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An Assessment of Responses in the British Press to Muslim Immigrants 1978-1989

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Nashwa Mohamed van Houts entitled "An Assessment of Responses in the British Press to Muslim Immigrants 1978-1989." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.

Palmira Brummett, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Robert J. Bast, Paul Pinckney

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Anne Mayhew
Vice Provost and
Dean of Graduate Studies

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**An Assessment of Responses in the
British Press to Muslim Immigrants
1978-1989**

A Thesis

Presented for a

Master of Arts

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Nashwa Mohamed van Houts

December 2003

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Nashwa van Houts

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1 – The Fragility of British Culture: Margaret Thatcher’s 1978 Fear of Being Swamped by Coloreds, January – October 1978	15
Chapter 2 – Old Empire, New Regime: Fears of an Islamic Theocracy in the British Press, January 1978 – June 1979	35
Chapter 3 – Send Rushdie to Hell? Coping with the Enemy Within: The 1989 Salman Rushdie Affair.....	59
Conclusion	83
Bibliography.....	86
Vita.....	90

Introduction

“The ‘metaphysics’ of Britishness’ which links patriotism, xenophobia, militarism, and nationalism into a series of statements on race was a key element in ...the constitution of the [Conservative] party under Thatcher.”¹

The themes of national culture and identity have long histories in the British Conservative party political tradition.² In 1978, Margaret Thatcher successfully harnessed these themes resulting in a Conservative election victory in May, 1979 and then a decade of Tory rule. Her comments on the fragility of British culture and its liability to become “swamped,” by incoming immigrant ways created a national debate that is still pertinent today.³

This work is a case study of British responses to immigrants between 1978 and 1989. The immigrants were generally from the Middle East or Indian subcontinent. The largest group were Muslim, and therefore very visibly different to the host population. I examine the visibility of these immigrants as expressed in three English language newspapers, and trace how the newspapers’ identification of Muslim immigrants evolved from a racial to religiously based characterization. From these characterizations, I work to demonstrate how the xenophobia of British citizens towards immigrants was reflected and perpetuated in the daily newspapers. The work analyses press coverage of three events over an eleven-year period with a broad survey for the rest of the time. These events are Margaret Thatcher’s 1978 call to end immigration, the 1979 Iranian

¹ Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (London: Hutchinson Press, 1987), 47.

² Ibid.

³ British newspapers carried articles discussing the problems of immigration within the last month. See Rachel Baird, “Migrant flood will force Brits out of jobs,” *Daily Express*, 25 July 2003, p. 2; Tom Bentley, “We must end this illegal exploitation,” *Daily Express*, 25 July 2003, p. 12.

Revolution, and the 1989 Salman Rushdie affair. What it attempts to do is demonstrate (by analyzing how the two biggest British newspapers presented these immigrants) that Britain was still a very hostile “host population” towards their former guests some fifty years later. My thesis is that in the period 1978 to 1989 a shift occurred in the way Muslim immigrants were presented in the press. This shift was a change from identification of immigrants by race in 1978, to a religious based definition in 1989. The work traces this evolution, seeing a discussion of immigration and culture in Britain come full circle as the newspapers begin to link the Islamic fundamentalism seen in the Iranian Revolution with their own large Muslim immigrant population. This link worked to further entrench the hostility of the host population that became truly explicit with Thatcher’s call in 1978. I acknowledge that there are plenty of other events that I could have examined throughout this period; I tried to choose issues that are well remembered, and that have enduring links to the current situation in Britain.

Approach

The three papers examined were: *The London Times* (hereafter *The Times*), *Manchester Guardian* (hereafter *The Guardian*), and the *International Herald Tribune* (hereafter *I.H.T.*). *The Guardian* and *The Times* were chosen for their ability to represent key viewpoints of British society, specifically, the liberal and conservative points of view respectively. *The Times* is the most widely read paper in Britain and has a center-right approach. The next most read paper; *The Guardian* has a more left wing, liberal approach.

My third source, the *I.H.T.*, is being used as a control paper, as it is economically (as opposed to politically) focused, and thus often presents issues with a great deal more distance than the first two papers. This distance is also literal. Although the head office (where decisions are made on *what* to include in the paper) is in London, the *I.H.T.* is a compilation of news stories written and published in various American papers, raising interesting questions about representation. Essentially, what Europeans are reading when they buy the *I.H.T.* is a United States' perspective on European events. Thus, the paper is translating these events initially prepared for an American audience, then providing extra details and background information. This extra detail and background information made my job as examiner easy as it meant that if there were a subtext involved in a particular event, the *I.H.T.* would often explain it. For example, Thatcher's 1978 call to end immigration was decoded by the *I.H.T.* as immigration problem = race or colored problem.⁴

From my initial survey of the newspapers, throughout the years 1978-1989, I then chose three events to demonstrate this evolution of identity politics and the immigrant question. The first event is Margaret Thatcher's 1978 pre-election call to end immigration and repatriate immigrants already residing in Britain. The second is the 1978-1979 Iranian Revolution, and the third is the 1989 Salman Rushdie affair.

The Margaret Thatcher call and the Salman Rushdie affair are examples of domestic cultural criticism. That criticism took the form of debate about the way immigration and integration issues were being handled at home. The Iranian Revolution, on the other hand, indicated fear of what was going on outside the "home" country. The

⁴ "U.K. Race Debate Escalates," *International Herald Tribune*, 12 February 1978.

revolution was an event unfolding in a strange, foreign place that brought home the reality of Britain's Muslim immigrant situation to the host population's attention in a dramatic way. The fears of Islamic fundamentalism raised during the Iranian Revolution were relived a decade later during the Salman Rushdie affair. At that time the British press attempted to reconcile secular, western democracy, and questions of loyalty to the state, with the reality of Britain's large Muslim immigrant population. Although many Muslims were living in Britain quite peacefully, it was feared that their loyalty to the state would be compromised by their loyalty to Islam.

Throughout my survey of the British press, specific themes emerged. The first and the most encompassing, was the invocation of culture. Margaret Thatcher brought the supposedly fragile nature of British culture to the fore. From the outset, her comments prompted the British press to debate how much immigrants were contributing to the culture, how much they were swamping it, and, more broadly, whether they had a right to enjoy living in it. These questions were again raised during the Salman Rushdie affair a decade later as the previously mentioned question of the loyalty of Muslim immigrants residing in Britain arose. Second was the theme of the fear of Islam. Becoming an issue during the Iranian Revolution and again during the Rushdie affair, British reportage depicted Islamic militancy as a new force shaking the globe. During the Iranian Revolution, the newspapers discussed, and either soothed or entrenched readers' fears about what the press generally called that fundamentalism coming over *here*. This rhetoric questioned the extent to which British culture should be assimilated by immigrants, and whether the loyalties of Muslim immigrants could ever be trusted.

To keep this work manageable and to complete it in a timely fashion meant taking a rather mercenary approach to exactly what I was going to examine and what I could not. As mentioned later in this introduction, I am not conclusively saying that what was written in the newspaper was what the people of Britain were thinking. Rather, I am looking to see if there are some conclusions to be made from the events covered in the papers, and later political, sympathetic, or violent acts.

My approach to analyzing the news stories is a hybridized model adapted from Charles Press' *The Political Cartoon*, and Farhang and Dorman's *The U.S. Press and Iran: Foreign Policy and the Journalism of Deference*.⁵ Although Press's work specifically analyses the political cartoon, it is easily adapted to present a model for analyzing the news story. His concept of the "vision of reality" has been used here to make sense of the newspapers' construction of the immigrant question. Press argues, "What artists are giving us is their assumptions about reality. They begin by selecting facts – what I will call a condition – that they think have good or bad effects. They are saying these are the main elements of the situation – how it should be looked at."⁶ Thus, the vision of reality is the cartoonist's or writer's selective view of events. Inherent within the picture of reality is the mood (and message). These give us further insight into the writer's point of view. Press continues, "The mood tells us pretty clearly how the artist feels and how he or she thinks we should feel... The artist projects the mood through the image or artistry he or she uses."⁷ So, by examining what language the

⁵ Charles Press, *The Political Cartoon* (New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1981); William Dorman and Mansour Farhang, *The U.S. Press and Iran: Foreign Policy and the Journalism of Deference* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

⁶ Press, *The Political Cartoon*, 63.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 70.

journalist is employing, one can gain some insight into how he or she would want us to react. Thus inherent in the mood is a message about what the writer would have the reader do about the situation. Sometimes this message is a call to action – to write to local officials or to boycott a particular institution, while at other times, the message is simply to feel in some way about the condition or event being discussed.

Farhang and Dorman use a model similar to Press's "vision of reality," that of the journalistic frame. In this, they look at every story through a specific frame to analyze the context. They argue, "Frames are simply constructions of social reality that result from journalistic decision making about what information to include in a news story, what language to cite... In short, frames are the contexts in which news occurrences are placed by reporters...and are susceptible to textual analysis in much the same manner as literary texts."⁸

Farhang and Dorman's "journalistic decision making" must be kept in mind when analyzing the newspapers that are the subject of this study. Specifically the paper's staff has placed everything that appears in the paper there with the editorial policy and the audience in mind. Press calls this audience the "cherished community," and describes it as "the community in the body politic" for which the paper is being produced.⁹ So, it is the cherished community that is "guiding the pen" of the writer.¹⁰ Both Press and Farhang and Dorman stress the importance of remembering the audience when examining the newspaper's approach – the way or the lens through which it interprets events, especially when the coverage of particular events changes.

⁸ Dorman and Farhang, *The U.S. Press and Iran*, 7.

⁹ Press, *The Political Cartoon*, 78.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 64.

Chapters Two and Three also incorporate Mark Juergensmeyer's model (of a new Cold War arising between the secular, democratic West and the religiously nationalistic Muslim World), to examine how these secular states (in this case Britain) cope when they have immigrants from these "other" places.¹¹ Juergensmeyer's discussion of the West needing a "new evil empire," after the fall of the Soviet Union, has pertinent implications when examining current events.¹²

When surveying my chosen newspapers, I was most concerned with the visibility and presentation of immigrants. Precisely, what language was being employed to create a picture of reality, mood, and message? I wanted to see how immigrants were being crafted for the paper's audience and, in addition, see how this shaped public responses towards them. I acknowledge that any conclusions regarding the public response would be tentative but nevertheless argue that connections can be made between the news story and political acts.¹³

Historiographic Contexts

There are several types of secondary sources that have addressed the issue of Muslim immigration to Europe and Britain in particular. There is a large body of work on the historical relations between East and West, and a growing body of work theorizing, discussing, or lamenting the failure of "Eastern" immigrants to assimilate in Europe.

¹¹ Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (Berkeley: University of California, 1993), 8.

¹² The Bush administrations language of terrorism and the term "terrorist" as a catch all term in a similar way the term "communist" was employed throughout the Cold War, especially during McCarthyism, further demonstrating a new ideological war. For Juergensmeyer's theory, see *ibid.*, 2.

¹³ Obviously, it is very difficult to analyze how events printed in a newspaper shaped responses. I attempted to match news stories on immigrants with legislation, attacks, and other public statements made by politicians.

There are two useful works that really examine the wider scope of Christian/Muslim relations and trace Western Christian responses to Muslims, starting from the seventh through to the thirteenth century. Norman Daniel's *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* was first published in 1960 and is the first major exploration of how Christians dealt with the "Muslim threat."¹⁴ The concepts in this book have been updated and given further nuance by John V. Tolan in his *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval Christian Imagination*.¹⁵ Tolan uses the rubric of threat to trace the ways that Christians represented Muslims. This frame is certainly helpful when examining recent Western European responses to guest workers and other immigrants.¹⁶ While much of the religious language employed in medieval sources has faded, I would argue that it has often been replaced with secular terms that continue to perpetuate a binary opposition between the (often Muslim) immigrants and the (generally Christian) host populations. Mark Juergensmeyer agrees, arguing that it was the growth of the secular state that led to the replacement of religious with secular language.¹⁷ This binary opposition is illustrated (somewhat repetitively) in many of the works (including his latest) of the renowned scholar Bernard Lewis, who has written at length on the East/West debate in general and Christian/Muslim relations in particular. His latest book, *What Went Wrong?* begins with the presumption that there is a natural conflict between Christians and Muslims and, simply put, that it was and is the Muslims who went wrong. Lewis is widely read and

¹⁴ Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1960).

¹⁵ John V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval Christian Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 275-281.

¹⁷ The President George W. Bush has certainly proven that the language of Revelations (in particular "good" and "evil") can be reissued. The apocalyptic language of the present administration has nice ties back to John V. Tolan's examination of medieval Christian responses to Islam. For the language of secular democracies, see Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War?*

cited in the contemporary media, including the newspaper press (he wrote an opinion piece for the *I.H.T.* during the 1989 Rushdie Affair), thus perpetuating the myth of an eternal Christian-Muslim relationship of conflict.

Many later works discussing Muslim immigration to Europe tend to be distinctly ahistorical in nature, focusing on an anthropological or sociological approach and aimed at discussing or, as is often the case, extemporizing on how, for example, to reintegrate Muslims into increasingly hostile European societies. Many such studies deal only with post World War II immigrants and implicitly accept an essential East/West dichotomy between the immigrants and their new societies, without examining a larger context.

Shireen T. Hunter's *Islam, Europe's Second Religion: The New Social, Cultural, and Political Landscape* is one such work.¹⁸ Providing individual country surveys, the work fails to provide any kind of background information. The reader is left not knowing what the situation was like pre World War II, and how things changed. Hunter takes too much for granted and thus portrays the situation as one of mistrust and hostility from the day these immigrants arrived in the country, often while simultaneously acknowledging that many Muslims had been in various European countries since the Middle Ages.¹⁹

When examining newspaper coverage of immigrants, one omission of all three papers was a presentation of Muslim immigrant perspectives on living in a new place. Ruth Mandel's article tracing Turkish *Gastarbeiter* in Germany provides such a

¹⁸ Shireen T. Hunter, *Islam, Europe's Second Religion: The New Social, Cultural, and Political Landscape* (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2002).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

perspective.²⁰ In this article, Mandel exposes the many conflicts that Turkish immigrants to Germany face, in particular the sense of alienation they begin to feel not just from their new world, but also from their homeland as they are now regarded as “different” from their native people. Mandel articulately documents how notions (in the minds of the *Gastarbeiter*) of a temporary sojourn in Germany were replaced by the realities of resettlement – materially the *Gastarbeiter* found better lives in their new lands but had to reconcile that with the double sense of alienation they felt.²¹ This study is helpful when examining the immigrant community in Britain as it provides a context for understanding why they stayed in a generally hostile environment by trying to understand their process of settlement in a new place.

Background to the Immigrant Problem

From 1947, Britain, France, the Netherlands, and (from 1949) West Germany recruited migrant workers to fill the labor shortages each country was experiencing in the post war reconstruction boom. These “guest workers” were invited to work in the low-skilled jobs such as manual labor, that nationals from the host country no longer wanted.²² Britain, France, and the Netherlands recruited most of the labor from their

²⁰ Ruth Mandel, “Shifting Centres and Emergent Identities: Turkey and Germany in the Lives of Turkish *Gastarbeiter*,” in *Muslim Travellers*, ed. Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori (London: Routledge, 1990), 153.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 153-169.

²² In English, these migrants were called “guest workers,” as that was their official status. In German the official term is *Gastarbeiter*, an exact translation of guest worker. In French it is *travailleurs immigrants*, literally working immigrants.

former colonies, while West Germany's greatest labor pool came from its World War II ally, Turkey.²³

These workers trickled in at first, but between 1960 and 1970, the number of guest workers in the various countries doubled or tripled.²⁴ The prosperity these workers experienced in their new places of work slowly dislodged their original notions of their sojourn being temporary, and the guest workers set up homes and brought their families over to live with them, creating communities that were a mix of their old and new worlds.²⁵

In the late 1960s, the worldwide economy weakened as the industrialized countries of Western Europe moved from manual to automated labor, creating massive unemployment.²⁶ Since much of the economic downturn was popularly attributed to the now floods of migrant workers, legislation was enacted throughout Western Europe in 1971 to halt the recruitment of labor from non European Economic Community (E.E.C.) countries. My research shows that although this legislation certainly slowed the immigration of guest workers, they were already perceived by their hosts as "swamping" the host populations, and thus, the drop in numbers often went unnoticed.²⁷ Also, whilst

²³ Stephen Castiles and Mark Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (Hong Kong: Macmillan, 1995), 71.

