were no longer the home of the angels but had been profaned: man by serving the machine would rise even beyond the heavens. But it was forgotten that, in this celestial voyage, dog and monkey had the honor of precedence over this diminished humanity. In the industrialized nations, the topic of the day is no longer that the machine demands submissive and tractable people to certain specifications. It is that, at the price of such human sacrifices, the machine is fabricating a new kind of man, on the level of draft animals in obedience, that is, stripped of all humanity. Between the lines of a news item that a lady astronaut has married a youthful fellow astronaut, and later that the lady is pregnant, and then that the astronaut couple are proud parents, I read of humanity itself made sport of. Pragmatism and scientism have advanced to a degree that two human beings are subjected to harsh experiments like so many mice, then breed, and then give birth. All this in order to prove that a human being can live and reproduce beyond the atmosphere! And then what? This is the question!

These are the problems of the advanced societies. But we - who haven't the machine, who are not an advanced society, who need not face these consequences, who are not compelled to make submissive, tractable, homogeneous people, who have no need for pre

fabricated heroes-make the same sort of heroes as we award prizes, elect representatives to the Majlis, elect some villager to recite poetry at a ceremony. Worst of all, we read on page one of any codified educational program about "cultivating the well-balanced individual" and such fatuities. Of course, it will be exclaimed that this is another symptom of occidentosis. But is it enough just to name the sore?

If one can maintain a role for our educational system, it is to disclose outstanding personalities who, in the midst of this social disorder (arising from the crisis of occidentosis), can lead this caravan somewhere. The aim of our educational system, such as it is, must not and cannot be to conventionalize, to uniformize, to homogenize people so they will all put up with the existing situation and come to terms with it. Especially for us, who live in this age of transformation and crisis and are undergoing this period of social transition, it is only with the help of self-sacrificing, self-surpassing, and principled people (who in the usage of pop psychology are termed antisocial, rigid, and unbalanced) that the weight of this transformation and crisis may be borne and that the social disorder described in this work may be remedied.

There was a time in our country (during the Safavid, Qajar, or earlier periods) when education was reserved for the aristocracy and aimed only at producing leaders.* Education was tailored to the needs of the leadership apparatus; it was not public, but available to a limited number. The leadership of our country, contrary to the demands of the age, still is at the disposal of a limited number of feudal families, aristocrats, people pliant to the court, and the two hundred families.¹⁰³ Although this leadership is an appendage of the great political and economic powers from abroad, educational opportunities have been greatly extended, producing bumper crops of graduates who are, however, cut out only to sit behind desks. They thus constitute a flood of candidates for the leadership. In such a situation, whatever other characteristics our educational system is likely to have, whatever its virtues and defects, it adds daily to the army of malcontents who have studied to become administrators and managers but who have failed to do so because they have no connections with the political and financial

*See *Hadaf-i Farhang-i Iran*.

powers, do not belong to the two hundred families, and are not among the great holders of movable wealth.

The ranks are growing by the day of those educated in the schools, the universities, and Europe. The means to create a broadened intellectual environment are expanding while the leadership apparatus of the country is becoming daily more restricted, more closed and monopolized, and SAVAK's screening is becoming more severe. Look at the contradiction! Ours is the age of the intensification of social disparities; under such conditions, to cultivate the balanced, tractable person and to put the brakes on the impetuous and refractory human forces constitute the most dangerous step one can take, leading to the strangulation of society. This is the step education is taking, with the assistance of SAVAK and the army, with today's Army of Knowledge and tomorrow's Army of Public Health.

Education and national policy in this period should help define these disparities and contradictions - disparities among levels of attainment, among classes, among modes of thought - so that one might at least know what problems confront us. As the problems are clarified, the solutions will be found. The role of education is to help break down every wall that has grown up around the center of command and leadership in this country and blocked access to it, made it a monopoly. I speak of a democratization of the nation leadership, that is, of removing it from the monopolistic grasp of this or that person or family. One may be no more explicit than this. The task of education is to tear down every wall raised in the path of progress and development. It is to aid those sides of the subjective, objective, and human equations that lie in the future - not the sides that are in decline and are out of place in our age. Our educational system and our politics must use the young, ardent, rousing energies as a crowbar to uproot all the outmoded institutions. They must use them as materials to construct a new world.

In this age of transformation, we need people of character, expert, ardent, principled people - not occidentotic people, not people who are sacks full of human knowledge, jacks-of-all-trades and masters of none, or who are merely decent, good natured, pliant, and earnest, or adaptable and placid, or meek and angelic. It is such people who have written our history up to now, and we've had enough.

The West has been fortunate that by the time its encyclopedists finished their work, it no longer needed polymaths, Aristotles, and ambulatory sacks of human knowledge. At that point, division of labor and specialists appeared. But the specialties the Westerner cultivates have no accompanying character. And we must start at just that point, that is, where we can cultivate specialists with character. Is our system capable of educating such people? And if not, why not? Where is it defective? That point must be sought out and removed.

