

# Islamic Exotericism: Apocalypse in the Wake of Refractory Impossibility

Reza Negarestani

*Unlike other strains of monotheism, Islam cannot be said to include the idea of an apocalypse in the sense in which we usually understand this word. In fact, the radically external, 'impossible' (non potest) nature of Allah renders the judaeo-christian apocalypse structurally impossible (impugnable). At the same time, Islam posits an apocalypse that is neither feared, hoped for or expected, but which, in the ideal of pure submission, is inhabited by the faithful as pure impossibility. In order to comprehend what appears, in its violent irruption into western chronology, as the apocalypticism of radicalized Islam, we must understand how Allah's absolute externality has as its consequence a different conception of temporality, different mechanisms for the maintaining of faith, and an apocalypse which cannot be reduced to a chronological moment or a possibility in unification.*

## COLLAPSE II

---

**THE OUTSIDE OF OUTSIDERS.** The Islamic account of Genesis spirals around a non-ontological unity. Firstly, as Mollasadra (1571-1640), the Iranian philosopher, emphasizes,<sup>1</sup> Allah is not 'Being' (yet neither is it *nihil*); its truth can never be known, either through being or through non-being, either before or after the Apocalypse. Secondly (and in parallel with the foregoing), Man can never attain an integral unity with God – such a unity as would, in other strains of monotheism, exalt and transform Man from his former (*quondam*) state. Man can only return to Allah, not unite with him. Unity or completeness in terms of the human is only entailed by affordance,<sup>2</sup> a state of mutual affordability or an economical openness: the state of being open to. In Islam, however, God is constantly external to Man, and only 'unlives' through the impossible, an absolute *potestas* so ultimate that it is im-*posse*-ible for Man; Al Farabi (870-950CE) in his *chef-d'oeuvre*, *On the Principles of the Views of the Inhabitants of the Excellent State*,<sup>3</sup> clearly brings into conjunction the possibility of possessability and impossibility, to suggest an *im-possess-ability*.

---

1. Al Farabi, *On the Principles of the Views of the Inhabitants of the Excellent State*, trans. Seid Jafar Sajjadi (Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Islamic Affairs, 2000).

2. Polish philosopher Roman Ingarden, in his works focused on ontology – written after breaking from Husserl's phenomenology through a critique of transcendental idealism – expounds on the problem of openness and affordance, suggesting that closure (or modulated/economical openness) is a priority for open systems, and analysing niches as power projection zones and inhibitors of unwanted interactions and communications. The openness of the niche protects itself from what makes it open, by opening itself to what makes it closed. Only through such an openness can the existential moments be afforded, and modes of Being are then able to emerge. For more details on affordance, see my 'Militarization of Peace' in Mackay (ed.) *Collapse* Vol. I, 72n.11.

3. Mollasadra (Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi), *The Beginning & the End on Transcendental Philosophy (Al-Mabda wa'l- Ma'ad fi'l-Hikmat al-Muta'aliyyah)*, Vol. 2 (Tehran: Sadra Islamic Philosophy Research Institute, 2002).

Possibility must be afforded if it is to be reached, its *potenz* must be attained, possessed and sometimes even activated through a dynamic course of action in order for it to be released (X is possible for Y if and only if Y affords X *i.e.* if Y is able to reach X and authenticate its possibility; or, Y must attain the capacity to afford X as a possessable objective). But Farabi bifurcates impossibility into a ‘Latent/Passive Impossibility’ (an impossibility characterized by its quiescence) and an ‘Active/Unfailing Impossibility’, where the former is merely a symptom of a subjective capacity or temporary lack of mutual affordance. That is to say that Latent or Passive Impossibility describes a situation where, once Y achieves the desiderata necessary to capacitate itself and afford X, the Latent Impossibility will be actuated as Possibility. Latent impossibility attests to the fact that the impossible object(-ive) (X) still remains in the horizon (boundary) of the subject in relation to which we attribute its impossibility; it is necessary only that it be afforded and that it mutually afford the subject in order for it to become possible (possess-able). At the same time this makes it certain that the latently impossible object(-ive) remains bound to the logic of the boundary, of conditions and characteristics (having its own idiosyncrasies which must be afforded in order to be activated and become achievable for the subject Y). Thus it remains existentially perusable and intrinsically inert and transient (it is not permanently and fully impossible). And it is neither functionally nor spatially external to the subject Y; on the contrary, it (latent impossibility: X) exists just as the subject Y exists, waiting to afford X to turn it into a possible (possess-able).

