

is also admired by Kalin for discrediting “subject-centered epistemologies,” that make meaning the property of the human mind. Conversely, for Mullā Ṣadrā, meaning is generated as a result of the disclosure of existence, and as such it is a mode of existence rather than being an abstraction made by the human mind (95–96). In this light, Mullā Ṣadrā presents a “radically different world picture and the place of the human states in it” (97).

Kalin makes a strong case for the success of Mullā Ṣadrā’s synthetic methodology in addressing some major conflicts and crises in the history of Islamic philosophy. He lays a solid foundation in the beginning of the book and his arguments build on each other one chapter after another to demonstrate Mullā Ṣadrā’s philosophical status as a methodologically conscious problem solver. Nevertheless, Kalin would be more faithful to Mullā Ṣadrā’s holistic approach had he also discussed in the philosopher’s works the place of Shī‘ī narratives in their own right, not just in his Shī‘atized Sufism. For example, Mullā Ṣadrā’s use of philosophical tools in his proofs of the imamate and his attempt to rationalize the epistemic authority of jurisprudence are examples that could have been discussed in this respect. The same is true about the influence of politics on Mullā Ṣadrā’s thought. This is not the best forum in which to evaluate Kalin’s view that Mullā Ṣadrā “protected himself from human frailties and moral failures around him” (52). Yet, I believe that even if we affirm this statement as true, one could still discuss the influence of politics on his works without compromising his moral integrity since different discourses may influence each other beyond the intentions of the author.

To summarize, Kalin has written a book which is essential for understanding Mullā Ṣadrā’s philosophical agenda and his endeavors to facilitate the path of philosophy in the Muslim world. I strongly recommend this book to any student and scholar of Islamic philosophy who may not yet be convinced of the importance of reading Mullā Ṣadrā. Last, but not least, Kalin’s precise and beautiful translations of Mullā Ṣadrā’s texts included in this book make great additions to Islamic philosophical literature in English. ✨

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HENRI LAUZIÈRE. *The Making of Salafism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016. viii + 317 pages, acknowledgements, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$55.00 ISBN 978-0-231-17550-0.

Contemporary academics struggle to arrive at a consensus of the terms they use. This complication is exacerbated by the work of sociocultural

anthropology which has taught us that many modern conventions are themselves social constructions, finding a place in our vocabulary only after the advent of Orientalist taxonomies. In his book *The Making of Salafism*, Henri Lauzière follows the use of the term ‘*Salafi*’ to reassess nineteenth and twentieth century Islamic historiography constructed by both Orientalists and Salafis. He guides us toward a different set of constellations by distilling modern Salafism into two types: modernist and purist. The book elaborates on the tension between modernists and purists, and how purists eventually win following political independence from colonialism.

Lauzière demonstrates that the growing confusion surrounding the term ‘Salafism’ (Arabic *salafiyya*) was due to historical negligence, over-reliance on secondary sources, and equivocating Salafism with modernism. Historical antagonists and opposing intellectual positions all maintained a false uniformity under the label ‘*Salafi*’. This problem remains with us today given that *salafiyya* continues to imply a range of incommensurable positions: progressive modernism, medieval Wahhabism, anthropomorphism, Athari doctrine, quasi legal Hanbalism, anti-Sufi, or simply those who adhere to the teachings of the prolific yet controversial thirteenth century jurist and theologian Ibn Taymiyyah.

Who is to blame for this debacle? According to Lauzière, the first culprits are continental Orientalists for dubiously constructing the term, beginning with Louis Massignon, and second, Salafis who read and came to believe the constructs imposed upon them by Orientalists—such as al-Fasi and Taqi al-Din al-Hilali in Morocco. Lauzière places his intervention in this ironic space between Orientalists and Salafis, arguing for a prescriptive “deconstruction” of historiography while simultaneously offering a “construction” to clarify our use of Salafism. The former shows how historical tools to understand Salafism are unreliable, constructing a mythical Islamic past. The later accepts Salafism as a modern construction that differed from its pre-twentieth century use. Prior to this period, Salafi was used to represent adherence to Hanbali theology. Thus, Salafism in its contemporary form cannot be used to study anything prior to this period. Secondly, Salafism had a political function for achieving independence for indigenous populations from colonial rulers. Reformers like Rashid Rida made alliances with the Saudi-Wahhabi state to unite their people against colonial rule, while also sympathizing for a return to a pure creed free from cultural accretions over time. Finally, after the 1970s, the purist Salafis dominated the landscape due to decolonial efforts leading to political independence.