Thus if in the West, through the inexorable logic of technology (and of capitalism), that is, as a consequence of mechanosis, specialization has replaced character, we, through the inexorable logic of occidentosis, have replaced both specialization and character with a facade of indifference: we cultivate the occidentotic. Our schools, our universities, our whole educational system, whether by design or through the unfortunate logic of the age, raise such people and deliver them to the nation's leadership - occidentotics standing on thin air who disbelieve in any basis for belief. They have no party, share in no hopes for humanity, know no traditions or myths. They retreat into a certain kind of vulgar Epicureanism. They grow corrupted and stupified by corporeal pleasures. They fasten their eyes onto the lower members and onto superficialities. They care nothing for tomorrow, only for today. And all this is only reinforced by the radio, publications, textbooks, the closed laboratories, the occidentosis of the leadership, the twisted thinking of those returning from Europe, and the *Kalila va Dimna* fixation of the literary exhumers. And then our governments, which for all their power are unable even to put a pleasant face on the situation, keep unleashing new catastrophes in seeking to distract and narcotize the people. Whatever the nature of these catastrophes, they sort into three types of melancholia:

1. *The melancholia of grandiosity*. Every little man is led to see his own grandeur in those grandeurs that are (falsely) associated with him: in the grandeur of the nationalistic demonstrations, in exorbitant celebrations, in the arches of triumph aflutter with rugs, in the jewels of the National Bank, in the trappings on the horses, in the fine uniforms of their riders, in the army commanders' tassles, in the huge buildings, in the yet huger dams (much has been said

about the immense amounts of the nation's capital wasted in building them) and, in sum, whatever is an eyeful, an eyeful for the little man so he will suppose himself great.

2. *The melancholia of glorying in the nation's remote past.* Although this follows from the melancholia of grandiosity, it has more to do with the ear. You mostly *hear* this kind of melancholia manifested: asinine self-glorification, with plentiful references to Darius, Cyrus, and Rustam, the sort of thing that pours from every radio in the country and from there fills our publications. This melancholia serves to fill the ear. Have you seen how a tired young worker walks down a lonely lane on a dark night? He generally sings to himself because he is afraid to be alone. He fills his own ears with his voice and thus dispels his fear. The radio fulfills the very same function. You hear it on everywhere, just to make some noise, to fill the ear.

3. *The melancholia of constant pursuit.* You create a new imaginary enemy for the hapless people every day; you stuff the radio and publications with news of him to frighten the people and reduce them ever more to a state of anxious brooding. You make them feel thankful for what they have. This constant pursuit takes numerous forms. One day a Tudeh party network is exposed; the next day a war on opium is launched, then a war on heroin; then the Bahrayn situation flares up, or the dispute with Iraq over the Shatt al-'Arab,* then a kidnapping, then the dread of SAVAK they sow in the people's hearts.

*What is tragicomic is that when, with the aid of the scholars of the College of Letters, we began applying our ancient name "Arvandrud" instead of the Arabic "Dijla" to the Tigris River in our radio and publications and disputed with Nasser his attempt to rename the "Persian Gulf" the "Arabic Gulf," for two full months the Iraqis turned back every oil tanker trying to reach Abadan by the Shatt al-'Arab, and so the Abadan refinery was closed for those two months, in 1340/1961.

11

The Hour Draws Nigh

It is time for me to put away my pen. So let me conclude with a brief account of some great men and with a seeming prediction that is not a prediction but is the inevitable end point of the road on which we and humanity are being taken.

Albert Camus, the late French writer, has a book titled *The Plague*. It is perhaps his masterwork. It is the story of a city in North Africa that the plague has reached by unknown means. It seems to have been something like fate. Perhaps it descended from heaven. First the mice, sick and terrified, pour out of their holes and surface in the streets, lanes, and corridors. Finally one day every garbage bin is filled with their little corpses, each with a red spot beside its mouth. Then more and more people catch the disease and die, until the sirens on the hearses never cease blaring and the corpses must be taken from the survivors at the point of bayonets to be limed and buried. They have no choice but to seal off the city. Within those plague-ridden confines, each inhabitant is engaged in a search. One searches for a cure for the plague. Another searches for an escape route. A third searches for opiates. Yet another wanders mad through the bazaar. Apart from the triumph of death and the doomed human struggle to flee it and to flee the pain hanging in the air like dust, what is most striking in such a city is that the presence of the plague-this demon of death-has only hastened the footsteps of each on the road he previously trod, whether ethical or unethical, righteous or otherwise. Not only has the plague not turned anyone back from the road he walked before, it has set him running on it. It is just like us who are faced with the plague of occidentosis, which has only hastened our steps into corruption.

When *The Plague* came out, some critics (the rightists) said that Camus intended the plague-stricken city to symbolize Soviet society. Others (the leftists) said that he had sowed the seeds of the Algerian movement. Others said all manner of things that this would not be the place to recount even if I remembered them. But I myself set out to translate this work to discover the author's essential message. When the translation was one-third finished, I understood the author's message. When the message grew clear, I dropped the translation. I saw that to Albert Camus, "the plague" is mechanism, this murderer of beauty and poetry, spirit and humanity.