## COLLAPSE II

---

Christian luminary Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464AD) argues in *De Possess* (a neologism best understood by breaking it down to its pre-existing elements *posse est*) that ‘God alone is what (He) is able to be.’<sup>4</sup> Nicolaus Cusanus expounds on a microcosmic proto-monadic system which is shaped around his term *Possess* (*Posse Est* or *Können-Ist*) which draws an intrinsic and interiorized line of alliance between Able-ness (being able to) or Actuation, and *Potentia* or Possibility. To exist is to be possible in the sense of *possest*; or more accurately, ‘able-ness’ and ‘actuation’ are immanent to potency and possibility. Possibility alone renders existence, just as potency alone renders able-ness. According to Cusanus, *possest* means that ‘possibility itself exists’ (*posse est*); then he concludes that because what exists, exists actually (existence is the actuation of possibility), the ‘possibility to be’ or the ‘potentiality to be able’ exists insofar as the ‘possibility to be’ is actual. Cusanus calls this *possest*. In other words, and from a different etymological and biblical perspective of the term *possest*, it means that the ‘potentiality to be’ exists as effectuation and able-ness (*posse/possibilis*).

The proposition ‘God is *possest* (actualized-possibility and able-potency)’ captures an omnipotent quality, to be opposed to created beings who can never completely fulfill their potentialities and can never fully reach their possibilities. This intrinsic and autonomous transition in *possest* between possibility and actualization, or potentiality and able-ness, can only be established in the presence of

---

4. See Nicholas of Cusa, *Metaphysical Speculations*, Volume 2, trans. Jasper Hopkins (Minneapolis: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 2000), *A Concise Introduction to the Philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa*, trans. Jasper Hopkins (Minneapolis: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 1986), and *Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings*, trans. H. Lawrence Bond (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1997).

capacity or affordability; because actualization or able-ness emerges when possibility or potentiality achieves and satisfies a certain capacity (*i.e.* in the case of chemical processes, reaching a certain gradient in potency to trigger a specific action) that leads to a certain actuation and effectuation. Designated actuation is the matter of designated affordability, or the range of capacity for a potency which must be fulfilled (afforded).

The necessity of capacity as the ground on which possibility and actuality are mapped together, or in other words, capacity as what connects possibility and actualization together, can now be examined through an apagogical argument (*reductio ad impossibile*) and in conjunction with the theological context at stake here. To this purpose, we shall assume that the connection between possibility and actualization (or potentiality and able-ness) is direct and immediate, and they operate in regard to each other without an intermediary, a *capacitas* which can contain something.

In the absence of capacity and affordability as bases which underlie both possibility and actualization, every possibility could lead to any actualization and any able-ness could be ensued by a potentiality with no required gradient or degree of quality or quantity. Or in other words, no particular ability would exist, since it is the capacity and gradient of fulfillment that lead a certain potentiality towards its able-ness. Once we assume that capacity and its subsequent affordability do not exist in the transition of possibility to actualization – ergo the *possest* of God – there would not be any boundary (limit) or compass for the actualization of a possibility, or *vice versa*.

## COLLAPSE II

---

Consequently, in the absence of capacity, the possibility of being God and actualization of that possibility – being the Divine, that is – for Man would be equal to the *possest* of God itself: so to speak, Man and God would be potentially and actually at the same level; a theological conclusion that is not only invalid for monotheism but also confutes its own grounding structure. Therefore, to this extent, the relationship between possibility and actualization, both in the actualized-possibility of God (*possest*) and possibilities of Man, is subjected to the economy of capacity and ability – in the sense of tolerance (range of modulation) – which is an economy of affordability rather than openness, environmental surround rather than radical outside. Now if capacity is latently and potentially attainable at all times (can be afforded at any time) and it constitutes the grounding nexus of possibility and actualization for both God and Man, then Man can afford the Divine all the time – which is not the same thing as ‘Man being God’ or ‘becoming the Divine instantaneously’. God can be afforded all along. This affording of God – which is delineated as the possibility of Man being actualized as God (ultimate actualized-possibility or *possest*) and is not ‘to be God itself’ – incessantly maintains the position of the Divine within the range (*confinium*) of Man’s affordability (either incapaciousness or capaciousness: capacity), or in other words, interior and endemic to Man’s *ecologia* and existence.