The book consists of six informative and dense chapters, briefly summarized here. Chapter 1 expands on Louis Massignon’s error, the

ramifications of labeling this error on reformers like ‘Abduh and Afghani, and the dialectics of al-Hilali’s conversion to Salafism from Sufism. Chapter 2 turns to Rashid Rida and al-Hilali’s role in mediating their message of a progressive yet “balanced reform” to an uncompromising Saudi-Wahhabism. Chapter 3 outlines purist Salafism and its ascendance during the period of Islamic nationalism. Chapter 4 discusses modernity and the ironic inception of modernist Moroccan Salafism. The juxtaposition of these two chapters is intentional since purist and modernist Salafisms rose together in the 1920s. Chapter 5 offers a persuading account that political independence of Muslims from colonial rule bifurcated purist Salafis from their modern counterparts. Finally, chapter 6 explains how purist Salafism came to dominate the post 1970s global Salafi landscape.

Lauzière’s efforts are ultimately aimed at a critical reinterpretation of Islamic historiography. Concepts like Salafism were complex terms made simple by historians in order to “organize the messiness of history” (3). Such terms would later direct the way scholars would assess primary and secondary sources, distorting and complicating—often with irreconcilable outcomes—the term itself. Lauzière is most critical of three “coping mechanisms” used by Western scholars to make Salafism appear singular. First is the lack of attention to primary sources and how the original authors used *salafiyya* in distinct ways. Thus, different historical actors operating from distinct perspectives, working towards separate goals across space and time were all erroneously deemed Salafi. Second was to remake and expand this category to include non-Salafi agents. Finally, was the invention of an inaccurate equivocation between modernism and Salafism. While actors like ‘Abduh and Afghani never used the term *salafiyya* in their writing, and Rida only once, all were placed under this misleading label. Since primary texts were ignored in this process, the secondary literature perpetuated the myth without check. As Lauzière astutely warns, “As long as we allow preconceptions and ready-made paradigms to determine the parameters of our historical investigations, we shall remain prisoners of our own mythologies” (13).

We have come to realize, at least since Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), that instead of trying to laboriously define our terms, one must examine the use of a word in the context of a sentence to extract its meaning. But what happens when the use of a concept itself becomes too ambiguous for use? Henri Lauzière demonstrates that attempts at defining Salafism through the question “What is Salafism?” offer us little insight into how the label gained popularity, notoriety, and perpetually shifted in the past century. The breadth of complexity, wide use of primary sources,

coupled with crisp and non-convoluted writing make this book an enviable intervention in revisionist histories of contemporary Islam. Further, the prescriptive historiographical nature of the book offers hopeful guidelines for aspiring historians and serious scholars in any field. There is little doubt that Lauzière has written the best book we have on Salafism. By providing a comprehensive critical reading of historiographical scholarship spanning late Orientalist and Salafi discourses, *The Making of Salafism* will impress a wide readership with interdisciplinary interests in history, contemporary Islamic studies, anthropology, religious studies, and political science. ✂

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BRINDA J. MEHTA. *Dissident Writings of Arab Women: Voices against Violence.* New York, NY: Routledge, 2016 (2014). 257 pages, bibliography, index. Paper US\$52.95 ISBN 978-1-138-20042-5.

Mehta's new text, *Dissident Writings of Arab Women*, focuses on the way in which postcolonial creative works by Arab women comprise a form of dissidence that provides alternate histories of the region, especially with regards to women's experience of war and other violence. Mehta asserts that these creative works (novels, short stories, poems, docudramas, interviews, testimonials, plays) represent the quest of writers to effect meaningful change in the world in the form of raised political and social consciousness, and new ways of thinking about the world. Mehta draws on a substantial body of postcolonial, feminist and literary theory to think about the political and cultural critique of these writers and the ways in which they may contribute to a changed consciousness about the experiences of women in colonial, postcolonial, revolutionary and wartime contexts.

She considers works that span fifty years, beginning with the Algerian war of the 1950s and ending with the initial stages of the Arab Spring uprisings. Mehta focuses on the work of women writing in French, English, Spanish and French *verlan*, (a slang that features inversion of syllables in a word) with one author writing in colloquial Egyptian Arabic. These authors are working from Europe, Africa, and the United States. She argues that by focusing on these writings she is representing a broad linguistic plurality in contemporary Arabic literature. This point is well taken. However, the presence of only one work penned in Arabic, when many are available in English and French translation, is perhaps one weakness of the volume.