So the matter stood until a play by Eugene Ionesco titled *Rhinoceros* came out. Again there is a city, and its people lead their normal lives without a care. Then suddenly a disease strikes the city. Note this recurrent idea of a contagious disease, like the plague, like cholera, like occidentosis. This disease is to become a rhinoceros. First one develops a fever. Then one's voice changes, becomes thick and coarse. Then a horn appears on one's forehead. Then the faculty of speech reverts into a faculty for producing animal cries. Then the skin thickens, and so forth. Everyone catches it, the housewife, the corner grocer, the bank manager, someone's sweetheart, and all take to the streets and trample city, civilization, and beauty. Of course I need not translate the work to convey what the author is saying. But I have been thinking about translating this play into Persian since I first read it, indicating in the margins how our fellow urbanites are headed further toward becoming rhinoceroses by the day. This is the ultimate solution to the problem of how to resist the machine.

In 1961, I saw Ingmar Bergman's film, *The Seventh Seal*, in Tehran. Here is a filmmaker from Sweden, the extreme north of the Western world, a man straight from the Arctic nights. The film is set in the Middle Ages, again in a plague-stricken land. A tired, defeated, and dispirited knight has returned home from the Crusades, where he has sought the truth and found nothing because he saw the same things in the Holy Lands that today the European holdovers see in the lands of the East and Africa plagued by imperialism. This knight has not journeyed to the East in search of oil, spices, or silk; he has gone in search of truth, absolute truth. That is, he has gone to see and touch God in the Holy Land of Palestine. He is just like Jesus' disciples; because they imagined they were

seeing God, they trumpeted the Christian message to the four corners of the world. This Swedish knight, who has come from the long Arctic nights to the heart of the blinding Eastern sun, seeks God. But instead, he finds the devil before him at every step: sometimes in the guise of his opponent at chess, sometimes in the guise of a monk, but always in the form of Azrael, who has scattered the seeds of plague in this land and is reaping the harvest of souls. And in such an age, when our knight is returning exhausted from seeking the truth, the church is sounding threats of final judgment and eternal torment; it announces that the hour is nigh. Bergman suggests that the age of faith has passed and now is the age of torment, that the age of belief is over and now is the age of trial. And the trial leads to the atom bomb.

And now I, not as an Easterner, but as one like the first Muslims, who expected to see the Resurrection on the Plain of Judgment in their lifetimes, see that Albert Camus, Eugene Ionesco, Ingmar Bergman, and many other artists, all of them from the West, are proclaiming this same resurrection. All regard the end of human affairs with despair. Sartre's Erostratus fires a revolver at the people in the street blindfolded; Nabokov's protagonist drives his car into the crowd; and the stranger, Meursault, kills someone in reaction to a bad case of sunburn. These fictional endings all represent where humanity is ending up in reality, a humanity that, if it does not care to be crushed under the machine, must go about in a rhinoceros's skin. And I see that all these fictional endings raise the threat of the final hour, when the machine demon (if we don't rein it in or put its spirit in the bottle) will set the hydrogen bomb at the end of the road for humanity. On that note, I will rest my pen at the Qur'anic verse: "The hour draws nigh and the moon is split in two."*104

*Qur'an, 54:1.

Notes

1. The expression "the late author" has led to speculation that the preface-or at least part of it - was not written by Jalal Al-i Ahmad, but penned posthumously and anonymously on his behalf, possibly by his brother, Shams Al-i Ahmad. This conclusion is by no means inescapable because Jalal Al-i Ahmad may have been sardonically alluding either to a state of exhaustion after decades of literary and intellectual exertion or to the fact that he had so far evolved since the first draft of *Gharbzadagi* as to become a new man. It remains, however, true that no obvious date can be assigned to the preface, although parts of it were included in the edition of Mihr 1341/September-October 1962. The version of the preface that appears here must have been written some time after 1964, presumably in conjunction with another attempt to publish the work. In any event, the complete and uncensored text of *Gharbzadagi* did not appear until the lifting of censorship in the course of the Islamic Revolution.

2. I offer "occidentosis" as a translation for the problematic term *gharbzadagi*, the original title of the work. As the author makes clear here, the force of the metaphor is clinical and focuses on the coercive and invasive qualities of Western influence. (Tr.)

3. Westerners imported anthropology from Oceania and sociology from Africa in the sense that the empirical data on which they founded their theories were gathered in those continents. See also p.127.

4. When the book was written, the *tuman* was worth approximately twenty cents.

5. On 6 Bahman 1342/26 January 1963, the Shah organized a fraudulent referendum to obtain the appearance of popular consent to the six points of the so-called White Revolution.

6. ECAFE: the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, now known as the United Nations' Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). (Tr.)

7. 'Ad and Thamud: two peoples mentioned in the ur'an who rejected divine guidance and were destroyed in consequence.

8. In his footnote to this sentence, the author has confused 'Abd ar-Rahman, b. 'Abdillah al-Ghafiqi, commander of the Muslim forces at Poitiers, with 'Abd ar-Rahman "ad-Dakhil," founder of the Umayyad

caliphate in Spain. The latter did not arrive in the Iberian Peninsula until 756, twenty-four years after the Battle of Poitiers.

9. Ibn Battuta (d. 1377), the celebrated traveler and geographer, was born in Tangiers and died in Marrakesh. Hence it is natural that he should be designated Maghribi ("Moroccan"); this hardly seems a case of proto-occidentosis.