Following Cusanus, in God’s *possest*, actuality and possibility can correspond and conform to each other symmetrically (with an equal scale) only if the capacity between them is equal to the unit distance or the unit

capacity. That is to say,  $ab$  is posed as the unit measure (*unus*: 1) for any other variation in actuality, possibility and capacity *i.e.* a unit in the threefold of existence. Accordingly, *possest* can be diagrammed as  $ab$ , which is equal to the unit capacity and the symmetric fold between actuality and possibility (see Diagram 1). To put it differently, *possest* as the complete symmetry and corresponding state of possibility and actuality (God) can only come to existence if both actuality and possibility are aligned with the Absolute or the un-conditioned ( $x=0$ ); since any condition, or more concretely, any variable step (*gradum*) or status, either in possibility or actuality, is formulated as a deviation ( $d$ ) from the unit distance or the unit capacity ( $d > 1$ ). To this point, beings are perpetuated as variations, and their existences are deviations from the unit capacity ( $ab$ ), which is immutable to variation and digression. For created beings, either actuality or possibility is characterized as the ratio of this deviation to its corresponding capacity. For instance in Diagram 1, for possibility of a created being this ratio of deviation is  $b_1b$ , *i.e.*  $b_1$  to  $b_1o$  (similar to a cosine function:  $b_1/b_1o$ ). Likewise, the existence of a created being becomes tangential to the existence of God. The existence of a created being is posited as the ratio deviation of both its actualities and possibilities ( $a_1, b_1$ ) to the unit capacity ( $ab$ ) which is *possest*

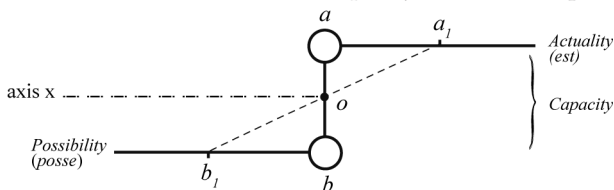


Diagram 1. The Threefold of Existence

## COLLAPSE II

---

or God itself (similar to the tangent function):  $(a_1 b_1)/(ab)$ .

Here the qualitative or quantitative characteristics of One and its formation as a specific *com-plexus* (or according to Cusanus, God's *complicatio*/enveloped in relation to the world's *explicatio*/developed), namely unity, should not be presented as the reductive 'indifference of the unity itself toward itself' (Hegel) by way of totalization or exclusion. Unity here serves monotheistic theology only by the virtue of its (i) positioning, (ii) the alignment it takes and (iii) the fold it plaits (as a fold-line which is itself a plait) in the threefold of existence. It is by way of these three acquired attributes (subsidiary to its unitary quality) that unity – as of God – more than being the exclusive oneness, is posited as the unit capacity, the measure (*metron*) of affordance. And affordance is the only and exclusive destination for the openness between Man and God in this territory and the ontological relevancy between possibility and actuality. Only through economical (dyslogistically economical, of course) possibilities of affordance or reciprocal affordability, can actuality be posed as the ideal realization of possibility, an end in itself, an entelechy. Unity of and through God is the fold of connection and communication made in the name of affordability and capacity (so long as one can afford). Neither unity nor its formative processes (unification) are totality or exclusion in themselves. To highlight the problematic of 'Unity as immanent totality', it can be suggested that different numeric principles can be applied to unity itself, in the same way that Kazimierz Twardowski<sup>5</sup> proposes that Leibniz's spiritual system is

---

5. Kazimierz Twardowski, *Selected Philosophical Writings (Wybrane Pisma Filozoficzne)*, (Warszawa: PWN, 1965), 200-4

subject to two different numeric principles. Consequently, Leibniz's system only includes monism of kind but not numeric monism. Unity as a process is perpetuated by two main numeric systems – of which at least one is manifold – which are applied synchronously together from both ends in the process of unification. In Christian theology, one is the numeric multitude or the participation of people (Man) in God; and the other is the numeric monism of God, which also envelopes the monism of kind. Moreover, one can embarrass the presupposed tautology ('I be that I be' [Exodus 3:14]) that is associated with One not only by the logic of exception (which again is directly extracted from oneness as counter-generalization) but also by the singularity function of One by which One separates from its unitary predeterminations. At the same time, from another direction, infinite growing processes can encapsulate the same singularity of One and develop the same 'object conception'<sup>6</sup> that is applied to One. If One consolidates everything under its banner by any means possible, every anomaly, unilateral development, exception, germinal multiplicity and constant driftage – that is to say, infinite perversion ( $d > 1$ ) – can also be gathered under the flag of One. This is the remobilization program (in a military sense) that is harvested from the double-dealing dynamism of heresy. If God basks in his house, let us reconstruct it according to the laws of demons.