²⁴ West Germany's immigration statistics show a leap from 686,000 in 1960 to 2,977,000 in 1970, therefore a 400 percent increase in just one decade. Britain had 2,205,000 in 1960 to 3,968,000, an 80 percent increase. France's population increased from 2,263,000 to 3,339,000, equaling a 56 percent increase. Ibid., 71.

²⁵ Ruth Mandel, 153.

²⁶ Ibid., 77.

²⁷ Margaret Thatcher and the newspapers that discussed her policies regularly employed the term "swamping." *The Times* came also regularly to use the term, even a decade after Thatcher had started saying it. Interestingly, recent articles discussing the rise of immigrants to Japan quoted the Japanese as feeling swamped by *gaigen* (aliens). All three newspapers employed here used the term throughout 1978 and 1979 in regard to the immigrant situation, and see *The Times* February and March 1989 issues for more recent use of it.

there were no migrants entering Western Europe under the designation of guest worker, the families of guest workers already in the country were allowed to enter under the clauses of family reunification that were written into each recruiting country's immigration law, under directive from the E.E.C. Finally the birth rate amongst guest workers was three times the rate of the host population, yet again enhancing the visibility of the immigrants and further entrenching the public perception of them as a drain on resources.²⁸

An examination of each of the recruiting country's legislation history through the period 1945 to 1978 (the year my analysis begins) demonstrates that the guest workers unwittingly uncorked the issues of citizenship and nationhood. Much to the chagrin of the host populations, the temporary workers were making permanent homes in their new country. The concepts of "citizen" and "guest worker" were especially problematic for the former colonial powers as they found their subjects wanting to reside in the colonial center, rather than staying "where they belong."²⁹ Britain's regulation of immigration is demonstrative of these conflicts. Since World War II, there have been four major pieces of legislation to define, limit and qualify immigration into Britain and (at the same time) to delineate the rights of British citizens.

The 1948 British Nationality Act was the first major piece of legislation to address the issue since the 1905 Aliens Act.³⁰ Rather than a limit to immigration, the

²⁸Anwar Muhammad and Patrick Roach, eds, *From Legislation to Integration?* (New York: Macmillan 2000), 1-13.

²⁹"An Answer to the Thatcher Enigma," *Guardian*, March 5 1978.

³⁰The 1905 Aliens Act was the first recognizably modern attempt at limiting immigration of a specific group of people. It was introduced to control the numbers of Jews fleeing from Central Europe and Russia. Drawn up in response to panic (ironically about being "swamped" by Jews this time) the act very closely

1948 act was an attempt to reform the law on nationality and citizenship. It declared every citizen in any commonwealth country a British subject and thus entitled to settle for the next 14 years in Britain and automatically acquire United Kingdom citizenship. After that time, it was foreseen that immigration would need to be restricted, even to British subjects. This act was put into effect in an effort to aid post war reconstruction by effectively granting citizenship to immigrant workers.³¹

Fourteen years later, as the world economy began to deteriorate, the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act was passed. This act qualified the right of Commonwealth citizens to come to Britain, requiring them to obtain an employment voucher from the Ministry of Labour before entering the country. This act also created three “categories” of immigrant based on job skills, with priority given to “rewarding” subjects who had served in the armed forces during the Second World War. This act also gave dependents of immigrants living now in Britain a statutory right to join the head of the household already in Britain.³²

Just six years later (1968) another act was rushed through in three days to limit the numbers of Asians from Uganda and Kenya as the governments of these countries were pursuing policies of Africanisation and expelling Asians (who then sought to move to Britain). This new act created another voucher system, specifically for these Asians from East Africa, with numbers limited to 1500 per year.

Finally, in 1971, another Immigration Act was passed, introducing the concept of patriality, and allowing only those who had British ancestry from either grandparent the

resembles the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act which was also hurriedly drawn up to restrict the number of Ugandan and Kenyan Asians entering Britain.

³¹ “Immigration: How Mrs. Thatcher Got it All Wrong,” *Guardian*, February 26, 1978.

³² Muhammad and Roach, *From Legislation to Integration?* 1-11.

right to live in Britain. The result of this act was to commit Britain to the dependents of Commonwealth Immigrants who had settled before 1973 (the date the law was to take effect), and to the East Africans, whose voucher quota was raised to 5000 per year. The latter allowance resulted from condemnation of Britain's efforts to exclude Asian subjects being expelled from East Africa.³³ Thus, by 1978, immigration in all areas had been regulated and legislated to limit both numbers of immigrants and notions of citizenship, nationality, and Britain's responsibilities towards former colonial subjects.³⁴

By 1978, the above legislative process was also similar to that of France and West Germany, which, like Britain had guest worker populations of over 6.6 percent of the total population. Also standard in these countries was the reality that these new populations had not integrated into their new culture and, in fact seemed unable to, due to overbearing invocations of "us" and "them" by an increasingly hostile host population.³⁵

³³ Ibid., 80-90.

³⁴ One must note, however that despite the many refinements of legislation, the opinion polls published in the papers I surveyed point to a persisting confusion. It was joked in the papers (prior to 1978) that despite all these "clarifications" no one could still define citizenship, subjecthood or their attached rights in either case! See *I.H.T.* issues in 1968 after the Commonwealth Immigrants Act was passed and again in 1971 after further changes.

³⁵ Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (Hong Kong: The Macmillan Press, 1993), 71.

Chapter 1 – The Fragility of British Culture: Margaret Thatcher’s 1978 Fear of Being Swamped by Coloreds, January – October 1978

...People are really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture, you know, the British character has done so much for democracy, for law and done so much throughout the world that if there is any fear that it might be swamped people are going to react and be rather hostile to those coming in. So, if you want good race relations, you have got to allay peoples' fears on numbers.³⁶

Margaret Thatcher made these comments in a television interview aired on Granada Television on January 31, 1978. Her discussion of Britain’s domestic race relations and immigration policies instantly provoked a national debate on the “immigrant question,” (the British term for race relations) and received widespread grassroots support for her fearlessness in bringing up such a sensitive issue.³⁷ This chapter examines how *The Guardian*, *The Times* and the *International Herald Tribune (I.H.T.)* responded to her calls, and their respective framings of the subsequent debate. Although each of the papers approached the issue differently, the extent to which Britain was becoming a racist country and the extent to which British culture was threatened were common themes. Comparing each paper’s representation of these themes provides insight into the media’s perspective on the immigrant question and on general notions of

³⁶ This quote was taken from the Margaret Thatcher Foundation, which has an archive of her speeches, comments, and interviews. The full text of this interview is there. See: www.margarethatcher.org

³⁷ Thatcher received so much support in fact, that opinion polls registered the Conservatives with an 11 percent point lead over the Labour government. Until her comments and the ensuing debate, the parties had been tied.

race and citizenship, hot topics still today throughout Western Europe.³⁸ Another important theme is a discussion of the alarm created by her racist depictions of Britain being swamped by immigrants, creating an invocation of “us” and “them,” which tied into a wider discussion of whether Britain was, or was beginning to be, a racist country. Finally, one thing is notably absent – the presentation of the immigrants themselves in the papers. Given that the discussion of immigration and changes in policy would affect the immigrant community most keenly, I had expected that there would be coverage of the immigrant voice. While there were some letters to the editor from immigrants, this absence of reportage bears further discussion.

Background

As discussed in the introduction to this work, large immigrant populations were now the norm in Western Europe, with each country having a migrant population of between five and ten percent. Arguing in the same interview as discussed above, Thatcher also said that Britain must:

... hold out the prospect of an end to immigration except, of course, for compassionate cases. Therefore, we have got to look at the numbers who have a right to come in. What we want to know, and what the Home Office have never been able to let us know, is the numbers who, under present law, are entitled to come here. Until we know that, it is extremely difficult because when I went round India and Pakistan — and Mr. Callaghan has followed in my foot-steps — I said to them, "You do realize that this country, the United Kingdom, is more densely populated than either India or Pakistan." It is not as if we have great wide open spaces or great natural resources; we have not. So, either you go on taking in 40 or

³⁸ As discussed in the introduction, Western Europe was coming to terms with its guest worker recruitment plans, which had seen these recruiting countries flooded with immigrants, generally from the Middle East or Indian subcontinent. The largest group of workers were Muslim and therefore very visibly different to the host population.

50,000 a year, which is far too many, or you say we must hold out the prospect of a clear end to immigration...³⁹

Thatcher's matter of fact choice of phrasing exacerbated fears that were held by many Britons, turning immigration into an election issue. All of the papers documented the surprise that many M.P.'s felt at this wave of support (in the form of letters to the paper and increased approval ratings in opinion polls) for Thatcher's comments, demonstrating that in some ways, these M.P.'s were out of touch with a portion of their constituents.⁴⁰

Thatcher's crusade to save British culture from its imminent "swamping" also engendered much discussion about the fragile nature of British culture in the "Letters to the Editor" sections of the two British papers. Each of these newspapers contained lively letters from a range of people debating just how much swamping Britain's culture could take, and the implications of immigration legislation for the country. An example of such a letter is taken from *The Times*, 4 February 1978 edition. Headlined, "Immigrants' place in society," the letter criticized Thatcher's comment that immigration should be halted so that the Government could use its resources to help younger members of the immigrant community, especially those born in Britain. It said,

They [the younger children] have already been given the inestimable privilege of living in one of the fairest, most advanced, decent, and open societies in the world; allowed to share the political, cultural, and economic benefits accumulated by generations of Englishmen. Surely it is up to them to, as it is up to their fellow English citizens to find their own place, or if they cannot, to make their contribution in their ancestral

³⁹ Quote also taken from Margaret Thatcher Foundation website: www.margaretthatcher.org

⁴⁰ Articles in all three papers from 3 February to 15 February discuss this surprise. Clearly, the grass roots support for halting immigration was there, especially when taken with the fact that the Conservative Party leapt ahead in the opinion polls. See note 37 for more on the polls. Documentation of grass roots support: Editorial, *I.H.T.*, 21 February 1978.

homes... Mrs. Thatcher has given the debate not only impetus, but also the added dimension of a national character. All who favour honest debate are in her debt for doing so.⁴¹

The author's argument that it was enough just to let immigrants settle in Britain was representative of letters to *The Times*, and its "self help" espousal. *The Guardian* printed equally polemical letters, which championed its policy of tolerance. Andrew Wingate's letter demonstrates this view. In this letter, the author discusses his shame at hearing Thatcher's comments, and being associated with Britain. Wingate writes,

The Indian press reports the speeches of our politicians on racial matters in full detail. It makes me ashamed to have to represent our country in this situation, in what is such a sensitive area for the Indian people. Marches by the National Front I can explain away as the work of extremists, but not the speeches of the leader of our second party and a possible future Prime Minister.... I endorse...that the argument be turned from the bogus and emotive issue of immigration, to the positive question of the acceptance and welcome of those who are already British citizens.⁴²

This letter articulately sums up what *Guardian* readers, who wrote into the paper to discuss the issue of race and citizenship, felt.⁴³ Many discussed a sense of shame, and inherent in this feeling was the belief that everyone should feel outraged at Thatcher's racism and her use of the invocation of culture to entrench this racism. This audience felt that British culture was the opposite of Thatcher's description – that it was open and accepting of others, especially those who were already British citizens.

⁴¹ This letter was representative of a Conservative point of view, as ninety percent of letters to the Times during this period were. Alfred Sherman, "Immigrants place in society," *The Times*, 4 February 1978, 15.

⁴² This letter also discussed the same things observed by Simon Winchester (discussed later in this chapter) in regards to the kindness of Indians to strangers, and the shame that this kindness is not reciprocated to Indian immigrants in Britain. Andrew Wingate, "Race – The Issue is of Acceptance," *The Guardian*, 12 March 1978, 2.

⁴³ At least ninety percent of letters in *The Guardian* echoed these sentiments. Interestingly, though the paper included letters from immigrants, it failed to present any articles specifically on the immigrants' lives.

Individual Paper Characterizations

The Guardian took a distinctly pro-immigrant stance that preached racial inclusion. The paper depicted the implications of Thatcher's comments (that Britain accept no more immigrants) as the first step down a slippery slope to a Hitlerish, xenophobic state. Of the newspapers, *The Guardian* launched the most sophisticated attack on Thatcher, using a three-tiered strategy that fit the articles into distinct, but complementary categories. It depicted Thatcher as both a Chelsea Conservative lady out of touch with the working classes and as an opportunistic bird of prey.

The first category was comprised of low-key, statistics-based articles that sought to show readers the true picture of reality and thereby demonstrate just how skewed Mrs. Thatcher's vision of reality was. There were often as many as three of these articles in each paper, albeit the articles were often repetitive. This category of articles appeared immediately after Thatcher's television appearance, and included her statements with numbers that allowed the facts to speak for themselves.⁴⁴ The articles primarily took issue with Thatcher's claims of Britain being "swamped." Hence, *The Guardian* published charts of immigrant birth rates, to show that while still high, they were falling.⁴⁵ The paper also printed entrance numbers to demonstrate that the spike of

⁴⁴ The first such article appeared 3 February 1978. Articles in this first category continued until the May 1979 election (which is the span of my survey for this chapter). I was still seeing this style of article in November of 1979.

⁴⁵ *The Times* also produced birthrate statistical charts to show readers how birthrates in regions of high immigrant population density were higher than in other parts of the country. See later in this chapter for further discussion of *The Times* approach.

immigrants entering Britain was well over, with numbers now nearly halved and only dependents entering to be with heads of households already residing in Britain.

“Facts and Figures on Immigration”⁴⁶ is an example of this first category of coverage. Published on 12 February 1978, *The Guardian* took a quote from Thatcher and placed it alongside the “facts.” This was the first box of fallacy and fact:

Mrs. Thatcher: Every country can take some small minorities and in many ways they add to the richness and variety of the country. The moment the minority threatens to become a big one, people get frightened. Fewer than four out of every 100 people in the United Kingdom are coloured. The Office of Population, Censuses, and Surveys estimates that in mid-1976 there were 1,771,000 coloured people (including those of mixed descent) in the U.K. This represented 3.3 percent of the population. Six years ago, that proportion was 2.7 percent. The Central Statistical Office, in a report published last month, said the coloured population could grow by 5 percent per year in the next ten years because there is a much higher proportion of coloured people in the 15 – 44 age group. Even so, this growth rate would mean a coloured population of only 2,656,000 in the mid-1980s. If the rest of the population does not increase, this would still involve a coloured population of 4.7 percent, fewer than 5 out of every 100 people.⁴⁷

In this paragraph, the paper not only challenges Thatcher’s comments that the minority is of “swamping” proportions, but makes it explicit that the colored population does not pose a threat, noting that even in a worst case scenario of population growth, (where the immigration population grows but the host’s does not) the colored population was still a long way from attaining even 5 percent of the total population. Moreover, it is notable that the newspaper uses hard facts to prove its argument, it includes them with words such as “only,” and “fewer,” to bolster the soothing message of the article.

⁴⁶ “Facts and Figures on Immigration,” *Guardian*, 12 February 1978, p. 10.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Another type of this first category of coverage occurred in the 26 February publication. Entitled, “Immigration: how Mrs. Thatcher got it all wrong” the article discusses Britain’s history of immigration legislation, highlighting the dangers of the proposed race-based legislation, and the Government’s obligations to British passport holders.⁴⁸ The article also works to counter Mrs. Thatcher’s claims that not enough had been done to restrict immigration by presenting all the limits placed on various immigrants to Britain, beginning with the Jews fleeing central Europe in 1905. Stating that:

The 1905 Act cast a long shadow. It was an act drawn up in response to a panic and its descendant was recognizably the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act which was drawn up and passed in three days to stop Kenyan Asians coming into Britain.⁴⁹

The use of the word “panic” to describe the fear of being stampeded by an incoming group links the reactions of the past with those of the present, emphasizing that this same fear still abounds. This article demonstrates the dangers of legislating in haste to restrict certain ethnicities from entering the country. It demonstrates that the fear of swamping has remained in Britain since at least 1905, even if it was dormant for periods of time.⁵⁰ Moving from the Jews to the Kenyan Asians, the article then discusses the outcomes of the immigration legislation and emphasizes Britain’s lack of loyalty to its

⁴⁸ Lindsay Mackie, “Immigration: How Mrs. Thatcher Got It All Wrong,” *Guardian*, February 26 1978, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ I would argue that this fear has abounded since at least the Crusades. Tolan argues that this fear was often expressed by Christians throughout this time and, that much like now, is a galvanizer of “us” and “them,” especially necessary when an army needs to be raised. See John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval Christian Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

citizens.⁵¹ Incorporating impassioned quotes from various politicians who have voted to fight these Acts, the journalist ends by reiterating: “There is currently a net outflow of people from Britain, and the number of West Indians departing currently outnumbers those few coming into Britain.” Again, the author uses words such as “few” to allay the fears of Briton’s being besieged by immigrants. Taken in concert with the other statistic-based pieces, this article enables the reader to see how this reaction is irrational. Immigrants did not “swamp” Britain in the past (despite the same popular fear), and as “Facts and Figures on Immigration” proved, they will not now.