10. *Kursi*: a low table under which a charcoal-filled brazier is placed and over which a blanket is laid. Putting their legs beneath the blanket, the members of a household are able to keep economically warm. The device, as well as the word designating it, is said to be of Japanese origin and should not be confused with Arabic *kursi*, meaning "chair."

11. *Samanu* is a kind of sweet made out of flour and wheat. It is generally included in the seven items beginning with the letter *sin* that are festively arrayed on a tablecloth on the occasion of the Iranian New Year.

12. Lydia cannot be equated with Central Anatolia. It is the classical name for an area in Western Anatolia that included the Greek coastal settlements and was centered on the town of Sardis.

13. The Safavids were "pseudo-Sufis" in the sense that they retained the trappings and titles of a Sufi order long after their transformation into a royal dynasty.

14. Buzurgmihr: minister to a number of Sasanian monarchs, especially Anushirvan, known as the Just. He patronized a number of translations from Sanskrit to Pahlavi, and it was also under his auspices that chess was introduced to Iran from India, thence to be disseminated farther to the west. He died in either 580 or 590.

15. Sarandib: the Persian for Ceylon or Sri Lanka, particularly evocative of the legendary associations of that island.

16. An allusion to Mahmud Ghaznavi's raids into India, particularly his sacking of the temple at Somnath in the Kathiawar Peninsula in 1026.

17. An allusion to Nadir Shah's sacking of Delhi in 1739.

18. Afrasiyab and Siyavush: two antagonistic heroes in the Iranian national epic, the *Shahnama*, representing the opposing realms of Turan and Iran, the nomadic and the settled.

19. The sealing of Iran's northeastern frontiers and the consequent cessation of nomadic incursions into the settled lands of Iran in fact antedate the October Revolution. The Russo-Iranian Treaty of 1881 provided for Russian rule of all the Turkoman-inhabited areas from which

raids on Iran had been launched; by the end of the decade, the Turkomans had been robbed of all military capacity.

20. Sultaniya: once capital of the Mongol rulers of Iran, it is now only a village, dominated by the imposing ruin of the funerary dome constructed by Uljaytu, one of their number.

21. Part of the caliphal city of Baghdad was indeed built with bricks from the ruins of the nearby Sasanian capital at Ctesiphon, an indication of the substantial continuities between the two cities and the courts they enshrined.

22. The word *takya* in this context indicates a structure for the performance of *ta'ziya*, the "passion play" of Shi'i Islam performed in the month of Muharram to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Husayn. The state *Takya* (*Takya-yi daulat*) was built in 1886, in rough imitation of the Royal Albert Hall, which Nasir ad-Din Shah had seen and admired during a visit to England in 1873. It fell into disuse in the 1920s and was destroyed in the 1950s on the pretext of being unsafe. See Samuel R. Peterson, "The Ta'ziyeh and Related Arts," in *Ta'ziyeh: Ritual and Drama in Iran*, ed. Peter S. Chelkowski, New York, 1979, pp.69-71.

23. This is not true in a literal sense. Karim Khan Zand was buried in a garden adjacent to his palace in Shiraz (see John R. Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, Chicago, 1979, pp. 199-200), and the Finance Ministry was, of course, built in Tehran.

24. Shush, Hegmatana, Ctesiphon, and Firuzabad all served as capital cities in pre-Islamic Iran; they thus illustrate the author's theme of the lack of rooted urban tradition.

25. *Jahiliyya*: the period of ignorance of divine guidance in which the Arabs were mired before the coming of Islam. In the statement that "Islam became Islam when it reached the settled lands between the Tigris and the Euphrates," there is an unmistakably nationalist distortion both of history and of the nature of Islam.

26. The French can hardly be blamed for the destruction of Khmer civilization, because its life was effectively ended by the Vietnamese in vasion of Cambodia in 1471.

27. Rustam Farrukhzad: son of a claimant to the Sasanian throne, he was the virtual ruler of Iran under Yazdigird III. He died in battle against the Muslims at the Battle of Qadisiya in 632.

28. Baharistan carpet: a vast carpet depicting a garden in spring that covered the floor of the Sasanian palace in Ctesiphon.

29. It is interesting to see the author again evincing his nationalism by assigning to Salman, the Iranian companion of the Prophet (upon whom be peace), a role in "the creation of Islam." Many people have sought to foist many things on Salman; for a concise account of his involuntary posthumous career, see Louis Massignon, "Salman Pak et les premices spirituelles de l'Islam iranien," in *Parole Donnee*, ed. V. Monteil, Paris, 1962, pp. 91-128.

30. The Shu'ubiya was a cultural and literary movement that exalted the historical legacy of the peoples converted to Islam-especially the Iranians-at the expense of the Arabs, whose pre-Islamic past was denounced as pure barbarism. By the latter-day Shu'ubiya, the author presumably means contemporary Iranian historians and scholars of facilely nationalist bent who continue to lament the Islamic conquest of Iran.