To this end, the monotheistic theology in which the existence of beings is tangential to the unit course

---

6. Ed Dubinsky *et al*, 'Some Historical Issues and Paradoxes Regarding the Concept of Infinity: An APOS Analysis: Part 2', in *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, Vol. 60, No. 2 (The Netherlands: Springer, 2005), 253-266.

## COLLAPSE II

---

(*unbedingt*) of God makes sense; but only at the cost of postulating the existence of God as capacity, or more accurately, the unit capacity in the threefold of existence. The *possest* of God is transversally interposed between actuality and possibility, an imposition that not only establishes a monopoly of God, for which beings are mere excursions, but also economizes existence. God is the *metron* of affordance; Man's affordability tangentially folds over and contains God (see Diagram 1).

The affordability of God (*i.e.* God being afforded or God within the fold of Man's existence) perpetuates the Divine as domestic or in-the-house (cohabitant) in connection to Man. The Almighty's omnipotence is merely effectuated in the wake of its confinement, which includes and covers Man too; while the latter is a part, the former is only environment, the neighbouring, the one that is tethered to the part's capacity. If the Triune God is existentially possible, it is because this God cohabits the same space in which Man resides, which is functionally bound by the economical closure of affordance between the two (Man and God) and is rendered volumetrically limitless by the opposition between 'the becoming of Man' and 'the Being of God', which determine the ongoing perpetuation of affordance (see Diagram 2). The affordance or mutual affordability between God and Man is an economical openness through which overlap and 'radical communication' (indifferent to capacity) are not attainable. Here, communication and overlap can only take place in the presence of and within a third capacitor, which is situated as an intermediate state (*meso-philic*) by both sides and interposes a buffer between them capable of consociating and bringing

the sides to one capacity, coordinating a domain of communication for God and Man. This capacitor is partially shared by both sides and does not preexist for them individually; it is conceived and formed by the movements of Man and God to each other (see Diagram 2). Coexisting contemporaneously and dynamically, these diametric movements whose course of action is affording, participate – in the sense of orchestration – in the coordination of a communal capacity, a *hospitium*. The hospitality of axes, here, cannot be exalted into an act of conjoining, unless through the act of lodging each party on the basis of their regulations, ineptitudes and failures toward each other and in themselves – the hospitality associated with the foundation of lazar-houses or the erection of hostels as loathsome places of dejection and parsimony. If God and Man are incapable of fusing with each other outside of their affordability, and for that reason their oneness is eternalized through a shared vessel (*vehiculum*) which renders both subordinate to each other, they never fully overlap each other; though at the same time they do overlap on a bounding level. In other words, the affordance or mutual affordability between God and Man can only lead to unity (continuity in and of One, *un-us*) when the boundary of Man is afforded (economically affirmed) by God. In the wake of Franz Brentano<sup>7</sup> and later, more concretely, Roderick Chisholm's theories of coincidence, which propose 'if something continuous exists as a boundary, it must be in connection with other boundaries and it must pertain to a continuum of higher

---

7. Franz Brentano, *Philosophical Investigations on Space, Time and the Continuum*, trans. Barry Smith (Sydney: Croom Helm, 1988).

## COLLAPSE II

dimension',<sup>8</sup> the continuity of God and Man in a 'shared capacity' determines and marks out not only the boundary of Man, but also of God. Unity cartographically outlines the shared and coinciding boundaries of Man and God, the afforded boundary. In unification as culminating affordance, all possibilities – including the possibility of unity and the possibility of Man's deification – are molded