The Guardian’s second category of attack against Thatcher was of a more base nature. This category of articles used satire to present her as an out-of-touch, Chelsea high-society, conservative lady, who lacked anything in common with the working class people she was supposed to represent. Thus working to undo her exhortations of an “us” and “them,” by demonstrating that she was not in touch with us. “Mrs. Thatcher in search of reality” is representative of this category.⁵² The article follows Mrs. Thatcher’s electioneering trip to Halifax in Yorkshire. From the very beginning the paper characterizes her as out of touch:

It was snowing outside the White Swan in Halifax. At exactly five to nine the four-car procession was drawn up outside and drivers and detectives were blowing into their knuckles and stamping their feet. Mrs. Thatcher emerged into an icy wind, which almost miraculously didn’t ruffle a single golden hair. She was most unsuitably dressed in a thin navy coat and tiny elegant black shoes that disappeared into the snow.⁵³

⁵¹ The term citizen is also tenuous – this term was also legislated and regulated to limit entrance into Britain.

⁵² Polly Toynbee, “Mrs Thatcher in search of reality,” *The Guardian*, 19 February, 1978, p. 4.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

From this inauspicious beginning, we follow her through her day at a carpet mill and then a local market. The withering tone also follows Thatcher, causing the reader to laugh at her never ending platitudes, and, more basically at her inability to connect with people.

She spied a refreshment stall in a covered market and hurried over to buy herself a tea. She sat down abruptly at a table with two embarrassed women and a young girl. Photographers' cameras flashed. She smiled at them and sipped her tea but conversation flagged painfully and petered out. ...Now she had a real chance to meet some people and she dried up. I'd been told that out here among the people she came to life. This was where she found her popular strength. But sitting there in that tea stall, she was one stranded Chelsea Conservative lady unable for the life of her to strike up an even passable conversation with three working class Yorkshire women.⁵⁴

By evoking this image of Thatcher as a high-bred woman unable "to strike up an even passable conversation," *The Guardian* leaves the reader wondering how this woman could even be a representative of the working class, when she clearly has nothing in common with them. Her "abrupt" sitting down also portrays her as ill at ease, which the writer reiterates with her use of "flagging" and "petering out."

Finally, the third category of stories *The Guardian* published were dispatches from its foreign correspondent Simon Winchester who traveled throughout the Indian subcontinent. Winchester's reports served to personalize the potential immigrants. The articles were of a gentle, sensitive tone and contained his observations. They presented a non-traditional vision of reality, showing readers a different angle on the immigrants, who were generally perceived as an underclass in Britain. Here, however, Winchester showed their joie de vivre, and essential kindness, even to strangers. One of the reports,

⁵⁴ Ibid.

entitled “More than Kin and Less than Kind,” discussed the kindness he had been shown in India, juxtaposed with the way Indians were treated by the British officials who worked at the immigration office.⁵⁵ Winchester begins by emphasising kindness in the network of civility:

Kindness to the stranger is as peculiar to the sub-continent as is black hair. There can be no region in the world where the foreigner is made to feel more welcome...⁵⁶

Winchester quickly ends the reader’s good feelings with his next observation:

And yet, how very unkindly the British seem to treat them. Our officials at least. The tales one hears, day after day, of the indignities suffered by ordinary Indian men and women...who come to beat feebly at the gates of our United Kingdom. You see them waiting in the sun on the verandah outside the British High Commission’s Immigration Section not allowed in until their appointment is announced... “My brother will learn English when he gets over to Birmingham,” a Punjabi woman told the immigration official... “He’ll never learn it...none of your sort ever do” The official replied...⁵⁷

In these articles, the mood and message were more intense. Winchester wanted the audience to feel ashamed of their compatriots running the immigration offices. Also, by discussing the generosity shown to him by a continent of strangers, Winchester pushed subtly for a reassessment of the way that Britons treated their immigrant population. Thatcher’s brash style of electioneering in addition to the brash policies she wanted to implement, could not be further away from the gentle, generous, people observed by Simon Winchester.

⁵⁵ Simon Winchester, “More Than Kin and Less Than Kind,” *The Guardian*, 12 February 1978, p. 9.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Despite running these foreign reports on potential immigrants, *The Guardian's* pages were conspicuously empty of immigrants residing in Britain. There were no human-interest stories or presentations to their cherished community of the immigrant voice. None of *The Guardian's* coverage called on the cherished community to immediate action, but rather to wait until Election Day. There is a real sense of treading carefully – as if it is too much to introduce the cherished community directly to these immigrants and ask it to mobilize on their behalf. Although this is speculation, perhaps the paper feared alienating its audience, as it was aware of the high level of support Thatcher received and did not want to provoke any more people into following her by focusing too directly on immigrants in Britain. Whatever the reason, there is a certain hollowness when one tries to reconcile the paper's words with its lack of action on immigrant rights. Rather than direct concern for immigrant rights, the paper's coverage suggests it was more concerned with stopping Thatcher from getting elected, and indeed saw this as the primary way to improve race relations.

The Times had a very different agenda from that of *The Guardian*, and it presented a very different picture of reality. From the beginning, *The Times* applauded Mrs. Thatcher's efforts to bring the race issue into the open. Thus, it printed many stories about citizens who were happy that politicians were at last talking about immigration. "Mrs. Thatcher 'right' on immigration issue," a mid February article, was representative of these "testimonial" articles. In it, we hear from Mr. Bendell, a 39 year-old surveyor who says, "I was saying that there should be a cutback on immigration a long time before

Mrs. Thatcher made her remarks on television...⁵⁸ However, while the paper was pleased that Thatcher made immigration and race relations an important public issue, her stance on the issue was not pleased with her stance on the issue. *The Times* presented a civilized discussion of immigration and race relations, and Thatcher's comments of "swamping" and "coloureds" were anything but civilized. Often the paper harked back to Enoch Powell, an extreme right wing believer in immigrant repatriation, stating that Thatcher's comments were "Powellite."⁵⁹ The paper obviously welcomed Thatcher's airing of the issue, but recoiled at her language. The editorial on 1 February 1978 (the day after Thatcher's television appearance), demonstrates this appreciation of her airing while creating a distance between the paper's views on race and Thatcher's. The editor says, "...Her phrasing, though clearly deliberate, could have been better..." and then points out that although her comments were ill phrased, they struck a cord amongst

...Those whites who feel most vulnerable to the impact of immigration... the deliberate toleration by the Government.... To show that immigration would not go on forever at that level [40,000 to 50,000 per year] is helpful for race relations, because of the prospect of an unending flow of immigrants at the present rate contributes to that fear...⁶⁰

The use of the term "whites" and discussion of their fears reinforced Thatcher's exhortations of "us" and "them." In the above article, the paper legitimizes "our" fears, arguing that the Government, in its "toleration," was not doing enough to soothe race relations. *The Times'* attempts at disassociation with Thatcher's comments were strengthened over the month of February, as it presented coverage of the issue in a style

⁵⁸ Penny Symon, "Mrs Thatcher 'Right' on Immigration Issue," *The Times*, February 15 1978, p. 2.

⁵⁹ Enoch Powell was a member of parliament between 1950 and 1970 who openly advocated ending immigration and repatriating the immigrants. His views were seen as extreme and he was marginalized because of them. Mrs. Thatcher was the first "main stream" politician to have taken up his sentiments.

⁶⁰ David Cross, "Mrs. Thatcher on Race," *The Guardian*, 1 February 1978, p. 15.

similar to *The Guardian's* first tier of coverage – low-key, rational, discussion based.

The paper did not use statistics to the same extent as *The Guardian* but did work to present its cherished community with a vision of reality that excluded the hysteria of “swamping.” Trying to distance itself from Thatcher’s policies, while still fostering discussion of the issue, the paper ran articles such as “What Mrs. Thatcher might have said” which stated,

...It was right for Mrs. Thatcher to have raised the subject but wrong for her to have said the things she did.⁶¹

The article was an opinion piece that worked to undo Thatcher’s extreme stance by arguing that there are many pragmatic things she should have discussed, instead of fueling fears of Britain being swamped by immigrants. The article chastised Thatcher:

...(If she claims) that the Tories can significantly hasten the promised end to immigration by “closing loopholes” then she will deserve the strongest condemnation for no mass immigration comes through the holes. If she is going to talk about people’s fears of being “swamped” (a word of Powellite quality which she should be ashamed of herself for using) she is going to make that fear a great deal worse when the people in question discover that what they want is for all the dark faces around them to go away...⁶²

A list of what Thatcher should have told potential voters followed this admonishment:

that repatriating immigrants would see the collapse of the Post Office, the construction industry and most public transport systems... that a large and constantly increasing proportion of coloured people were born here and are therefore British citizens with all the rights and obligations of this citizenship...that the Tories ...would have to launch a massive campaign of urban renewal... that unemployment, bad housing and the tax cost of

⁶¹ This article was representative of *The Times* opinion of the subject. All articles would point out the problems (i.e. unemployment, weak economy) and then blame the Labour government while stating that the Conservatives could fix the problems. There were ten articles throughout February 1978 following this format. Bernard Levin, “What Mrs. Thatcher Might Have Said,” *The Times*, 14 February 1978.

⁶² Ibid.

social security are not the fault of coloured people but of rotten economic policies which a Tory government would abandon.⁶³

The article ends with the writer arguing that both colored and white people should vote Conservative as both have “much to lose by keeping the present Government in office.”⁶⁴ Here we see both a different vision of reality (one in which immigrants are here to stay and that problems such as unemployment are the fault of a Labour government rather than the immigrants), and a very different message. The writer urges his audience to vote Conservative in the next election, not because they will limit immigration, but because the Conservatives will fix all the structural problems such as a bad economy, unemployment, and social security. The paper does not want to advocate blind hysteria of colored people but encourage its readers to focus on the issues behind immigration – how the State will support and redress the issues of a growing population.

Interestingly, the paper, through its call to both colored and white to vote Conservative, must see some part of the immigrant population as part of its audience. Perhaps this is why it distanced itself from Thatcher’s hysteria. However, apart from this one sentence, there was no other evidence that there was an immigrant audience.

Articles documenting these problems repetitively appeared throughout 1978. They followed the same format of pointing out a problem, using a headline that linked the problem with immigrants, and then, after presenting the problem, blaming the current Government. “Racket of immigrants in restaurants,” was one such article.⁶⁵ Printed one week after Thatcher’s interview, it discusses the problem of “immigrants coming to

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ “‘Racket’ of Immigrants in Restaurants,” *The Times*, 7 February 1978, p. 3.

Britain as students and then immediately taking up employment.”⁶⁶ Giving the case of three Middle Eastern students who were being deported for this crime, the article called “for checks on foreigners entering Britain on visitors’ visas...and greater supervision by the authorities” to make sure that they, also, were not working illegally. This article shows the audience that, with high immigration, comes “rackets” of people working illegally because the Government is not stringent enough with its checks. Other articles throughout 1978 pointed out similar issues, such as high birthrates and poor housing. “Birthrate in areas of high immigration,” gave birthrates throughout Britain, demonstrating that immigrant areas such as Bradford, (in the north of Britain) had higher rates than traditional Anglo enclaves.⁶⁷ Stating that, “the average of new Commonwealth and Pakistani births is 22 percent,” the article compared this figure with single digit numbers in “white” residences, again, presenting immigrants of color as a problem to the cherished community.

The *International Herald Tribune* immediately took issue with Thatcher’s comments, labeling her a racist. This must be qualified, however. The *I.H.T.* created distance between its reportage and the event by never actually asserting or criticizing directly, but by swamping the reader with criticism from other sources. Thus, the 1 February 1978 edition ran a headline on its front page that read, “Mrs. Thatcher is called racist for colored immigration stand.”⁶⁸ The paper, as well as all subsequent editions, contained various quotes from key political figures labeling Thatcher a racist. The *I.H.T.*, like *The Guardian*, had a vision of reality based on the desirability of equality and

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ “Birthrate in Areas of High Immigration,” *The Times*, 14 June 1978, p. 14.

⁶⁸ R.W. Apple Jr., “Mrs. Thatcher is Called Racist for Coloured Immigration Stand,” *I.H.T.*, 1 February 1978.

policies of inclusion for all races. Thus, it scorned Thatcher's ideas of limiting immigration. Articles throughout February and March of 1978 repeatedly warned of turning immigration (and therefore race) into an election issue. The 21 February editorial is representative of seven articles during this two-month period. The subheading stated, "With a general election likely in October, there is danger that the issue of immigration will dominate the campaign."⁶⁹ The editor then argued that it "was distorted to view the problem of immigration...as a problem of race."⁷⁰ Rather, it should be seen in a "broader historical perspective." The article then went on to frame Britain's immigration and race relations woes as a "legacy of empire," with Britain's early colonialism coming back to haunt her in the form of subjects from various colonies wanting to live in the Motherland.⁷¹ Thus, the *I.H.T.*, presented Britain's problems as more than an issue of race, placing responsibility for the large numbers of immigrants on the country's colonial past.

In addition to locating the question of race in the legacy of Britain's past, the paper asked, "Is Britain becoming a racist country?" This gave the *I.H.T.* the opportunity to discuss the surprising wave of grass roots support that Thatcher gained after she publicly made her stance. The paper also analyzed her popularity in relation to Mr. Enoch Powell, a politician of similar beliefs. The question of racism also began a dialogue on the fears that many Britons harbored in relation to immigrants. Interestingly, these pieces ended articulately by contextualising and grounding anti-immigrant

⁶⁹ Editorial, *I.H.T.*, 21 February 1978.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

sentiment, as well as working to desimplify the issues. “Racial issue may be key in next election,” was one article that provided such contextualization.⁷² The writer stated:

...The racial tensions that have been developing in Britain for a decade have suddenly been thrust into the center of a national political dialogue.... Race has been an everyday topic for years in pubs, in homes and on the outer fringes of politics...Many white Britons believe that nonwhites, who are called ‘coloreds’ here threaten not only their jobs, but what Mrs. Thatcher called ‘the particular British character...’ I believe myself that the problem of immigrants is so interlocked with other problems – of housing, unemployment or recession that it is misleading to depict it in simple racial terms.⁷³

In this article, the writer first situates the dialogue on race in Britain. He tells his readers that race has been a fairly closed subject for some time, and that now it has been brought out into the center of the political arena. He then voices the tangible and intangible fears of many Britons, demonstrating why race has become such an issue. Finally, he relocates the issue, moving it from abstract fears of being swamped by people of a darker color, to the broader pragmatic issues of the economy, state support, housing. This delegitimises Thatcher’s vague notion of a fragile culture by taking this notion out and replacing it with tangible, economic concerns. The *I.H.T.*’s presentation of this event using an economic focus demonstrates its sense of cherished community. Clearly, they are educated and pragmatically interested and unwilling to be caught up in Thatcher’s vague assertions about the impending ruin of British culture.