31. It is remarkable to see the author repeating here a medieval European calumny against the Caliph 'Umar; in this instance, he is conducting himself occidentotically. The great Ptolemaic Library of Alexandria was burnt in 48 B.C. by Julius Caesar, and its replacement, known as the Daughter Library, was destroyed in about 389 on the orders of the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius. At the time of the Islamic conquest in 646, no library of importance existed in Alexandria, and the attribution to the Caliph 'Umar of a literary *auto da fe* in the city was the work of Christian polemicists. There is likewise no historical basis for the claim that a library was destroyed in Ray by the Muslim army that freed the city from Sasanian rule.

32. The notion that Islam was "an answer to the call of Mani and Mazdak," two religious sectarians of pre-Islamic Iran, or "a new call based on the needs of the urban populations of the Euphrates region and Syria" is dubious at best. But plainly erroneous is the author's implication that the rise of Islam was in some way connected to the Prophet's meeting with a Syrian monk. Here, too, he is repeating one of the stock themes of medieval ecclesiastical fantasy, although with apparently positive intention. The Prophet (upon whom be peace) accompanied his uncle, Abu Talib, on a trading expedition to Syria when he was nine years old and encountered an anchorite called Buhayra near the city of Busra. Buhayra recognized the signs of prophethood in the young Muhammad and said that Christian tradition foretold his coming (see 'Ali b. Burhan ad-Din al-Halabi, *as-Sirat al-Halabiya*, Beirut, n.d., I, 118). Such a brief encounter, at so early an age, could hardly have involved any transmission of influence in the various senses intended by the medieval church and Al-i Ahmad.

33. Var-e Jamkard: a structure the precise nature of which is not known. The legendary Iranian king, Jamshid, in anticipation of the Great

Flood, built an underground enclosure where he preserved the seed of every living being. Arya Vaejah: the "expanse of the Aryans," the legendary ancestral home of the Aryans. (Tr.)

34. Legend has it that Alexander and Khidr, the patron saint of the Sufis, went in search of this pool of the water of life. Khidr was said to have found it, Alexander contrariwise. (Tr.)

35. Nizami of Ganja (d. 1209), possibly the greatest of all Persian poets, described the mystical journeying of Alexander the Great in his *Iskandarnama*. Nizami was by no means alone in identifying Alexander with Dhu 'l-Qarnayn, nor is it certain that he was the first to do so; numerous Qur'anic scholars, commenting on 18:83, make the identification. (See Ismail Haqqi Burusawi, *Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan*, Istanbul, 1389/1970, V, 290, for a summary of received ideas on the subject, as well as the author's own dissenting opinion.) The identification was plausible in that the name Dhu 'l-Qarnayn (The possessor of the two horns) was thought to refer either to the two horns seen on Alexander's head in some depictions or the western and the eastern extremities of his realm.

36. Zangi is a term applied strictly to an inhabitant of the East African coast but often used more loosely to designate any African.

37. An allegory contained in *Mantiq at-Tayr*, the masterpiece of the celebrated Sufi poet 'Attar (d. 1220) (see pp. 77-91 of the edition published by Mashkur in Tehran in 1968).

Zunnar: The distinctive belt that non-Muslim minorities were occasionally required to wear.

38. The poet Sa'adi relates, in his celebrated *Gulistan*, that he was captured by the Crusaders while on his way to Jerusalem-not Mecca, as Al-i Ahmad would have it-and put to work digging a ditch in Tripoli (see p.74 of Furughi's edition, published in Tehran in 1316/1937). See also note 46.

39. Karbala and Najaf are, of course, the sites of burial of third and first Imams, respectively, and are therefore goals of pilgrimage for Shi'i Muslims.

40. *Farr*: an aura of kingship that was said to descend on the head of the divinely anointed shah in the form of a falcon. (Tr.)

41. The author may refer to the growing practice in Iran of reckoning the day as beginning at midnight, as in the contemporary West, rather than at sunset, as formerly in Europe and latterly in the Islamic world. (Tr.)

42. Of the four groups mentioned here, two - the Batinis and Hurufis - no longer existed in Iran when the Safavid state was founded. The Batinis (that is, Isma'ilis) had been effectively crushed by the Mongols in the thirteenth century, and although scattered Isma'ili communities persisted in various parts of Iran, the Isma'ili movement was never resuscitated in its previous form. As for the Hurufis, a sect founded by Fazlullah Astarabadi (d. 1394), they barely outlived their master; the sole perpetuation of their teachings took place in Anatolia and the Balkans, not Iran, under the auspices of the Bektashi order of dervishes. The author's reference to Batinis and Hurufis in the context of Safavid and post-Safavid Iran is therefore anachronistic.

The Nuqtavis were a group owing allegiance to a certain Mahmud Pasikhani (d. 1428), who claimed to be both the Mahdi and the bringer of a new revelation. They retained a foothold in central Iran until the early seventeenth century.

The Baha'is are well known. The author implicitly dissents from the common Iranian view of Baha'ism as a creation of Western imperialism and suggests rather that it is the last surfacing of a perennial Iranian tendency to engender esoteric sects.

43. Mir Damad (d. 1631) was one of the foremost scholars of Safavid Iran, a figure of monumental erudition who nonetheless frequented the royal court. Of Mulla Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (d. 1699), it would be truer to say that he dominated than that he "served the Safavid court"; his influence was in large part responsible for the disastrous policies that led to the Afghan invasion and the demise of the Safavid state.