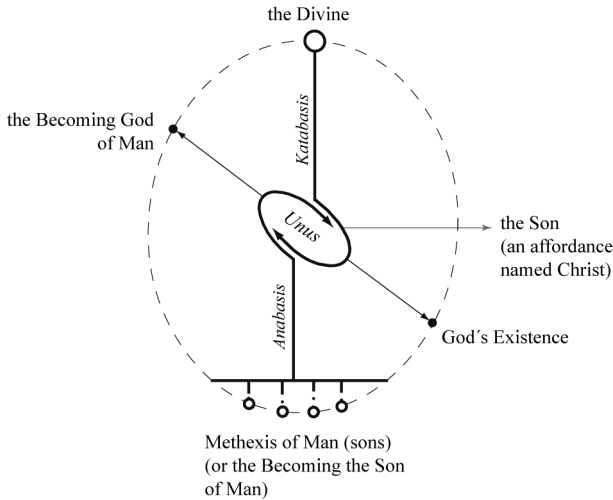


Diagram 2. Monad Mechanics

by the capacity and boundary of Man which necessitate a boundary for God as the continuity of Man's boundary in unity. The possibility of unity entails the possibility of a coincidence of boundaries in the congenial company of

8. R. Chisholm, *On Metaphysics* (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 1989), 83-90.

Man and God.

Having ratiocinated the threefold of possibility, actualization and – *en passant* – meso-philic capacity, the investigation of Possibility and Impossibility for Man and God can be pursued by, and in conjunction with, Farabi’s Islamic question of Active/Unfailing Impossibility.

For Farabi, Being and being united with God demarcate a passage that is trodden through the intersection of Latent/Passive Impossibility and Possibility (symbolised as  $A \cap B$ ), and whose boundaries are outlined by the ‘symmetric’ difference of Latent/Passive Impossibility and Possibility which is the union of both

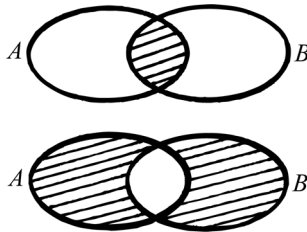


Diagram 3. Union and Symmetry in *Possesst*  
(After Nicolaus Cusanus’ *De Possesst*)

minus their intersection and can be symbolized as  $(A \cup B) - (A \cap B)$ . Farabi refutes any manifestation of ‘possibility of Being’ in the existence of God, because possibility of Being is – with the same scale or *sun-metron* – symmetrically determined by the relative complements of A and B (symbolised as  $A - B$  and  $B - A$ ) which maintain existence by exclusion and debarment of other parts (simultaneously full A and full B) (see Diagram 3).

## COLLAPSE II

---

The Christian doctrine of Apocalypse and Return to God adheres to the model of Latent/Passive Impossibility; it is maintained that the Unity with God which is now impossible will eventually be afforded, and, as possible, will ensue. Affordance, or 'the openness to possess', is the *causa causans* of 'possibility (*posse*) to be able and actualized'. In the presence of affordance, possibility is assumed as the capacity (amplitude) or the containing possibility to do something. Possibility as affordability – in its economical receptivity and investment – exists prior to possibility as ontological potency. Parallel to, but entirely dissociated from, Latent Impossibility, it is the other impossibility (im-possess-ability) delineated by Farabi that designates the plane on which Allah pervades everything in Islam; it is Active or Unfailing Impossibility, which cannot be afforded under any circumstance. Hence it perpetuates and postulates itself outside of possibility and possess-ability – that is to say, potentiality for Being and being united. Farabi's Active Impossibility, which suggests itself as consistent and radical, equals radical externality. Allah's externality renders it im-possess-able; its active impossibility originates and reinforces its un-existence or im-possess-ability for all modes of existence. But at the same time this un-existence is not that of the *nihil*, since it is immanent to existence and all modes of being. Allah does not afford, but is the total openness which must be afforded, regulated, grounded and moderated in order to be transformed into modes of existence, into survival; otherwise, its active im-possess-ability would be the resolute terminus of all beings.

According to Islam, then, existence is the consequence of the prevailing impossibility of Allah, and Allah's

absolute openness can only be afforded (that is, submitted to economical communication or the affordable passage from passive impossibility to possibility) but not radically communicated. Ontological modes of openness or ‘openness bound to existence’ cannot be absolute, since they would thereby transgress their existential necessity (first and foremost, they must survive and their openness is bound to their logic of survival). They merely afford this active impossibility and maintain their survival through its im-possess-ability, since possessing it in its entirety would be the undoing of affordance, and consequently of the survival that affordance makes possible and maintains. Absolute openness cannot be communicated, it can merely be afforded; and existence emerges out of this very lack of radical communication with the Absolute Openness (or in Islam, the impossibility or im-possess-ability of Allah) and its pathological symptom, affordability.