Conclusion

While all of the newspapers took issue with Mrs. Thatcher’s comments, they welcomed the opportunity to discuss race and the immigrant question with their

⁷² “Race May be Key in Next U.K. Election,” *I.H.T.*, 24 February 1978.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

respective communities. Each paper approached this dialogue from a different angle, filtering it through the particular agenda or ideology that worked as the paper's lens. Thus, *The Guardian* worked from a broadly humane angle that found Thatcher's policies to be opposed to its own inclusive ideals. The paper launched a three-pronged attack at both Thatcher and her comments wanting readers to understand from its category one articles that the problem was not simply of race, and that Thatcher was therefore overdramatizing an important issue. This implied that *The Guardian* readers were knowledgeable, and that the paper could trust them once it published the facts and figures. Just in case it could not, there were the other two categories. One satirized Thatcher, making her attempts at representing the common man both feeble and wildly exploitative, thus cracking her invocation of "us" by questioning her ability to lead us. The final category did not even mention Margaret Thatcher. Rather, Simon Winchester worked to acquaint *The Guardian* readers with colored people on *their* own terms, not Britain's. These heartwarming pieces had both explicit and implicit arguments. Explicitly, Winchester gave the reader pause, making him or her rethink the way that immigrations were treated, not just in general, but also at an individual level. Implicitly, he evoked more abstract feelings of kindness towards people who were obviously good and kind people.

Overall, the paper worked to demonstrate to its cherished community that immigrants were not the problem and that British culture had a much greater strength than Thatcher gave it credit for. Interestingly, although the paper had an inclusive policy towards the immigrant question, it seemed that at that time, immigrants were not part of

the cherished community, and this may be the reason that the paper did not call the audience to take more action.

The Times was happy to see immigration become a subject for debate but worried about Thatcher's blatant extremity. Her comments were viewed with distaste, as if she had breached basic civility. The paper did still ask its readers (both immigrant and colored) to vote Conservative, arguing that this was the party that would fix the concrete issues of poor housing, unemployment, and a weak economy. It bolstered this advocacy by printing many stories with headlines linking immigrants with the above issues, so that readers would know that in immigrant areas the birthrates were at least double, that immigrants worked illegally, and occupied the worst housing. These articles all ended with the observation that the present Government was not doing enough to fix these problems, and that the Conservative party would. In all of these articles, race was explicit, either through use of the term colored, or by mentioning the country of origin.

The *I.H.T.* contributed very differently to understanding the immigration issue. It decoded terms for its American readers (e.g. "immigration is a code word in Britain for race relations").⁷⁴ Choosing to see the issue as a legacy of empire and of economic practicality, the paper took for granted the American ideals of welcoming immigrants, assuming that immigrants should be cared for.

The newspapers' respective framings of this event demonstrate that the themes of color, and the fear of being deluged with a different culture, were at the forefront of the discussion. All of the papers, whether for or against Thatcher, presented the issue in terms of race, and turned the issue of integrity of culture to suit their agendas. All three

⁷⁴ "Mrs. Thatcher is Called a Racist for Colored Immigration Stand," *I.H.T.*, 1 February 1978, p. 1.

newspapers employed the use of race as the primary identifier of otherness. The fear throughout 1978 is of coloreds. Religion is not employed by any of the papers, to describe immigrants, nor is it even a topic of concern in Britain. This indicates that links between the immigrant population and Islam have not yet been made and that discrimination is primarily race based at this time.

Chapter 2 – Old Empire, New Regime: Fears of an Islamic Theocracy in the British Press, January 1978 – June 1979

The Iranian Revolution and the installation of an Islamic state heralded a new epoch for the West that attempted to reconcile itself with, “Islam, a new force partially understood” that made communism look “distinctly manageable.”⁷⁵ Unsure of what to make of the growing unrest in Iran throughout 1978, *The Guardian*, *The Times*, and the *International Herald Tribune* tentatively began coverage, with each attributing different weight to the significance of this increasing turbulence. The documentation of strikes and demonstrations in Iran throughout 1978 included broader questions such as “who was leading or organizing the strikes?” “How violent were they?” After the Shah fled Iran in January of 1979, the newspapers were split. *The Guardian* was excited about the possibilities for change, while the other two papers worried about Khomeini, who was the devil they did not know. Islam’s role in the revolution not just as a unifier and motivator but also as an alternative form of government was discussed more forcefully from this point. I have analyzed newspaper coverage on the period from the beginning of sporadic strikes in early January 1978 that increased in frequency and intensity over the coming months, to the early months of the Islamic republic, ending my analysis in June 1979. By that date, two of the three papers were articulating alarmist sentiments towards the role of Islam in the world and its power to unify a people.

⁷⁵ “Islam: A New Force Partially Understood,” *The Guardian*, 15 April 1979, p. 10.

Each of the newspapers expressed a markedly different attitude towards the events of the revolution that was in keeping with their place on the political spectrum and therefore their respective audiences. By the spring of 1979, the newspapers in Britain began to link the unrest and ensuing revolution with Islam and subsequently feared that the Islamic threat (over there) would come “*here*” because there were so many Muslim immigrants. In the United States, on the other hand, the Muslim threat was crafted in terms of a Cold War paradigm.

Another thesis of this chapter is that the downfall of the Shah, followed by the ascendance of an Islamic State under Ayatollah Khomeini, marked an overwhelming change in the way that the people of Britain viewed Muslim immigrants. Whereas prejudice towards immigrants was already well entrenched in the body politic, the Iranian Revolution represented the beginning of a new era of racism and religiously based xenophobia as parts of British society worked to reconcile themselves to living amongst immigrants from the Islamic world. From this time on, Islam and Muslims were never again seen as potentially benign, but rather, as fundamentalists to be feared.⁷⁶ Mark Juergensmeyer’s *The New Cold War?* provides a helpful model for viewing the way that secular western democracies (i.e. Britain) reacted to the growth of religious nationalism. He argues that countries such as Iran, who have implemented Islamic theocracies, are the “new evil empire,” in the eyes of the secular, democratic west.⁷⁷ I take his argument and apply it to the way the British have coped with Muslim immigrants *within* their borders, arguing that the Iranian revolution started a process of using religion as the primary

⁷⁶ These fears are reiterated in the third chapter of this work that examines the Salman Rushdie affair.

⁷⁷ Mark Juergensmeyer, 55.

articulator of identity which eventually (in 1989) marked an overwhelming change in the way that Britons viewed immigrants. Although the Thatcher Government ushered in a new intolerance towards coloreds (including Muslims), the Iranian revolution and new Islamic state represented a turning point in terms of identification. No longer were people from the Middle East and Indian subcontinent seen in racial terms; they were categorized by religion.

Background

The January 1979 flight of Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi from his throne amid strikes and great unrest heralded the end of a tumultuous era and the beginning of an equally turbulent one for the people of Iran. The revolution represented not just popular disenchantment with the monarchy's autocratic rule, but also a rejection of the way the Shah had allowed the West to encroach into Iran.⁷⁸

The Pahlavis had been in power since 1925, when the elder Reza Shah became hereditary shah, thus ending the Qajar dynasty. He reorganized the army and introduced reforms in order to encourage education and private industry. Until 1941, there was an economic boom, as modernized oil production sped up extraction and export, and as foreign capital flooded in to finance road works, rail, and the telegraph.

Oil was also to be the greatest source of conflict between Iran and the imperialistic powers Britain, France, and the USSR. In 1941, British and Soviet (and later American) forces occupied Iran under the pretext of safeguarding the oil. These powers refused to acknowledge the independence and sovereignty of Iran until the

⁷⁸ Background section taken from Said A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

Tehran conference of 1943. The Soviets stayed past the expiration date (given at the Tehran Conference for all foreign powers to be out Iran) of 1946, leaving only after Iranian leaders had complained to the United Nations and acceded to Soviet demands for oil concessions.

Unable to cope with the pressures of war and foreign invasion, Reza Shah abdicated in favor of his son, Muhammad, in September of 1941. Despite Iran's relative prosperity, development was uneven due to the Big Powers' continued demands for concessions and their opportunistic, rapacious approach to the country. While the oil producing centers of the country became industrialized, most of the country remained agrarian. In 1951, Premier Mossadegh and his National Front movement successfully gained the Iranian parliament's support to nationalize the oil industry. In response, the British blockaded Iranian ports, leading to the collapse of the industry and placing the country in an economic depression. Increasingly apprehensive about Mossadegh's growing power, the Shah engineered a coup with the United States' C.I.A. to put the Prime Minister out of government and return all power to the Shah.⁷⁹

From 1953 onwards, the increasingly westward looking Shah worked to consolidate his power, forming a secret police of crack troops to root out any potential dissent. He also carried on his father's work of reorganizing the army, and he began working with the United States to train soldiers and upgrade weapons. The Shah also attempted to accelerate the economic and social transformation of Iran, primarily through land reforms. In this process, which he called the "White Revolution," the government purchased estates, selling parcels of land to the people and distributing large tracts of

⁷⁹ Ibid., 72.

crown land.⁸⁰ In addition, the Shah carried out extensive plans for further redistribution, education, and the encouragement of private industry, but these policies were not wholly successful. Farhang and Dorman assert that the Shah's reforms failed because while the government broke up big estates, it reduced these to an inadequate size for sustaining a family.⁸¹ As a result, there was massive relocation to urban centers throughout the rest of the 1960s. Thus, the White Revolution resulted in even greater gaps between classes, creating widespread social alienation. All of these factors contributed to periods of unrest in Tehran (which had the biggest influx of people) throughout 1963 and 1964, as the inhabitants of the newly built urban shantytowns articulated their anger and resentment towards the Shah in the form of strikes and demonstrations.⁸²

This unrest, as well as its potential implications, reinforced the Shah's belief in the need for a strong army and he thus worked to further ties between Iran and various western countries in the hopes of receiving weapons and military aid. This improvement in relations with the West resulted in the Shah's journeys to Britain, the European continent, and the United States. His decision to make Iran the second strongest military power in the Middle East, coupled with Cold War imperatives, led to the formation of a special relationship with the U.S. The armies of the two nations performed exercises together. In addition, the Shah traded oil for tanks and planes.⁸³

The strengthened relations between Iran and the West seemed to have the effect of encouraging the Shah's sense of importance, and he embarked on a series of measures to confirm his grandeur to the world. The first was a coronation ceremony

⁸⁰ Ibid., 73.

⁸¹ William Dorman and Mansour Farhang, 83.

⁸² Said Arjomand, 86.

⁸³ William Dorman and Mansour Farhang, 79.

commemorating his ascension to the Peacock Throne in 1967. The second, in 1971, was a 2500-year birthday party held in honor of the Persian Empire. Each of these events cost millions as the Shah wined and dined over fifty heads of state at each occasion.⁸⁴

Thus, as the Shah enjoyed his new title of “the bulwark of the East,” his people grew more resentful of his gratuitous parties, violence, and repression, because their economic expectations were not being met.⁸⁵ All these sources of disaffection culminated in a series of riots that broke out in early 1978 beginning with calls for the liberalization of policies. This unrest simmered throughout the year, boiling over in November and December with massive strikes and anti-Shah, pro-Khomeini demonstrations. Exiled by the Shah since 1962 for criticizing the monarchy, the Ayatollah Khomeini was a charismatic figure who was seen by many Iranians to be the rightful leader of Iran. Tapes were made of Khomeini’s lectures on Islam, (delivered while in exile) and his urgings to the people of Iran to rise up against the Shah, and these were distributed throughout Iran. When the Shah fled Iran on 18 January 1979, Khomeini returned to Iran from Paris within a month, with the expectation of implementing an Islamic state. Although the disruption continued as the Shah-appointed provisional government fought the Mullahs for control, Khomeini’s forces were victorious and he declared the Islamic state of Iran on 11 February 1978, less than a month after the Shah had fled.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 119.

⁸⁵ The Shah was given this title by Gerald Ford, but was also called it by current President Jimmy Carter; Ibid., 123.

Individual Paper Characterizations

Crafting of the Revolution in the British Press began with observations on the increasing unrest in 1978. Foreign correspondents for *The Times* and *The Guardian* gave the most specific coverage of individual strikes; *The Guardian* had its own correspondent Liz Thurgood stationed in Tehran in 1977, while *The Times* did not have correspondent Tony Allaway there until September 1978. Before this the paper drew stories from various press agencies such as Reuters and Agence Press France.

The Guardian presented a vision of reality through the lens of human rights, which, it claimed, the Shah frequently flouted. This was demonstrated in the paper's concern for the strikers, especially as 1978 wore on and the strike activity intensified. Highly opinionated, *The Guardian's* journalists always expressed concern or sympathy for the strikers, generally students, painting them as victims. Liz Thurgood's 14 May article documenting a demonstration in Teheran expresses this concern.

Although they could be shot by the Shah's troops, or jailed and tortured by his brutally notorious SAVAK squad, the students are out here with increasing regularity calling for change. Tired of waiting for the Shah to loosen controls, they want greater freedom in the press, and a tight reigning in of the same SAVAK guards who threaten to them at this moment. It seems this generation will not take no for an answer, as shown in their determination to protest, even in the face of armed soldiers.⁸⁶

This piece not only shows concern for the demonstrators, but great regard for their bravery. Her repetitive references to the danger these protesters face highlight her anxiety that the audience would understand the severity of the situation thus the mood in this article is intense, conveying the precarious atmosphere. This article also critiques the

⁸⁶ Liz Thurgood, "Another Day in Tehran," *The Guardian*, 14 May 1978.

Shah, for it is his troops and SAVAK squads that are threatening the demonstrators. The reader also gets a sense that the Shah could not rule without such an iron rod, thus casting him as a tyrant, incapable of both good leadership, and democracy.

Another example is Liz Thurgood's September 1978 piece discussing the Shah's latest crackdown. Named "Black September," this episode of repression was the worst in Iran in decades.⁸⁷ There were major discrepancies between the Iranian official and eyewitness reports on death tolls. Thurgood began her discussion of this event as follows:

Why the Shah must 'liberalise'

By CRUEL paradox, the Shah has imposed martial law on 12 cities across Iran, ostensibly to give his people more political freedoms. The troops and tanks may have bought him some time, but the crackdown has shown that he cannot tolerate any real opposition to his absolute powers – except within his own strictly limited definition of liberalization. According to the Shah... liberalization was set in motion nearly two years ago – about the time that President-elect Carter was helping make human rights an international issue. But it has become clear in the past month that that the Shah has his own rule book of "liberalization." The shooting of unarmed protesters ... seemed to provide proof ... that the Shah's first rule is the survival of his regime at any cost.⁸⁸

This article is typical of Thurgood's reportage, presenting a picture of a regime that did not care for its people. She discusses what the regime does, and its reasons for doing so, while telling the reader what is really going on, and how the people of Iran face cruel abuse at the hands of the leaders. Her language is sarcastic as she discusses the Shah; she works to delegitimise his position by portraying him as dependent on soldiers to keep both order and his regime intact. The author is also somewhat cynical when

⁸⁷ On 8 September 1978, martial law was imposed in Tehran, and early that evening troops fired on a group of demonstrators (at the Shah's request). The casualties were enormous and the day came to be known as the massacre of Black September; Said Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*, 114.

⁸⁸ Liz Thurgood, "Why the Shah Must Liberalise," *The Guardian*, 10 September 1978

documenting the role of Jimmy Carter and his human rights stand, especially given the two leaders' friendship and Carter's continued support for the Shah (despite the Shah's apparent disregard for human rights).

Thurgood wanted *The Guardian's* cherished community to know that the Shah was unlikely to terminate the repression. The same Black September article conveyed this articulately:

...The latest demonstration highlighted what almost certainly will continue to remain a controversy for months to come: how many people – or “martyrs” as the dead are already called, were killed in Tehran on Friday.⁸⁹

This article demonstrates the paper's human rights prism, focusing not just on the violence, but the regime's attempts to cover up its brutality. Other articles by Thurgood further demonstrate the Shah's lack of concern for human rights. In her next piece, written from Britain, Thurgood asks, “for how long can he remain on a throne girded by guns...”⁹⁰ thus again showing her disdain for the Shah's reliance on his army to stay in power. Interestingly, Thurgood was the only correspondent to predict that the demonstrators were not going to stop. She argued that this generation was unified against the Shah as a “combination of unfulfilled economic expectations, denial of fundamental political rights and years of repressive dictatorship, including torture” had galvanized them.⁹¹ Thurgood's articles thus suggest that she saw some form of upheaval coming, and it is certainly clear that she welcomed it.

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Liz Thurgood, “King of Kings?” *The Guardian*, 15 September 1978.