44. Concerning *Nun va'l-Qalam*, see p.22.

45. Contrary to the author's statement, the 'Abbasid Caliphs never granted the Mongols transit, pasture, or settlement rights in the eastern Islamic world.

46. Sa'di did not claim this for himself. See note 38.

47. Unfortunately for the author's argument, the Arabic word *Qustantiniya*, which may mean either Constantinople (Istanbul) or Constantine in Algeria, refers on this occasion to the latter. Al-i Ahmad refers in his footnote on p. 67 of the Persian text of *Gharbzadagi* not to the English original of Fischel's work, which is cited at the foot of p. 51 of this translation, but to a Persian version of it prepared by Sa'id Nafisi and Nushindukht Nafisi. However, he overlooked the fact that, on p. 56, the translators conscientiously gave the name "Constantine" in Latin characters after the word *Qustantiniya* precisely in order to warn against the error into which Al-i Ahmad has fallen.

Even if the city in question were Constantinople, it had not been "freshly conquered by the Ottomans" at the time of Ibn Khaldun's meeting in Fez with Abu 'Ali b. Badis, which took place in 761/1360. Indeed, when Ibn Khaldun died in 1406, almost five decades were still to elapse before the conquest.

48. If by the establishment of the Safavid state the author means the coronation of Shah Isma'il (as seems to be implied by his footnote on p. 52), he is wrong in locating that event in Ardabil. It took place in Tabriz.

49. In the Persian text (p. 70), Al-i Ahmad has translated Rene Grousset's "les Grands Moghols" (*La Face de l'Asie*, Paris, 1955, p. 117) as "*Khankhanan-i Mughul*," which we have rendered in turn as "the Mongol Great Khans." It seems that Al-i Ahmad did not realize that Grousset was referring to the Mughal Emperors of India, not to the Mongol Great Khans who gradually transformed themselves into the Yuan dynasty of China and had vanished from the scene long before the rise of the Safavids.

50. Yildirim Beyazid, who ruled from 1389 to 1402, was not "the last Seljuq ruler of Turkey," but the fourth Ottoman Sultan. He was captured at the Battle of Ankara by Timur in 1402 and placed in a cage, not "for the amusement of Christian onlookers," but to discourage attempts to free him. Al-i Ahmad's evocation of the event is, however, marginally correct in that the Timurid invasion of Anatolia was cautiously greeted by the Byzantines because it diminished Ottoman pressure upon them and delayed the conquest of Istanbul.

51. Concerning Fardid, see p.25.

52. Khusrau Anushirvan (ruled 531-579): the most celebrated of all the pre-Islamic rulers of Iran and the one in whose time court protocol appears to have been codified in its full complexity.

53. The Treaty of Turkomanachay ended the Second Perso-Russian War of 1826 to 1828. Its main stipulations were for Russian annexation of Erivan and Nakhchivan and the granting of capitulatory rights to Russian subjects residing in Iran.

54. "Rule in accordance with Islamic law": that is, *mashru'a*, a slogan devised to serve as the counterpart of *mashruta*, constitutional rule, after it had become apparent that numerous proponents of constitutionalism were opposed to the implementation of Islamic law.

55. Malkum Khan (d. 1908) was a Perso-Armenian concession mongerer, Freemason, diplomat, and pamphleteer who advocated the thoroughgoing westernization of Iran.

'Abd ar-Rahim Talibov (d. 1911) was a Tabrizi merchant who spent most of his life in Baku and preached European-style enlightenment in a number of Persian writings.

56. Here Jalal Al-i Ahmad has fallen into the common error of ascribing to Aqa Khan Kirmani (d. 1896)-a freethinker and agitator of checkered career-a work entitled *Seh Maktub* (Three letters). What is often known by this title is in fact a single letter (see Firidun Adamiyat, *Andishaha-yi Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani*, Tehran, 1346 Sh./1967, p. 43). The author has compounded this error by calling the work "*Three Letters to Jalal ad-Daula*," a book written not by Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani but by Mirza Fath'ali Akhundzada (d. 1878), the celebrated Azarbayjani playwright, in exposition of his atheism (see Mirza Fatali Akhundov, *Eserleri*, Baku, 1961, 11, pp.9-132).

As for the works listed in the footnote on p. 58, I have been unable to identify *Islam, Akhund, va Hatif al-Ghayb. Haftad o Do Millat* is another work by Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani (see Adamiyat, *Andishaha*, pp. 49-50). *Risala-yi Yek Kalima* is a treatise by Mirza Yusuf Khan Mustashar ad-Daula (d. 1895), an Iranian diplomat who believed European codes of law to be essentially compatible with the Islamic *shari'a* and therefore prescribed "law" as the sufficient cure for all troubles of Iran (hence the title of his treatise). The work *Siyasat-i Talibi* mentioned by Al-i Ahmad seems to be an error for *Safina-yi Talibi* (The ship of Talib), a book on political reform by Talibov. Finally, *Siyahatnama-yi Ibrahim Beg* is a comprehensive critique of Iranian ills, in the form of a fictitious travelogue, written by Zayn al-'Abidin Maragha'i (d. 1910), an Azarbayjani merchant who spent most of his adult life in the Caucasus, the Crimea, and Istanbul.