⁹¹ Liz Thurgood, “The Situation in Iran,” *The Guardian* 17 September 1978.

Ultimately, Thurgood's enthusiasm for the protesters led to her expulsion from Iran in October 1978. Letters from the Iranian embassy in London to *The Guardian* explaining why the expulsion decision was made, discussed Thurgood's:

...Fervent and vituperative personal campaign against the Iranian regime...(in her depiction of the riots) she has flaunted her animus towards the Government. Her sweeping generalizations are, in our view, animated by her own predisposition against the Government and her affection for those who oppose it.⁹²

This is an interesting characterization of her coverage on the regime, as it is accurate. Her reportage certainly did display an animus towards the Government, based on its disregard for human rights. This letter demonstrates how sensitive the Iranian monarchy was to criticism, and, (in their deportation of Thurgood) their willingness to stem it.

Thurgood's replacements were equally opinionated. Articles in *The Guardian* during the rest of 1978 contextualised the unrest and anti-Shah demonstrations by giving histories of the Shah's oppressive policies and of the previous two revolts (1953 and 1963) that had taken place. Like Thurgood, these writers also argued that the Shah's brutality was unlikely to stop until the strikes ended. Such opinionated documentation of the unrest was unique. The paper clearly felt very strongly about the Iranian monarchy's infringement on personal rights, and was very proud of the large numbers that did come out and protest. Although many of the articles were intense, there was no strong message in them for the audience, perhaps other than a warning that the situation in Iran was becoming like a powder keg. Throughout 1978, however, there was no discussion of Islam as a motivator or unifier. The articles focused on popular discontent (often

⁹² Parviz C. Radji, "Why Iran Expelled *The Guardian* Correspondent," *The Guardian*, 1 October 1978.

economically based) and the volatile situation of a Shah surrounded by troops unwilling to liberalize, even in the face of such protest.

The Ayatollah's return to Iran and the installation of an Islamic state gave *The Guardian's* correspondents pause. When the Ayatollah returned to Iran, the paper adopted a new approach, waiting to see how the new ruler would manage. From January to March the paper viewed the situation with more distance, clearly unsure, and unwilling to predict what the new regime would bring Iran. Articles at this time simply documented the changes taking place as the *majles* (council of experts) was elected and things generally settled down. By April *The Guardian* was printing articles of a critical nature, again, human rights based. The paper was primarily critical of the Ayatollah's repression of Baha'is, and articles especially took issue with the short amount of time in which he had even been back in Iran before starting repression. "Ayatollah purges Baha'is," is such an example.

He has been back in Iran for less than three months, yet already has begun purging those of a different faith. The Ayatollah gave permission to his Guards of the Revolution to round up Baha'is, who he says are 'anti revolutionary'.... Many Baha'is fear for their lives and property now, as the Ayatollah's men round them up to send them into exile.⁹³

This article demonstrates *The Guardian's* willingness to criticize on human rights abuses, while not delegitimising or even criticizing the Islamic regime. The piece critiques Khomeini for giving his permission to the Guards. It, and the other seven articles that appeared until May of 1979 did not ever try to invalidate the new state, just critique it from this point of view. Islam was never characterized as the source of evil, rather,

⁹³ "Ayatollah Purges Baha'is," *The Guardian*, 20 April 1979.

articles started to question whether a younger, more open, interpreter of the Koran should succeed Khomeini. “Khomeini’s Iran,” is an example of this limited critique. Printed in early May 1979, the article states:

That the Shah has gone is a great thing for Iran. The people thought they would be free. The Ayatollah’s Iran is not so free, and, with each new law, returns further into the past. Women must again wear the chador – the jeans and skirts of the Shah’s days are forbidden. For religious minorities in Iran, the future is also bleak. Already Baha’is are being sent into exile. Iran needs a leader who can balance a traditional Islam with an open, accepting, and modernizing society. The people of Iran must be tired, tired of constantly having to conform to one man’s wishes.⁹⁴

In this article, it was not the religion that mattered, but the person in charge. The writer (again Liz Thurgood) listed the infringements on Iranian society, and made comparisons between the two autocracies. Her observance that each regime was an autocracy is insightful, and one that *The Times* and *I.H.T.* had failed to see. Thurgood was not criticizing Islam – indeed her observance that Islam can be balanced with modernity demonstrates that she placed blame squarely on Khomeini. Another article, entitled “The New Shah,” again illustrated this point of limited critique:

The Shah had SAVAK; Khomeini has his Guards of the Revolution. Both rulers did not tolerate any dissent, believing in the divinity of their ways.⁹⁵

The comparison again left no doubt in the reader’s mind how similar the two men were. The choice of the term “divinity,” also references both men’s belief that God is in agreement with their actions, even when it came to a use of force. Again, Islam was not the problem here; it is the kingdom of men at fault.

⁹⁴ Liz Thurgood, “Khomeini’s Iran,” *The Guardian*. 3 May 1979.

⁹⁵ “The New Shah,” *The Guardian*, 28 May 1979.

Although the reporters of *The Guardian* debated the issue of an upsurge in Islamic fundamentalism, (as evidenced in an increasing number of articles on Islam as a force) the paper was generally unconcerned with notions of Islam plunging Britain into ruin. It did not conceive of Islam in the same base ways (good or bad) as the *I.H.T.* and *The Times*. Between February and May, *The Guardian* seemed to have articles gently laughing at the Cold War policies of the U.S., insinuating that this time, the U.S. was unable to control the situation.

An April 1979 comment article, entitled, “Islam, A force partially understood,” demonstrates this laughing tone:

Islam has begun to make Marxism look decidedly manageable. As recently as ten years ago there were only two conflicting ideologies in the world to which policy makers need pay any attention – discounting that is nationalism in Africa...Islam has gradually crept up on this old dialogue, until the Iranian revolution and all that flows there from, it presents a powerful new voice...⁹⁶

Although there was an air of jest to this piece, I argue that after the Iranian revolution Marxism probably seemed eminently manageable – Islam presented a new “other.” Chapter three, the Salman Rushdie affair of 1989 demonstrates that a decade later, the secular West was still negotiating the boundaries of Islam. Articles like “A Militant Islam on the March” included insights such as “the look to religion ...arises from the failures of secular nationalism in the Moslem world itself.”⁹⁷ This failure was repeatedly argued by *The Guardian* to be the key reason for the failure of fundamentalist

⁹⁶ “Islam, A Force Partially Understood,” *I.H.T.*, 17 April 1979.

⁹⁷ “A Militant Islam on the March,” *The Guardian*, 7 January 1979.

regimes to take hold elsewhere, but not in Britain where life was safe and steady in comparison.

Thus, *The Guardian* remained constant in its use of human rights as a filter for judging the Iranian regimes. The paper obviously did not see Islam as evil or “other,” given its continued critique and comparison of Khomeini to the Shah. Rather it discussed the evil of autocracy, and censured the new Iran for its lack of change in this respect. Subtle links are made between instability in Iran and the large Muslim population at home, but the tone of the articles was generally reassuring.

The Times’ coverage on the other hand, demonstrated a different agenda. Pieces throughout 1978 documented the mounting tension by presenting a volatile vision of reality, but did little to explain the history of relations between the Shah and his people. Thus, it also failed to address the reasons for Iranians’ hostility towards the Shah.

“20 Killed as police open fire in Iran,” is one such article that documented simply what happened, omitting any discussion of the events by stating:

Earlier today, the official news agency reported that five people had been killed and nine injured when police opened fire on demonstrators attacking a police post at Qom, about ninety miles south of here. The agency said that police had issued repeated warnings and had fired into the air to repel the attackers. They opened fire on demonstrators after four policemen had been wounded.... Dissident sources said that 20 people were killed when the police fired on a protest demonstration ...they described the protest as a peaceful demonstration against police action in dispersing a weekend rally of ...students.⁹⁸

The style of the article could not be more different from *The Guardian*’s brash praise for the strikers. Instead, by using matter of fact language, it maintained distance

⁹⁸ “20 Killed as Police Open Fire in Iran,” *The Times*, 11 January 1978.

from the participants by simply including an unbiased account of differing stories explaining what occurred.

All articles documenting strikes followed this format, as shown in this 12 May piece entitled “Iran riots spread to Teheran,” which covers another strike:

Thousands of demonstrators clashed with police in the crowded bazaar section of southern Tehran today ...Police threw teargas and fired over the crowd...but sources say that some of the hundred people injured in the clash had been hit by police bullets.... The Teheran clash followed a meeting in a meeting in a mosque addressed by Dr. Karim Sanjabi, who heads the Iranian human rights committee, set up after six people died in anti-governmental riots in...Qom...last January.⁹⁹

Yet again, the article provided no further documentation, apart from the immediate context of the riot’s beginning. There was no opinion or further discussion of the human rights committee. The same format continued, even after the Black September massacre. One such example is the piece entitled, “Strike call effective throughout Iran,” written by *The Times*’ own correspondent Tony Allaway, who stated:

Reports of demonstrators clashing with police in west Teheran this morning could not be confirmed. But five deaths were reported in Dezful, southern Iran after police fired on rioters who set fire to 28 banks...¹⁰⁰

Thus, throughout 1978, the paper remained more neutral than *The Guardian*. Journalists simply reported the unrest without presenting a history of the regime’s violence and tight grip on Iranian society. In addition, correspondents did not predict or suggest future events, giving just the event and any immediate contextualization.

However, the Shah’s flight from the Peacock Throne in early 1979 heralded a change in reportage for *The Times*. From then on, the paper was fiercely critical of the

⁹⁹ “Iran Riots Spread to Teheran,” *The Times*, 12 May 1978.

¹⁰⁰ Tony Allaway, Strike Call Effective Throughout Iran, *The Times*, 5 October 1978.

Ayatollah Khomeini and the installation of an Islamic state. This change was evident in “Khomeini purges religious minorities,” an article castigating the Ayatollah’s repression of Baha’is.

The Ayatollah Khomeini is sending many of the country’s minority Baha’is into exile, a government source said earlier this morning. Charging the Baha’is as ‘anti-revolutionary,’ he has given his Guards of the Revolution permission to remove the Baha’is in what many human rights observers say will be a brutal relocation. Fearing for their lives under an Islamic regime, many fled the country when the Shah announced his abdication. Under the monarchy, they were a protected minority group...¹⁰¹

This excerpt illustrates a shift in the paper’s frame of reference from one of strategic interest to a *Guardian*-like human rights prism. Nowhere in the coverage throughout 1978 did *The Times*’ reporters discuss the Shah’s human rights infringements. The new Islamic regime, however, was repeatedly castigated for forcefully removing the Baha’is. Another example of this new lens was “Iran – home to repression,” which stated:

Women in Iran have begun demonstrations against the mullahs for new laws making traditional Islamic dress for women compulsory again. Under the Shah’s policy of modernization, women were encouraged to wear jeans and skirts, and to remove their veils. He wanted them to be equal to men. Now, the new law means that they must again veil and cover their entire bodies in a public ‘submission’ to their Islamic religion.¹⁰²

In this article, Islam is responsible for the infringement on women’s rights to dress as they please. A vision of reality is crafted in which the religion is sexist and patriarchal, by the misuse of the word submission. The article also praises the Shah as

¹⁰¹ Tony Allaway, “Khomeini Purges Baha’is,” *The Times*, 5 May 1979.

¹⁰² Tony Allaway, “Iran – Home to Repression,” *The Times*, 30 March 1979.

both a modernizer and liberator of women, failing to qualify either term, in contrast to the Islamic regime.

Articles between March and June became more condemning of Islam, demonstrating *The Times*' uneasiness with the new theocracy. These pieces worked in concert with the articles on the infringements of human rights. One such piece was "Iran, an Islamic Theocracy," which stated:

Islamic Iran is very different from the country the Shah left just a few weeks ago. Democracy has also gone, as the Ayatollah implements his Islamic theocracy. His pronouncement that "Islam is in charge" is frightening. Women remain indoors, again submissive to their men. It is said that alcohol will be banned, as will the "west-toxic" music from the United States and Britain. Iran will be shrouded in a cloak of Islam.¹⁰³

Printed on 5 March 1979, less than one month after the Ayatollah's return, the piece conveyed the image of Islam being used to blanket the country from the West. The inclusion of the phrase, "again submissive to their men," creates a sense of outrage in the cherished community, by portraying the end of the Shah's apparent policy of equality. In addition, it portrays Islam as a repressive, patriarchal religion associated with the ignorance and barbarianism of the Middle Ages. Accompanying the article was a cartoon that depicted a giant size Khomeini clasping a small, fragile looking woman with the label "Iran," to his breast. The caption states, "Here, my child. You will be safe from all other influences,"¹⁰⁴ thus reiterating the feeling of suffocation that the article conveys. Painting Khomeini as an overprotective father, the cartoon portrays him as responsible for the country's stagnation.

¹⁰³ Tony Allaway, "Iran, an Islamic Theocracy," *The Times*, 5 March 1979.

¹⁰⁴ "Here, My Child. You Will be Safe from all Other Influences," *The Times*, 5 March 1979.

“How the Iranians can’t get away from it all,” is another piece that waved the red flag of the threat of Islam.¹⁰⁵ Describing the deprivations of an Islamic holiday it stated:

The first summer in the Islam republic threatens to turn Iran’s northern riviera into a tourists’ disaster zone. Six weeks into the holiday season and the Caspian Sea resorts are almost deserted.... ‘Business is miserable,’ said the owner of a large hotel that thrived during the Shah’s regime.... The reasons behind such gloom are not hard to discover. Once crowded beaches are now divided by lengths of rope, punctuated by bawdy Islamic guardsmen; women, clad in the black veil of Islam and children sit on one side, husbands on the other.... Such restraints follow religious proscriptions from Qom. Earlier last week, the Ayatollah Khomeini warned against “the blooming youth (who) poured into the sea, grappling with one another, doing what they liked. This remarkable attack followed the prohibition of alcohol.... When Iran began its month long Ramadan fast, sandwich kiosks closed and many hoteliers were wondering whether guests would have to observe the dawn till dusk fast.¹⁰⁶

Again, the article focuses on the deprivations that Islam is bringing to Iran. Once crowded beaches are now empty, and segregated. Women, who used to wear what they wanted, now must wear chadors, even on the beach. The article conveys the extremity of Islam, portraying it as restrictive to the point of fanaticism.

The Times presents a striking change in its language and style throughout the period of January 1978 to May 1979. The abdication of the Shah and the installation of an Islamic state in the spring of 1979 mark the change. Articles moved from a balanced, event-based reportage without opinion or predictions, to condemnation of the theocracy, Ayatollah Khomeini, and Islam. Based on human rights, this critique employed similar language to that of *The Guardian*. Similarly, *The Times* commented on the emergence of Islam as a potential threat. The paper portrayed the religion as one of repression and

¹⁰⁵ Tony Allway, “How the Iranians Can’t get Away from it all,” *The Times*, 7 August 1979.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

backwardness, playing on the audience's sense of outrage in its repetitive discussions of the forced submission of women.

The *International Herald Tribune's* reportage differed from the British papers in many respects. First, the paper crafted the issue of Iranian unrest and revolution from a U.S. point of view, therefore molding coverage based on a Cold War paradigm that primarily regarded economic and strategic interests before human rights. The *I.H.T.* followed Farhang and Dorman's model of U.S. reportage of Iran, which describes the press as continually being led by the government rather than working to inform and discuss issues with its cherished community.¹⁰⁷ The paper provided very little documentation of the increasing unrest throughout 1978, with the documentation of strikes only starting with frequency from November 1978. The Shah's abdication, however, marked a change in reportage, with the threat of Islam becoming the primary theme.

The article, "Foes of Shah Strike Oil Industry in Iran," was an example of the *I.H.T.'s* deference to U.S. government policy over fact-finding journalism.¹⁰⁸ Stating that:

A general strike today by thousands of Iranian oil industry workers opposed to the regime threatened the nation's \$600 million-a-day oil exports and Premier Jaafar Sharif-Emami called the strike an act of treason.... Premier Sharif-Emami acknowledged that in parliament that the strike had resulted in "difficulties." He said he could understand

¹⁰⁷ William A. Farhang and Mansour Dorman, *The U.S. Press and Iran: Foreign Policy and the Journalism of Deference* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987) 14.

¹⁰⁸ "Foes of Shah Strike Oil Industry in Iran," *I.H.T.*, 1 November 1978, p. 1.

opposition to his government, “but why hurt the state itself?”...”What will happen to this country if the oil production is stopped?”¹⁰⁹

This article was representative of *I.H.T.* reportage on Iran before the fall of the Shah, which primarily focused on U.S. economic and strategic interests. The title blatantly demonstrates the paper’s tone, working to delegitimise the strikers by terming them “foes” of the Shah. The article further undoes the strikers by portraying their actions as treasonous and selfish. Below this article was a small update box that issued a statement from President Carter giving the Shah strong support describing “his embattled regime as progressive and very valuable to the entire Western world.”¹¹⁰ This news piece also leaves the reader in no doubt as to the paper’s bias, with neither article discussing the Shah’s human rights abuses, Iran’s economic woes, or its history of ineffective leadership.

An 8 November article demonstrated the same bias, also with an explicit headline. “U.S. gives strong support for Shah’s Rule,” reiterated President Jimmy Carter’s support for the Iranian monarch.¹¹¹

“The desperate effort of Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi of Iran to halt turmoil in his country by turning to military rule won strong support from the White House yesterday...”We fully support the efforts of the Shah to restore order while continuing his program of liberalization.” Cyrus Vance said.¹¹²

This piece again reaffirms U.S. support for the Shah, even as he imposed a military government. There was no discussion of how badly Iran was shutdown with the strikes,

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ “Carter Gives Praise to the Shah,” *I.H.T.*, 1 November 1978, 1.

¹¹¹ “U.S. Gives Strong Support to Shah’s Rule,” *I.H.T.*, 8 November 1978, p. 1.

¹¹² Ibid.

nor of just how much popular sentiment was against the Shah. The audience was presented with an American strategic interest portrayal, and the Shah's actions were justified to keep him in power, with U.S. interests safe.

The Shah's departure from Iran resulted in a change in reportage. From then on, coverage centered on the threat of Islam, with limited coverage on the new Islamic republic. "The Shi'ite Threat," was one article that evoked a fear of Islam.¹¹³ In the article, readers are informed that, "Shi'ites who make up perhaps 15 per cent of the world's 700 Muslims are Islam's downtrodden. In only one Shi'ite country – Iran – is there a Shi'ite leadership." The article then documents the history of the Shia/Sunni split, finishing the piece ominously: "For the Sunnis, the menace of the Ayatollah is the spur he gives for a Shi'ite assertion of their rights as equals." Thus, informing the cherished community that it was the Iranian Muslims that they should fear. The Ayatollah is presented as something of a Pied Piper, who will lead his people to claim their equality.

Another piece entitled "Islam and the Swathe of Instability," discussed the nature of Islam:

Conservative and radical regimes both appear vulnerable. While the resurgent Moslem movement has taken special aim at the alleged excesses of Western influence, it is hostile to Marxist ideals as well.¹¹⁴

Thus, reading much like a "How to Spot a Communist" handbook, the *I.H.T.* attempted to help its audience come to grips with the "resurgent Moslem movement," while offering little insight into the issue, the same critique that many have of the paper's treatment of communism. Interestingly, the piece made no links between the movement and the large

¹¹³ "The Shi'ite Threat," *I.H.T.*, 2 March 1979, p. 8.

¹¹⁴ "Islam and the Swathe of Instability," *I.H.T.* 15 January 1979.

Muslim immigrant populations in Europe, rather making generalized comments about Islamic dissatisfaction with Western excess.

Thus, it was the threat of Islam that dominated *I.H.T.*'s post-Shah coverage of Iran. The paper was clearly distressed at this new fundamentalism that had toppled Iran, and therefore spent the rest of 1979 trying to make sense of it. The idea of instability spreading to Europe's Muslims was not addressed rather, the *I.H.T.* simply portrayed Islam under the rubric of threat.

Conclusion

The Iranian revolution and the institution of an Islamic theocracy unleashed a fear that still pervades Western societies to this day. All the papers document an unrest heightened in frequency and intensity as the year progressed. Finally, drowning Iran in November, the crucial part of this deluge was its energy, stamina, and idealism. The three newspapers, although similar in the flow of stories they presented, gave very different versions of reality, depending on their respective ideological bents.

The Guardian's bent was human rights based, and the paper loudly castigated the Shah for his continued disrespect of these rights. *The Guardian* sided with the strikers, leaving no ambiguity about its bias. Reports throughout 1978 provided a location of the relationship between the Shah and his people, thus providing the audience with an understanding of why Iran became gripped with unrest. After the Revolution the paper was silent, giving the new regime a chance to install itself before being judged. The regime was censured for its lack of regard for minorities, and for allowing the Ayatollah to be autocratic. *The Guardian* provided the only link between the fundamentalism

swirling around the globe and its domestic Muslim population, but reassured readers that it was insecurity and instability that bred fanaticism. Thus, the paper met the rising force of Islam head on, without needing to frighten its cherished community.

The Times' coverage was opposite to *The Guardian's*. Throughout 1978 the paper presented facts only, providing balanced coverage of the unrest. This changed in the spring of 1979 with the Shah's abdication. The paper's reportage changed two fold. Firstly, it now presented critiques of the new regime from a human rights point of view similar to *The Guardian's*. Second, the threat of Islam became a prominent theme, and it blamed the new Iran on Islam. Interestingly, Muslim immigrants at home were not linked to fundamentalism – it seems the paper was too busy documenting the external threat.

I.H.T.'s coverage differed again. Caught by surprise, the paper did not begin frequent reportage on Iran until the unrest was reaching its climax. The information it did provide was stilted by deference to strategic interest. Thus, *I.H.T.* readers were left not knowing the extent of, or, often reasons for the strikes, with strikers portrayed as traitors. The fall of the Shah was another surprise, and the paper shifted its energy to documenting the rising threat of Islam, in terms very much like *The Times*. Also, like *The Times*, there was no connection made between the Islamic threat and the large Muslim populations throughout Europe.

The issue of culture and even the invocation of “us” and “them” were not raised here. Rather, the three newspapers remained outwardly focused with only *The Guardian* briefly looking in. The issue of audience is still unclear – coverage in all three papers did not demonstrate in any way whether their cherished communities included Muslim

immigrants. What is key in an examination of *The Guardian*, *The Times* and *I.H.T.* is the emergence of Islam as a force, and for the latter two papers, a threat. These papers definitely exhibit uneasiness about where to slot Islam into the list of evil-isms, an issue Juergensmeyer discusses as the first stage of Islam becoming the new evil empire.¹¹⁵ The spring of 1979 heralds this new evil, with *The Times* and *I.H.T.* arguing that it was the visible differences of Islam (the treatment of women, veiling, absence of democracy, segregation, and alcohol bans) that often rendered it as evil. Only *The Guardian* managed to examine it without causing alarm to the domestic population. As chapter one demonstrates, Margaret Thatcher was doing enough of that.

¹¹⁵ Mark Juergensmeyer, 51.

Chapter 3 – Send Rushdie to Hell? Coping with the Enemy Within: The 1989 Salman Rushdie Affair

The Salman Rushdie affair is a rich example of the final phase of my thesis. In this affair, it is the topic of religion that dominates domestic discussion, and it is religion that is now the entrenched way of defining immigrants. The press, after examining the Iranian Revolution and questioning the force of Islam generally, has shifted its gaze inward again, to link Islam (and the various fundamentalist movements going on around the world), with Britain's own large Muslim population.

My analysis of coverage begins on 1 January 1989. Although Rushdie's controversial novel, entitled *The Satanic Verses*¹¹⁶ was released in Britain in September 1988, and the Muslim community immediately lodged protests with the government, there was no coverage of the protest in any of the newspapers.¹¹⁷

Background to the Affair

Rushdie's novel was a cause célèbre because he depicted the Islamic Prophet Muhammad as a philanderer and his wives as prostitutes. The title, *The Satanic Verses* relates to three verses in the Koran that were supposedly written by Satan masquerading as Muhammad, and refer to his infidelity. In September 1988, Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* was released in the United Kingdom. Leaders of the Muslim community called on the government to ban the book, citing his depiction of the prophet as offensive. They had little success. Reportage of the affair shows that the book

¹¹⁶ Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, (London: Penguin, 1988).

¹¹⁷ Daniel Pipes, *The Rushdie Affair: the Novel, the Ayatollah and the West*, (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1990), 20.

offended most members of the Muslim community in Britain.¹¹⁸ In fact, some members of the Muslim community in Bradford (an industrial city in the north of Britain) held a book burning on 14 January 1989, but there was no coverage of this in *The Guardian*, *The Times*, or *I.H.T.*, apart from a passing observation a week later in *I.H.T.* Coverage did not begin until the Ayatollah Khomeini's *fatwa* (religious edict) on February 12, 1989. Then, however, the affair occupied the front page of all the papers for most of February.¹¹⁹

In early January, W.H. Smith, the largest book retailer in the United Kingdom, announced it would stop carrying the book, due in part to the offense caused to Muslims and, more pragmatically, because it simply was not selling well.¹²⁰ Also, in January of 1989, the book was released worldwide. Immediately the governments of countries with majority Muslim populations banned the book. On 12 February the Ayatollah Khomeini leader and chief Islamic jurist of Iran issued a *fatwa* (religious edict) calling for Rushdie's death because he had insulted the prophet. Khomeini proclaimed it was "every Muslim's duty to spend his life and his wealth doing everything he could to send him (Rushdie) to hell."¹²¹

The British government immediately asked for "clarification" of Khomeini's comments. Salman Rushdie and his wife went into hiding under Scotland Yard police

¹¹⁸ There was not a single piece of coverage in any of the papers that portrayed a Muslim as unmoved by the book. All were offended, but to different extents. The question became whether they were offended enough to follow the Ayatollah Khomeini's *fatwa*, or whether they felt greater respect for English law.

¹¹⁹ The *fatwa* pronounced Rushdie an apostate (an ex-Muslim, someone that has turned away from Islam) and an infidel and told Muslims to send Rushdie to burn in hell for his offense to Islam.

¹²⁰ This assertion is countered by the reality that the book had climbed from ninth to sixth on the bestseller list and earned the author the 1988 Whitbred literary prize.

¹²¹ Daniel Pipes, *The Rushdie Affair: the Novel, the Ayatollah and the West*, 12.

protection on February 14.¹²² The Iranian President, Ali Khameni, told the British government that the Ayatollah's edict would remain, but that the death sentence "may be" rescinded if Rushdie apologized.¹²³ Within twenty-four hours the author apologized, but the Ayatollah said that it was too late – even if Rushdie led a good life from then on, he had sinned. He had to die.

The British government called for a meeting of the twelve European Economic Community countries (E.E.C.) to discuss the affair. All twelve countries vigorously defended Rushdie's right to free speech and condemned Khomeini's call as "inciting terrorism." All twelve also decided to remove their diplomats in an effort to compel Tehran to take back the *fatwa*. In Britain, W.H. Smith announced that it would be restocking the book; in Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States the book was not displayed but available for purchase if requested. Sales boomed in all three regions.

The British Muslim community loudly condemned W.H. Smith's decision reversal. The community also kept pressure on the government to ban the book, something that the leaders still refused to do. In Britain, continental Europe, and the United States, publishers and stores carrying the book received death threats. In the United States, two stores were bombed.¹²⁴ Throughout February and March, there were violent demonstrations against Rushdie in Britain, the United States, Turkey, Pakistan, and India. At the same time there was also much support for Rushdie from the literary community, which labeled the Ayatollah's behavior as "intellectual terrorism" and defended Rushdie's right to publish, "Free from fear of violence or intimidation."

¹²² Ibid., 30.

¹²³ Ibid., 33.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 39.

During the affair, the primary theme that emerged in *The Guardian*, *The Times* and *I.H.T.* was the defense of Rushdie's right to free speech in the face of international Muslim aggression. All three newspapers agreed that death sentences simply could not be proclaimed from afar. However, it is interesting to see how the various papers tempered this sentiment with sensitivity for the Islamic community, in other words, the extent to which the discussion of the responsibilities that went along with the privilege of free speech varied. Further, the defense of Rushdie was often tied to a negative portrayal of the Ayatollah Khomeini. I found that in both the *I.H.T.* and *The Times*, discussions of Rushdie's safety were accompanied by vilifications of the Ayatollah. However, this coverage provided no information or insights into "Khomeinism," (the Ayatollah's brand of Islam). *The Times* just selected excerpts of his pronouncements to show how frightening he was. *The Guardian* on the other hand contained no demonizations of Khomeini, and in fact, it often worked to do exactly the opposite – humanize him. From this stance, each of the newspapers went in a different direction, generally along the lines of the paper's general outlook.

Individual Paper Characterizations

The Guardian's coverage of the Rushdie affair was the most complex. While beginning with the basic premise of free speech stated above, the paper was also at pains to discuss just how offensive the book really was to Muslims, preaching an inclusionary policy of race relations. Again, a human rights paradigm was the measure of censure. The paper's reportage centered around three elements, all tied to the notion of culture, which demonstrated sensitivity to Muslims on the home front. The first was a cultural

critique of both the abuse of Rushdie's free speech, as well as the firebrand style of Islam demonstrated by the Ayatollah. Second was the paper's inclusion of Muslim immigrants in its reportage. This widened cherished community now included (at least) upper middle class, educated Muslims. Thirdly, the paper printed many articles on the law and exhortations from the government to stay within it. This returns to the human rights prism under which the paper was produced, as it was clear that while it was sympathetic to the offense caused to Muslims, it was not sympathetic to violence.

The paper's critique of both Rushdie and Khomeini opened a discussion of Islam. Working to give its readers an understanding of how and why the Ayatollah had reacted so strongly, the paper discussed the Ayatollah's brand of Islam at length. The extended discussion of Khomeini's Islam in *The Guardian* was unique, as neither *The Times* nor *I.H.T.* observed that there is more than one type of Islam. *The Guardian* often compared Islam with Christianity; in this case to demonstrate that the diversity among Christians was similar in Islam. The paper was at pains to inform its cherished community that Islam in Iran was "Khomeinism" – a radical form of Islam, and one that most Muslims, both Shia and Sunni, felt was a perversion of the religion.

The 16 February edition included an article, "Khomeini's ideas a perversion of Islam," which discussed the Ayatollah's fundamentalism.¹²⁵ Beginning with rhetorical questions about Khomeini's powerful religious position and killing in the name of religion in general, the article asked:

Has a country's political and spiritual leader the right to make a public indictment to murder? As there is obviously no such right, how must the world community react to the 'contract' that Iran's Imam Khomeini has

¹²⁵ "Khomeini's Ideas a Perversion of Islam," *The Guardian*, 16 February 1989.

offered to Islamic fundamentalists the world over? The claim by Khomeini and his fanatical cranks to lay down the law and create an absolutely medieval reign of terror in their country is already causing a problem. But their determination to impose their version of Islam outside Iran's borders, even on people who are not of their faith is plain terrorism.... The Islamic world's spiritual, intellectual, and political leaders have a primary duty to speak up on the matter. It is urgent that they unequivocally condemn... Khomeini's practices and warn their...fellow Muslims to be on their guard and remind them that the Teheran ruler's religious ideas are a perversion of Islam just as the Inquisition was formerly a perversion of Christianity. The moment there is a call to murder is there not a duty to assist the person whose life is threatened?¹²⁶

In this article we see the broader question of whether someone in the Ayatollah's position of power should even have the right to make death sentences. Clearly, the article says no, simply because there are too many people who will heed his words.¹²⁷ *The Guardian's* lens of humanity is demonstrated through its statement that when someone is in danger, it is our duty to assist them. Finally, the term "fanatical cranks," and "medieval reign," makes it clear what the author thinks about Iran's brand of Islam.

The first point the article made about the rights of spiritual and political leaders was discussed in further articles that compared the Ayatollah with the Pope. Given Britain's history with the Catholic Church, the comparison of these two is brilliant. In the eyes of many Britons, they are both bad guys. Called "The Works of Satan," the article argues, "That Pope John Paul, spiritual twin of Ayatollah Khomeini does have something in common. The Ayatollah is not the only one to seek to ban books he does not like."¹²⁸ The article then goes on to discuss the Pope's energetic criticism of Italian

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ The same argument about Rushdie's abuse of free speech could thus be leveled at the Ayatollah, who in *The Guardian's* mind was just as irresponsible as Rushdie. Ibid.