57. Al-i Ahmad's casual reference to "the slaughter of the Armenians and Kurds" again betrays his ignorance of Ottoman history. The history of the Armenian question is too complex to encapsulate in the slogan of "the slaughter of Armenians," and certainly the Kurds were immune from slaughter until the period of the Turkish Republic.

58. After the production and marketing of tobacco in Iran had been made the monopoly of a British company (known in Iran as the Regie), Mirza Hasan Shirazi (d. 1894), the main religious authority of the time, declared that "the use of tobacco is tantamount to war against the Imam of the Age," thereby forcing the cancellation of the monopoly.

59. *Marja'iyyat va Ruhaniyat* - a work more carefully written and coherently argued than much of Al-i Ahmad's production, despite his accusation of bombast-has been summarized and discussed in English by A. K. S. Lambton in her article, "A Reconsideration of the Position of the Marja' al-Taqlid and the Religious Institution," *Studia Islamica*, XX (1964), pp. 115-135.

60. Shaykh Khaz'al was the virtually independent ruler of Khuzistan until his forceful removal by Reza Shah in November 1925.

61. Isma'il Aqa Simitqu (also known as Simko), chief of the Shakkak Kurds, attempted repeatedly to create an independent Kurdish principality in Western Azarbayjan until his final defeat in 1926.

62. Sayyid Hasan Taqizada was an anglophile politician who began his political career as a constitutionalist and ended it as an appendage of the Pahlavi state. Not coincidentally, he was also a firm advocate of westernization "down to the marrow of our bones."

63. Shahrivar B20/August 1941 was the month in which Reza Shah was removed from the throne and his son, Mohammad Reza, put in his place by the Allies.

64. Rashid 'Ali Gailani was the author of a short-lived coup d'etat in Iraq that sought to extirpate British influence by concluding a pact with Germany.

65. See note 10 above.

66. *Eshkane*: a dish prepared with oil, water, dried vegetables, onions, and eggs.

67. General Mode: the name of a clothing manufacturer.

68. Kulsum Nana: a legendary female repository of sound advice for women. Her sayings have been repeatedly lithographed in popular editions, particularly in the recension of Shaykh Jamal ad-Din Khwansari.

69. A blue bead is frequently attached to objects of value, particularly conveyances, both animal and mechanical, to protect them against the evil eye.

70. Qur'an, 4:34. The key word of the verse, *qawwamun*, which we have translated as "endowed with authority," is traditionally taken to imply both the responsibility of men for assuring the welfare of their wives and their right to obedience from them, within certain legally defined limits. Baydawi (d. 1282) says, for example, that the meaning of *qawwamun* is that "men have to women the relation of rulers (*wulat*) to subjects (*ra'iyya*)."

71. The expression "third and fourth classes" seems to mean the impoverished masses.

72. Imamzada Da'ud: a descendant of Imam Hasan, separated from him by twelve generations, whose shrine is situated in the hills of Shimiran.

73. 15 Sha'ban, the birthday of the Twelfth Imam, is a cause of

celebration for the oppressed because his return to manifestation is expected to result in the establishment of universal justice.

74. Mazliqanchay: the name of a small village in northern Iran, chosen for its representativeness, not for any distinguishing feature.

75. Concerning Khalil Maliki, see p. 11.

76. Concerning the Shu'ubiya, see note 30.

77. Bahrayn was claimed by Iran on the basis of intermittent suzerainty exercised in the past; the claim was officially abandoned in 1970. The distribution of the waters of the Hirmand - a river originating in the Hindu Kush that flows through southwest Afghanistan before crossing into the Iranian province of Sistan - was subject to dispute until settled by the Afghan-Iranian agreement of March 13, 1973. As for the Shatt al-'Arab, the disposition of conflicting Iranian and Iraqi claims was part of the Algiers Agreement of March 1975, an agreement repudiated by Iraq when it launched its aggression against Iran in September 1980.

78. *Ya Buduh*, the second of these invocations, translated by us as "O Powerful Spirit," is a talismanic word that gains its effectiveness from the numerical properties of the Arabic letters that compose it. It is variously said, however, to be the name of the planet Venus or of a jinn.

79. *Hurmat* (reverence), *ihiram* (respect), and *haram* (forbidden) are all derived from the Arabic triconsonantal root HRM.

80. Edward Granville Browne (d. 1926), who held the chair in Persian at Cambridge University from 1888 to 1926, took an interest in Iranian politics as well as Persian literature and fervently espoused the cause of the Constitutional Revolution of 1906-1909. The implication of the remark attributed to Peter Avery is that Browne's wealth permitted him to assume political stances that brought him into opposition to his own government, whereas Avery's circumstances forbade him such a luxury and compelled him to seek employment in business before coming to Cambridge.

81. Mirza 'Ali Asghar Amin as-Sultan, who held the title Atabak during the last part of his career, held different ministerial posts in Qajar Iran. He was assassinated while prime minister in 1907. Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Kabir was a prominent figure in the history of Iranian governmental reform. He was put to death in 1852 as a result of his rivals' intrigues.

82. Hajji Mirza Aqasi served as minister to Muhammad Shah from 1836 to 1848. He is generally remembered for his experiment in shoeing camels-by analogy with horses-and his project for manufacturing cannons, a project that literally backfired.