¹²⁸ Peter Hebblethwaite, "The Works of Satan," *The Guardian*, 5 March 1989, p. 9.

novelist Umberto Eco as a “nihilist,” for his work *The Name of the Rose*.¹²⁹ Ironically the book discusses medieval Catholic torture of heretics. However, the article ends by pointing out that while the Pope is censorious of texts he considers blasphemous, he “refuses to label his political or other enemies,” and he preaches forgiveness above all.¹³⁰

The Guardian remained very sensitive to British Muslims and printed many articles cataloguing how Rushdie’s book had offended them. The paper drew parallels with the way Christians would feel if someone portrayed Jesus in a derogatory way. *The Guardian* included conciliating comments from the Anglican Church, which interestingly, voiced great disappointment in Rushdie, arguing that he had abused his privilege of free speech by writing such an offensive novel. The Church likened the novel to the recent film *The Last Temptation of Christ*, which had caused Christians much pain for its similar depiction of Jesus. In these articles there is a different invocation of culture. This strain begs for discernment, implicitly asking whether a democratic culture will let anything go, and where the bounds of discrimination should be placed. These articles admonished the reader that if not offended by Rushdie’s book, or the film about Christ, *you should be*, thereby shifting the issue onto the individual.¹³¹

Adherence to the law was the third theme of *The Guardian*’s coverage.

Throughout February and March the paper printed six articles urging British Muslims to stay within the law. In addition to this, they printed stories from members of the Muslim

¹²⁹ Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose* (San Diego: Harcourt Brach Jovanovich, 1983).

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ This is an interesting point – how far do the bounds of tolerance stretch, and who draws the line? This question is still pertinent today, perhaps more so in this increasingly “anything goes,” generation. For articles demonstrating the Church’s disappointment in Rushdie, see “The Poison of Defeat,” *The Guardian*, 26 February 1979, p.1; “Break with Iran over Satanic Affair,” *The Guardian*, 26 February 1979; “Amy E. Schwartz, “In Writing Anything Goes,” *The Guardian*, 19 March 1979, p. 20; George Armstrong, “U.S.Bishops Ticked Off by Rome,” *The Guardian*, 22 June 1979, p. 21.

community who were advocating peaceful expressions of offense from their community.

“Britain’s Muslims must decide under which law they want to live under,” was one of these articles.¹³² The writer argues that,

There is singularly little that Britain can do about the politics of Iran, and still less about the pronouncements of Ayatollah Khomeini.... Placed slightly closer within the reach of British politicians and all who might influence them, however is preservation of the *mores* and standards of this country.... Under the present Government they [Muslims] have received as a class markedly little attention given the manifold problems they suffer. But one claim for which they can claim no sympathy is the claim some Muslim leaders now make to destroy British freedoms or to escape the restraints of English...law. The law protects us all, including them.¹³³

This article was representative of articles on this subject. *The Guardian* would begin by acknowledging the hard time that immigrants had in Britain, before extolling them to stay within the law, noting that it was for the common good.¹³⁴ The tone, moving from soft to firm, demonstrates that while sensitive, the paper upholds the law first. The paper tempered this theme with a presentation of “reasonable” British Muslims who were angry with Rushdie, yet found killing him reprehensible. “Spurn the book, spare the man,” is such a presentation. It begins:

It takes a brave Muslim to tell Ayatollah Khomeini that he is inciting a crime *against* Islam, but Dr. Zaki Badawi is just such a man. Britain’s most senior Islamic figure, chairman of the Imams and Mosques Council, and the Islamic Law Council, is so incensed by Khomeini’s death sentence that he declares he would unhesitatingly give the hounded author refuge in his own home, should Rushdie seek shelter there from Iranian or other would be assassins. ‘When I was professor of Islamic studies in Northern

¹³² Hugo Young, “British Muslims Must Decide under which Law they want to Live,” *The Guardian*, 5 March 1989, p. 8.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ For further examples of such articles see: “Hurd Pleads for a Non-Violent Response,” *The Guardian*, 5 March 1989; “The Duties of a Muslim Citizen,” *The Guardian*, 1 March 1989, p. 13; Corine Lesnes, “The Bradford Connection,” *The Guardian*, 12 March 1989, p. 13; Paul Martin, “Spurn the Book, Spare the Man,” 5 March 1979, p10.

Nigeria...I hid some Ibos in my home at the start of the civil war, while the Christian Ibos were being slaughtered [by Muslims]... Later I smuggled them to safety. I would do the same for Rushdie or any other persecuted person... [He] hastens to add ...he holds him [Rushdie] in contempt... What he has written is far worse to Muslims than if he's (sic) raped one's own daughter'... Muslims who have come to Britain have come to a tacit concordat to obey British law.¹³⁵

This article was at the root of the paper's vision of reality and message – Muslims had every right to feel angry about the book, but not to kill the author. This form of fundamentalism was unacceptable. The use of Dr. Zaki Badawi as an example of good citizenship demonstrated *The Guardian's* granting of authority to Muslims at home, the first time that I saw this happen. Badawi was held up as a defender of the very culture that Mrs. Thatcher began a discussion of. Clearly he is part of *The Guardian's* cherished community (also the first time that I had seen this) and is not just a defender of “our” culture, but an example of humility for the audience.

The Guardian worked to present the Rushdie affair under the rubric of culture. Disturbed by the *fatwa*, from a human rights framework, the paper demonstrated sensitivity to British Muslims that implied that many (if not all) had become part of the cherished community. *The Guardian* criticized both Rushdie and Khomeini for a lack of responsibility to free speech, but also worked to humanize both Khomeini and Islam. The paper presented the Ayatollah as a man who lived only for Islam (to the detriment of Iran) and Islam as a religion of diverse viewpoints ranging from the fundamentalist Khomeini's to the humane Zaki Badawi's. The Rushdie affair represents a watershed in

¹³⁵Paul Martin, “Spurn the Book, Spare the Man,” *The Guardian*, 5 March 1989, p. 10.

terms of reportage for *The Guardian* demonstrating a widened audience who was fully included and legitimized.

The Times presented its audience with a simpler view of the affair. Primarily concerned with Rushdie's safety, the paper launched a two-fold attack. First, the attack focused on the Government, which, in the paper's opinion should have immediately broken off relations with Iran. Secondly, in direct opposition with *The Guardian*, it lambasted British Muslims willing to kill the author, arguing that their loyalty should be to Britain, since they had chosen to settle there. From 14 February (the date Rushdie went into hiding) the affair was front-page news, and remained so until the end of the month. The front-page article generally discussed overnight developments, (such as the Ayatollah's latest inflammatory comment) with commentary or opinion inside.

The 18 February coverage demonstrates the paper's impatience with the government, arguing that Rushdie's freedom was not something to be "bargained for." Entitled, "A Hostage at home," the piece stated,

It is a matter of justifiable pride for this Government that Britain will not bargain not over the fate of hostages held in other countries. Mr. Salman Rushdie has been made hostage by the Iranian Government, on British soil as surely as if he had been kidnapped. The British response is not something so far to be proud of.¹³⁶

The language in this article is terse, as the editor goes on to say that economic sanctions must be immediate as "Salman Rushdie has already become a hostage, Britain must not behave like one." The editor is aghast at Britain kowtowing to another country, especially one that has "incited terrorism." The language is Thatcher-esque in its

¹³⁶ Editorial, "A Hostage at Home, *The Times*, 18 February 1989.

exhortations to fight back and save Britain from losing its freedoms and culture to these Muslims.

The Times contained the greatest discussion of the extent of popular belief that immigrants should assimilate into the British way of life, and it fueled British frustrations about immigrants coming to Britain but “refusing to participate” in the British way of life.¹³⁷ This demonstrates that the issue of cultural preservation brought up by Thatcher in 1978 was still an issue for *The Times*’ readers. The only difference was that the enemies were now Muslim, not colored. Within this dialogue there was also a critique of Islam, making it clear that *The Times* considered the religion barbaric.¹³⁸

“Defending ethnic majorities,” is one discussion of the frustration that many British people felt towards Muslims. Printed on 17 February, the article stated:

Sir Geoffrey Howes reaction the death sentence placed on Salman Rushdie was ...not good enough...He should have been forthright in his condemnation of this incitement to international terrorism...Nearly every militant demand made by an ethnic minority has been acceded to, and usually with alacrity. The fact that it is a minority, especially an ethnic minority seems in the eyes of some to give it a special status that places it beyond the proper scrutiny and reasoned criticism. The result has been that British traditions, culture, and laws have had to be totally amended to meet the needs of those with old fashioned values and mores of less civilized times and places...The readiness to play fast and loose with our traditions was evidenced again in response to the Bradford book burning. Immediately an ethnic minority complains they are willing to have our reading dictated by the tastes of non-English speaking Muslims not long out of the villages of Bangladesh.... Why should we? If Muslim immigrants cannot and will not accept British values and laws then ...why should the British feel any need ...to accommodate theirs...¹³⁹

¹³⁷ There was no discussion of the difficulties that immigrants faced upon arrival (not to mention in trying to get to Britain as discussed in chapter one or any question of how welcoming or tolerant the different facets of British society were.

¹³⁸ Islam was always discussed as a monolith, with the paper failing to inform its readers that the Ayatollah’s form was considered by many Muslims to be a perversion.

¹³⁹ Robert Kilroy-Silk, “Defending Ethnic Majorities,” *The Times*, 17 February 1989.

This article includes all of the issues *The Times* raised in depth during the affair. It begins with a critique of the government for not being strong enough, and then moves into a discussion about the problem with immigrants. In this case, it is Muslims who, through their continual whining, have successfully managed to erode much of British culture, law, and traditions (although the writer does not explain what these were). The language, like the above article is terse, demonstrating a hardness and resolve. It presents Muslim immigrants as a stereotypical other who were enemies of British culture and traditions. This piece harks directly back to Thatcher's invocations of swamping, creating an "us" that needs to stand up to "them." The article ends energetically, telling the cherished community to stop "acceding," as "we are not supplicants in our own country." Again, ending on a note of "our country," not theirs.

A similar piece appeared ten days later. Entitled, "Talking to Muslims," it discussed Home Secretary Douglas Hurd's speech at a Birmingham Mosque in which he:

'Pleaded with the Muslim community not to isolate itself from mainstream life. He called for their children to be taught fluent English, and to have a clear understanding of the history and Constitution of Britain...' such advice is no more than common sense. While the first generation of immigrants may face insurmountable difficulties in coming to terms with their adopted country, the second and third should not be deprived of the opportunities open to them in the land of their birth. Many parents work untiringly towards this goal, but there are exceptions ...*The Satanic Verses* has made this all too evident.

Again, there is evidence of a dialogue about the extent of assimilation necessary by Muslims. Gone is the race based language of "coloreds." The article's title, "Talking to Muslims," lets the reader know exactly for whom the writer is writing. This piece was not as aggressively critical as the previous, as it presented a conciliating tone.

The Letters to the Editor section proved to present a livelier dialogue, and the paper printed letters from many different points of view. The printing of such a diverse range of letters by *The Times* presents an interesting issue – during its coverage of Thatcher’s anti immigrant rhetoric and the Iranian Revolution, the paper printed only letters that supported its position. Unlike *The Times*’ section, *The Guardian*’s “Letters to the Editor” section presented letters overwhelmingly in agreement with the paper’s agenda. An example of these *Times* letters is one written by the author Roald Dahl.

Admonishing Rushdie for putting lives in danger, he argued that:

With all that has been written and spoken about the Rushdie affair, I have not yet heard any non-Muslim voices raised in criticism of the writer himself. On the contrary, he appears to be regarded as some sort of hero, certainly amongst his fellow writers and the society of authors, of which I am a member. To my mind, he is a dangerous opportunist. . . . In a civilized world we all have a moral obligation to apply a modicum of censorship to our own work in order to reinforce this principle of free speech.¹⁴⁰

Interestingly, the paper echoed the sentiments in this letter, printing an interview with Dahl just days after his letter.¹⁴¹ This demonstrates that the paper was interested in what its cherished community had to say. The style or extent of coverage did not change, however. Dahl’s opinion on the issue seems to place him in *The Guardian*’s cherished community more so than *The Times*’. His letter is a rebuttal of *The Times*’ coverage on the subject, as the paper’s coverage of Rushdie did not contain any criticism of Rushdie. Other letters also argued that the issue was one responsibility of free speech. Here is an articulate representative:

¹⁴⁰ Roald Dahl, “The Satanic Verses”, *The Times*, 27 February 1989.

¹⁴¹ “Pulp the Book to Save Lives” *The Times*, 5 March 1989.

The controversy surrounding *The Satanic Verses* has important implications for the future of a British society which now contains a large minority of Muslims.... The debate surrounding *The Satanic Verses* should be as much about the responsible use of the freedom of expression as about that freedom itself.... It is the clear duty of Muslims in this country...to abide by and uphold the laws of the United Kingdom. For that reason there would appear to be justification for some...review of how British subjects might have proper recourse for the laws concerning blasphemy when deeply held beliefs are outraged.¹⁴²

The sentiments in this letter were not addressed by *The Times*, perhaps leading one to believe that Dahl's letter was taken up only because of his notoriety. The above letters raise interesting questions about who the paper's audience was, and the license *The Times* appears to have in terms of offending them. The Society of Authors' letter to *The Times* was more in keeping with the paper's reportage and presentation of reality. It read:

The order to murder Mr. Rushdie is particularly chilling to authors and we have much sympathy with him. It is also an extremely worrying portent of interference in the freedom of writers to express their views within the law. The Government has our full support in taking strong measures against the Iranian Government and firm steps to ensure the safety of Mr. Rushdie and his publishers.¹⁴³

This letter discusses the affair from the perspective of local authors of London. While their concerns about expression within the law are exactly what *The Times* was defending, they (both the authors and the paper) failed to discuss the issue brought up in the previous letter- that observes, as the fabric of British society is changing, so too should the laws.

The Times reportage followed the contents of the above letter, placing freedom of speech against international aggression above all else. The paper was clearly horrified

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Society of Authors, "The Satanic Verses," *The Times* 24 February 1989.

that a British citizen should fear for his life, even though he was law abiding and simply expressing himself.

Interesting enough, *The Times* ran an editorial on 11 February, (the day before the *fatwa*) marking the tenth anniversary of the Islamic Revolution and the Ayatollah's return to Iran. Entitled, "Decade of the Ayatollah," the editorial discussed Iran's "successful and cruel return to the past." This return to the past was creating a country of martyrs, as:

Thousands have been executed for crimes such as 'warring with Allah,' many of them without trial in a system veering between Islamic law and revolutionary terror.... The human rights organization Amnesty International has evidence of 1200 executions since August [1988].¹⁴⁴

The excerpt shows that *The Times* continued to refer to human rights when discussing Khomeini's regime in Iran, and also provided an in-depth discussion of the regime's economic failures, something that the paper never covered *during* the revolution or when the Shah attempted to modernize. The one-sidedness seen during the Iranian Revolution was similarly evoked in the final lines of the article, which, ending on a low note, forecasting little change until the Ayatollah's death, as, "The City of God does not work by the rules of economic necessity."¹⁴⁵ Somewhat prophetic was another line, which read, "So long as the Ayatollah is alive, however, it will be premature to believe that the revolution is turning tame."¹⁴⁶ Thus, *The Times* placed all blame for the economic collapse on the Islamic Government, failing to inform its readers of the Shah's legacy of ineffectual economic reform.

¹⁴⁴ "Decade of the Ayatollah," *The Times*, 11 February 1989.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

The Salman Rushdie affair demonstrates how central the discussion of culture was for *The Times*. Disgusted at the lack of respect for British law, the paper printed vehement articles against both the British Government for being too accommodating and the British Muslims. The attack on Muslims demonstrated a frustration about their lack of integration, and the paper argued that this should be key to their residence in Britain. *The Times*' defense of Rushdie, who was representative of the paper's views on assimilation, was therefore fitting. Interestingly the paper never discussed his origin, simply calling him a British citizen. The paper's waving of the red flag of Islamic threat continued, and often its vilification of the Ayatollah would blend in so that it was difficult to see if even the paper knew where one stopped and the other began.

The *International Herald Tribune*'s coverage remained steadfastly within an economically based, U.S. strategic interest framework.¹⁴⁷ The paper first printed an article on Rushdie in January, when it was announced he had won the Whitbread literary prize for the novel. As Bradford Muslims had already spoken out against Rushdie, the article quoted him saying, "I did not anticipate the size, nature, or ugliness of the protest." This quote became representative of the paper's view towards Muslims, indicating that the paper had not become any more reconciled with Islam since the Iranian Revolution. The Ayatollah's *fatwa* put the affair on the front page of the paper for the rest of the month, as developments were tracked.

I.H.T.'s primary theme was the Ayatollah's incitement of international terrorism, and it discussed this topic at length. The paper characterized Khomeini as a satanic

¹⁴⁷ This is supported by Mansour Farhang and William Dorman's work on the presses' deference to the White House throughout 1978 and 1979. See Farhang and Dorman, *The U.S. Press and Iran: Foreign Policy and the Journalism of Deference*.

mischievous-maker, and there were three articles alluding to the timing of his *fatwa*, arguing that he timed it for the ten-year anniversary of the 1979 Hostage Crisis.¹⁴⁸ The *I.H.T.* worked to delegitimise Khomeini, and his *fatwa*, through a legalistic approach. The paper linked its negative portrayal of Khomeini with Islam, reducing it to a religion of hate, murder, and backwardness, thus demonstrating that it was still uneasy with the notion of an Islamic state. Typically, the paper distanced itself from discussions of culture and assimilation, but did have articles defending free speech above all else.

Entitled, “The Flames around Rushdie,” the paper first documented unrest about the publication of his book on 19 January 1979. In a telephone interview with *I.H.T.*, Rushdie discussed the Bradford community’s strong reaction to the novel, which had culminated in a book burning a week previously. “The barbaric image of book burning,” he said,

Horrified lots of people ...it alerted people in this country to something extremely dangerous and ugly, even those who cannot stand me as a writer.... Rushdie charged that it was a carefully orchestrated campaign run by a number of extremists centered on the Regent’s Park Mosque in London thanks to considerable Saudi and Iranian funding.

The discussion of Muslim opposition to the book as “dangerous and ugly” set the tone for further coverage on the affair. The paper’s drawing on the horror of people in 1989 watching a book burning is interesting. It appealed to a similar chord as the Anglican Church did in *The Guardian*’s coverage in that there were some things that one should find appalling. What is interesting is the divergence of what those things *should*

¹⁴⁸ The 1979 Hostage Crisis occurred when Iranian students stormed the U.S. embassy in Iran, taking the staff as hostages. They allowed the women and Black men to go free, but kept the other Americans for some 400 days, letting them out on the day of President Reagan’s inauguration in 1981. This event was obviously the nadir for relations between the two countries, and there had been no rapprochement between the two since then.

be. For the Anglican Church and Muslims, it is blasphemous characterizations of their prophets. For Salman Rushdie this is not something that is appalling. Rather, the book burning was the condemnable act.

Once Ayatollah Khomeini's *fatwa* was announced, the *I.H.T.* worked to delegitimise it, by going to Al Azhar University in Egypt, one of the foremost institutions of Islamic study and law. The paper's decision to go to the primary center of study and scholarship was clever, and fits with the paper's businesslike agenda. The article, entitled, "Across Islam, Dissenting Reaction," stated that,

Scholars from Al Azhar and elsewhere...disputed Ayatollah Khomeini's right to order a death sentence on the Indian-born Salman Rushdie, saying the edict contravened Islamic law.... 'In Islam there is no tradition of killing people without trying them,' said a senior scholar.... I do not approve the principle of murdering someone for writing something we did not like,' said Sheikh Abu Wafa, a leading Islamic scholar at Cairo University.¹⁴⁹

The article thus provides a "western" perspective, telling the cherished community in its headline that Islam was not monolithic. Secondly, the article shows that even in Islam arbitrary pronouncements of death were unacceptable. Also important is the article's title. Although the paper gave its audience an Islamic perspective on the *fatwa*, it still failed to contextualize, and thus to produce some understanding of Khomeini and sentiments in post-revolutionary Iran for the cherished community.

In addition to consulting scholars at Al Azhar, the *I.H.T.* also published opinion articles by an American scholar of Islam, Bernard Lewis, and Mid East observers Rana

¹⁴⁹ "Across Islam, Dissenting Reaction," the *I.H.T.* (16 February 1989).

Kabbani and Patrick Seale.¹⁵⁰ Lewis's *I.H.T.* piece, entitled, "On Rushdie and the law of Islam," argued three points.¹⁵¹ The first was that the Ayatollah's response was "unjustified within Islam." Secondly, he argued that the *fatwa* was timed to coincide with the American release of the book in a "striking parallel with the seizure of the U.S. embassy in Tehran." The third point emphasized the freedom of speech as paramount. Lewis argued:

Muslim jurists claim no jurisdiction over infidels in their own countries, and are not agreed on how far Muslim jurisdiction extends over Muslims in lands not under Muslim government. . . . If we are not [prepared to defend our freedoms] then the further erosion of our freedom at home will certainly be rapid and probably irreversible.¹⁵²

These comments hark back to Thatcher's comments a decade previously, claiming that coloreds swamping Britain were eroding British culture. In this article, Lewis argues that it is the Muslims who are eroding freedom with their intolerance, and that (like Thatcher), "we" must stop them before it is too late and they have completely deluged us with their fundamentalist ways.

Accompanying the article was a cartoon to reiterate Lewis' point. Called "Civilization Marches On," the left side had an image of a Nazi soldier wearing a swastika throwing books onto a bonfire, with the caption "primitive book burning." The right side of the cartoon depicted a man in turban and cloak (obviously the Ayatollah), carrying a lit torch to a bonfire of books with Salman Rushdie tied to a stake in the

¹⁵⁰ Bernard Lewis's work is discussed in the introduction. I particularly note his one-sided approach to telling the story of Christian-Muslim relations. Kabbani and Seale both have books on the Middle East published, examining myths and notions of the Orient.

¹⁵¹ Bernard Lewis, "On Rushdie and the Law of Islam," *I.H.T.*, 8 March 1989.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

middle. The caption here read “the new improved author burning.”¹⁵³ This explicit link between the Nazi Regime and the Ayatollah is yet another example of the paper’s vilification of Khomeini. The equation of Khomeini with Nazism was meant to outrage the cherished community by implying that like Nazism, everything associated with Khomeini was evil; just like the barbaric Nazis, Khomeini appears crude and merciless. This depiction parallels the *I.H.T.*’s previous article on Rushdie’s outrage at the book burnings. Again, the cherished community appears being presented with an image that they should automatically feel outraged about.

The article by Mid East observers Kabbani and Seale provided much insight by demonstrating how the Ayatollah perceived the affair. This was the first piece that attempted to demonstrate why the Ayatollah felt that the West was (again) attacking Islam. Entitled, “A gulf of suspicion and mutual distaste widens,” the writers very articulately traced relations between Islam and the West, placing them in a historical context, thus showing that through a lack of knowledge about each other, each new recrimination widened the gulf of difference.¹⁵⁴ The article began:

Ayatollah Khomeini’s death sentence on Salman Rushdie and the West’s outraged response are shots exchanged across a gulf of prejudice and incomprehension between ancient rivals, Islam and Christendom. For the Ayatollah, “The Satanic Verses,” was the final proof that the non-Islamic was out to destroy him. Did not Britain and Russia try to carve up Iran between them for a century or more? Did not the United States and Britain put a puppet Shah on the throne to milk and denature Iran, not least by making war with the Shiite clergy.... He remembers what the West has forgotten: that in the Western chronicles Moslems are depicted with dogs’ heads as a monstrous race; that for a thousand years a long line of Christian detractors portrayed Mohammed as a lustful and proliferate false

¹⁵³ “Civilization Marches On,” *I.H.T.* 8 March 1989.

¹⁵⁴ Rana Kabbani and Patrick Seale, “A Gulf of Suspicion and Mutual Distaste Widens,” *I.H.T.*, 9 March 1989, p. 8..

prophet. Seen from this perspective, “The Satanic Verses” perpetuates harsh Christian polemic, its author being all the more guilty for having betrayed his own Moslem origins.¹⁵⁵

This was the only article in the paper that worked to place the Ayatollah’s response in a historical paradigm. Although it assumed a natural binary between Christendom and Islam, it nevertheless demonstrated why, at least in part, the Ayatollah had taken umbrage at the work and the author. Kabbani and Seale’s language is evocative, selecting the less savory ways in which the West had portrayed Islam, and framing them from Khomeini’s point of view. Their observance that the West has forgotten the long relationship and its abuses is apt – nowhere else in the paper’s coverage of Thatcher, the Iranian Revolution and the Rushdie affair did I find an examination of past relations between Christianity and Islam.

Despite this luminous article, the bulk of the *I.H.T.* coverage portrayed Islam as monolithic and fearsome, focusing on the more extreme examples of angry demonstrations against Rushdie. One of these appeared in the 27 February edition, which contained the picture of young girls marching in Teheran wearing the chador and waving placards that said, “we are ready to kill”. The picture of young, innocent girls demanding a man’s death appealed to the cherished community’s sense of outrage. This image of girls as aggressively calling for Rushdie’s death further deepened the audience’s feeling that Islam was a religion of fanatics. This was compounded by the reality that by demonstrating, these girls were challenging traditional Islamic values of female seclusion. Ironically, they challenged these values to defend Islam from Rushdie’s attack. The photo, while captioned with basic events about a demonstration in Teheran

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

earlier in the week, was placed next to an article entitled. “For the East End’s Muslim’s, a Betrayal.” The article contained quotes from vendors at the Petticoat Lane Market, all of which were extreme. The article began,

No one interviewed had read the book... which is the current best seller in Britain.... ‘If Salman Rushdie were to walk down this street, he would not be alive for very long,’ said Mohammad Said, 16.... ‘Rushdie has betrayed the religion,’ he said. ‘They have to ban the book and even then, I still think that they should kill him.’ Mr. Sadiq, whose parents emigrated to Britain from Pakistan, and Mr. Rushdie’s recent expression of “profound regret” for the “distress” caused some Moslems was not enough.... When the novel was published last fall, crowds of incensed Muslims ...burned the novel.

Presenting Muslim immigrants as a group of vengeful fanatics, the article again appeals to the reader’s sense of outrage that people wanted to kill Rushdie because they did not like his book. This is reinforced by Sadiq’s statement that banning the book is not enough – that Rushdie should be put to death.

The *I.H.T.* vigorously waved the red flag of the threat of Islam at its audience throughout the entire affair. Attempting to denude Khomeini of his authority, in the eyes of its cherished community, the paper quoted Islamic scholars from both the Muslim and Western worlds, proving that the religion was as divergent as Christianity, and that therefore, many disagreed with the *fatwa*. The *I.H.T.* presented Islam as threatening by presenting Muslims as fanatics. Although the paper proved on the one hand that the religion was diverse, it continued to present Muslims as a monolith, burning books and calling for Rushdie’s death.

Conclusion

Newspaper coverage of the Salman Rushdie affair marked a change in the way that the host population viewed Muslim immigrants. Now, they were perceived as Muslim first. This status was problematic, as *The Times* and *I.H.T.* presented them as part of the threat of Islam, a menace that terrorized both cherished communities. For these two papers, they were now the enemy within, and were subsequently portrayed as such.

Thus, *The Guardian*, *The Times*, and *I.H.T.* presented the Rushdie affair through the lens of culture. *The Guardian's* audience had widened to now include much of the immigrant population. Thus, its reportage was sensitive to Muslims, while still advocating respect for the law. This affair also demonstrates the paper's willingness to grant Muslims authority at home – its use of Dr. Zaki Badawi as a defender of the same British culture exhorted by Thatcher, also exhibits an increased level of integration since Thatcher's 1978 call. *The Times'* selection of Rushdie as a defender of this same culture, again demonstrated that Britain, in spite of Thatcher's warning, had become mixed, and that 'coloreds' had become British.

Another issue of culture was the motif woven throughout this affair that asked "does our culture let everything go? Is there anything we should feel outraged about?" Very quickly it became clear from all three newspaper's attempts to make its readers feel outraged about particular aspects of the event, that these feelings, as with the desire for censorship, are entirely personal matters, especially in a diverse society such as Britain's. This was best evidenced through Rushdie's quotes in *I.H.T.* that book burnings were barbaric, and something we should feel outraged by. Both the Anglican Church and the

Muslim community who argued that it was blasphemy that one should feel outraged by countered this. The *I.H.T.*, while not entering into an outright discussion of culture, worked to portray Islam as a threat by pairing it with things that were considered evil and offensive to the culture. The divergence of opinion about what was outrageous exhibited, somewhat ironically, that culture as invoked by Margaret Thatcher was not, and is not monolithic – but an imagined community.

The Salman Rushdie affair demonstrates the extent to which religion had become central to the newspapers not just as an articulator of identity, but also as a threat. Gone is the term “colored” to describe immigrants from the Middle East and Indian subcontinent. The papers all discussed the diversity within Islam, acknowledging the religion to be multifaceted but throughout the affair, the Muslim voice was heard, proving that things certainly had evolved since 1978.

Conclusion

When examining Thatcher's call to end immigration, the Iranian Revolution, and the Salman Rushdie affair, a distinct evolution in the way the newspapers viewed Muslim immigrants is visible. Moving from racial to religious identifiers, the period 1978-1989 provides insights not just of the way that Muslims were presented as other in the press, but of the way that broader issues of culture were used to delineate their otherness. 1978-1989 in the newspapers was also a period of cultural negotiation between the immigrant and host populations, as the British worked to reconcile Thatcher's seemingly prophetic exhortations of swamping with the reality that Muslim immigrants were there to stay. Thatcher's call to end the immigration of coloreds and her invocation of Britishness, harnessing the divisional terms of "us," and "them," and reinserting them back into the imagination and discussion of Britons began a debate that is still rife in the United Kingdom today. *The Guardian*, *The Times* and *I.H.T.*, while often disagreeing with her sentiments, still used the term "colored" to articulate identity, as well as the notions of culture, particularly the divisional "us" and "them." Throughout 1978 all of the papers welcomed the opportunity to discuss race and immigration with their respective audiences and did so using Thatcher's language.

The Iranian Revolution shifted the newspapers' gaze outward, and saw primary articulation of identity as religious, not racial. The move to religious-based designations also saw the threat of Islam become a key theme in *The Guardian*, *The Times* and *I.H.T.* coverage. All three newspapers registered a heightened sense of a rise in Islamic

fundamentalism around the world, yet only *The Guardian* did not pose it as a threat, even though it had linked this fundamentalism with its large, domestic, Muslim population.

The Salman Rushdie affair made the link between Islamic fundamentalism over *there* and Britain's large Muslim population explicit, rekindling the debate about culture. All of Margaret Thatcher's concerns and notions of culture were present in the 1989 coverage, and the affair, although a clash between two cultures, also demonstrated the integration between the two that had taken place. Rushdie's identity is also demonstrative of this clash. An ex-Muslim of Indian origin, he was rallied around by *The Times* as the example of what they were defending because the paper saw him as British. Interestingly, the paper never discussed his origins. He was simply referred to as a British citizen and therefore worthy of protection. Meanwhile Britain's Muslim population felt especially betrayed by him because he *was* once Muslim.

The threat of Islam became an issue for *The Times* and *I.H.T.* during the Iranian revolution, and then with the installation of an Islamic state. Both were uneasy about Islam in general and the Islamic state of Iran in particular. The Salman Rushdie affair emphasized the fact that now the enemy was living within their borders, very different from the previous threat that had been in a foreign place. Both papers villainized Islam and Khomeini, portraying them both as demonic and suffocating, indicating that often the two were synonyms.

The enemy within was the way *The Times* and *I.H.T.* came to view Britain's Muslim population. After a decade of discussion about immigration, culture, Britishness, and Islam, the most fundamental change was the shift from race to religion to denote identity. *The Guardian*, *The Times*, and *I.H.T.* still framed discussion of these issues

using Margaret Thatcher's invocation of culture, demonstrating that the divisiveness she reintroduced into discussion about culture remains to this day.

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