83. The meaning of the metaphor "asses in lions' skins" is apparent. The second part of the chapter heading, "lions on the flag," is an allusion simultaneously to the flag of prerevolutionary Iran, the middle band of which was emblazoned with a lion and sun, and to this line of the *Masnavi* of Jalal ad-Din Rumi: "We're lions all, but sewn to flags,/ A breath of wind drives our attack" (Book 1, line 603). The line appears in the story of the minister sent by a Jewish king to subvert the Christian belief of his subjects. This he does by propagating various conflicting doctrines. His disciples compare themselves to lions on flags in their supposed impotence and dependence on his guidance.

84. The original text has Mount Uhud, a mountain near Mecca, but the functional equivalent in English of this mountain when mentioned proverbially is the Rock of Gibraltar.

85. Sayyid Husayn Husayni Shams al-'Urafa (d. 1935) was a shaykh of the Ni'matullahi order of Sufis with a large following that congregated at his *khanaqah* in south Tehran. For the French original of the article to which Al-i Ahmad refers, see Jan Rypka, "Dans l'intimite d'un mystique iranien," *L'Ame de l'Iran*, eds. R. Grousset, H. Masse', L. Massignon, Paris, 1951, pp. 181-200.

86. Mulla Sadra (d. 1640) is generally accounted the major philosopher not only of Safavid Iran but of the entire Islamic world in the postmedieval period.

87. Shahrivar 1320/August 1941: the month of the Allied invasion of Iran and the replacement of Reza Shah with his son. 28 Murdad 1332/19 August 1953: the date of the American-royalist coup that overthrew the government of Dr. Musaddiq and restored the rule of the Shah.

88. "The siege of Herat" is presumably an allusion to prolonged but unsuccessful attempts by an Iranian army in 1836 to capture Herat.

89. The disturbances mentioned here are those that took place in March 1963 and served as a prelude to the great uprising of 15 Khurdad/S June.

90. See note 5 above.

91. Ja'far Pishavari was leader of the *Dimuqrat Firqasi*, a communist-dominated party that established an autonomous government in Azarbayjan enjoying Soviet support in December 1945. When that support was withdrawn a year later, the government collapsed and Pishavari fled back to the Soviet Union.

92. 'Abbas Iqbal was a literary scholar and historian of great erudition whose merits should not be obscured by Al-i Ahmad's justifiably critical remarks concerning him.

93. *Kalila va Dimna*: the Indian collection of animal fables by Bidpay, translated into Arabic from a Pahlavi version by Ibn al-Muqaffat (d. circa 759) and then several times into Persian, most notably by Abu'l Ma'ali Nasrullah (fl. circa 1150) and as the *Anvar-i Suhayli* by Husayn Va'iz Kashifi (d. 1505). (Tr.)

94. *Ilahi Nama*: the mystical epic by Farid ad-Din 'Attar (d. circa 1220); *Rish Nama*: the satirical work by 'Ubayd Zakani (d. 1371). These works are named only to typify the ostensible interests of orientalists. (Tr.)

95. The "decorative *beh*" is the *beh* sometimes found in early classical texts prefixed to verbs in the past tense without fulfilling any evident syntactic or semantic function.

96. It is difficult to analyze fully the cluster of mixed metaphors that Al-i Ahmad here presents to the reader. The general idea appears to be that the problems faced by graduates returning from Europe can be solved only by those who, like them, have been exposed to the antithetical social and intellectual climates of Europe and Iran.

97. Pigeons are housed in towers in many areas of rural Iran, where their droppings can be collected and used as fertilizer. (Tr.)

98. Ahmad Qavam, known as Qavam as-Saltana, made use of the Qashqa'i tribe in an anti-Soviet, anti-Tudeh party coup in 1946, a coup ultimately in the interest of the Shah. (Tr.)

99. The mention of New Jersey is not apposite here because it has never been a cotton-growing state.

100. The word we have translated here as "representational" is *shamayil*, which means, more narrowly, a pictorial depiction of scenes from the struggle and martyrdom of Imam Husayn at Karbala.

101. *Zurkhana*: the traditional Iranian gymnasium. (Tr.)

102. The traditional cosmology, firmly based on numerous Qur'anic verses, posits the existence of "seven heavens" or "seven spheres," which are not to be equated with the sensorily observable heavens. There is a certain association of seven prophets with the seven heavens, Jesus being associated with the fourth heaven. According to traditional notions, Jesus exercised the profession of tailor while on earth, so that the needle he neglected to discard before his ascension was a sign of lingering attachment to this world.

103. The two hundred families were reputed to run Iran before the Islamic Revolution. In Sasanian times, there were seven such families, but the number has been subject to inflation. (Tr.)

104. Al-i Ahmad's quotation of this verse (Qur'an, 54:1) clearly implies that nuclear devastation of the earth may be the means whereby the apocalypse predicted in Revelation shall occur. This view is unacceptable to the *'ulama* (see, for example, Muhammad Hamid al-Hamawi, *Rudud 'ala Abatil*, Hama, n.d., pp. 132-135), and its occurrence here is a further indication that Al-i Ahmad was not immune from the disease he describes.

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