The revelational conclusion or the unitary apotheosis with God is defined as coming to union with God by participation, or participation in God through the Son. In this revelatory process, the aperture of man’s epistemological focus in relation to the Divine must surpass his ontological isolation by means of a third capacity outside his own capacitance or the state of his capacity: an *extenta* whose boundary (or boundedness) ontologically shares and overlaps that of Man, and whose epistemic expanse (of unboundedness) intersects with the Divine. The mechanism of ‘coming to Union’ or unificatory disclosure of the Apocalypse (Revelation), while it is subjected to variations of either ontological or epistemological directions, constantly partakes of a fundamental revelatory

## COLLAPSE II

---

process in a monadic or unitary sense: participation by the necessity of incompatible entities or parts and their ordained unity, *i.e.* difference, and adding a quality or amount (a content) to the difference to satisfy and fill it. This attributable content which takes form as *contentum* (the conjoiner) and *contentus* (the satisfier) cannot be anything. Precisely speaking, it should be – by the virtue of its satisfying function – determined and individuated by exclusion, or the logic of negativity, to locally fill and neutralize the effect but not the cause of the difference – that is to say, to be ‘something specific’ at last. This ‘specific something’ must share the contents of both the Divine and Man without transgressing their capacities or boundaries outlined by affordance, which actuates the coincidence of boundaries (*viz.* necessitating both the existence and coincidence of boundaries) between God and Man; it can be the groundwork of participation and affordance if and only if it is perpetuated by the sum exclusion of both sides – neither outside of X nor outside of Y. To this extent, this certain content reinvents the autonomy of participation in ostracism and repels the ephemerality of its existence by double-satisfaction. The Son is the ultimate *contentus* of Revelation and Unification, the double-satisfier of Platonic participation. If according to Hans Urs von Balthasar, transcendence to Christ manifests the apocalyptic consummation of History and Christ gives the world (the *exteriora* of the created world, the *interiora* of human essence and the *superiora* of heavenly order) its *Gestalt*, then both the configuration and consummation of the world (essence itself) exist only in affordance and economical participation through capacity.

We shall become Sons by participation (*methexis*)  
(Cyril of Alexandria)  
*Totus Christus, Caput et Corpus*

Four factors are involved in neo-Platonic and later Augustinian doctrines of *methexis* (participation): **(i)** The divine source of experience or the horizon (*horismos*: whose formation is characterized by an inner hegemonic boundary – *perata* – and an external boundlessness) of participation, which affects the spiritual senses of the human beings. Apart from this horizon there is no motivation for participation, since *methexis* presupposes the lack of an autonomy between participants, *i.e.* participants undergo *methexis* through their lack of autonomy and the hegemonic autonomy of the Divine. **(ii)** The *telos* of experience or the intention of the source, the purpose and goal for human being, which is unity with the Divine. *Methexis* presupposes myriad levels of being necessarily emanating from the Divine to unify later with the Divine as the ultimate One. **(iii)** The transformation brought about through experience which is based on the capacity/affordability between participants (*participans*) with each other, on the one hand, and the participant with the Whole or the *contentus* of participation (*participatum*), on the other. The persistent interference of capacity and affordance in participation, and in the reciprocal relation between participation and participants, imparts a self-correcting or gravitational quality to the collectivizing process of participation towards a satisfactory collectivity – thereby constraining in its collectivization dynamics – for the participants and the content of participation. This state of participation undertakes the together-ness of relationship as long as the

## COLLAPSE II

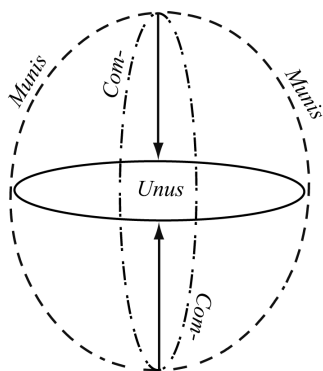
---

capacity of nexus can be fulfilled; therefore, it operates as ‘coming together (*com*) under a bound or an obligation (*munis*)’. This is an Obligation that can only exist as One (*unus*) because it is directed and achieved by and through capacity and affordance between entities in participation, or to be exact, by the collective affordance or the ‘shared’ capacity, the capacity shared by all as the sum affordability that can be fulfilled by all. For such an obligation, which can only survive and influence as a shared capacity, the plane of movement is necessarily one of convergence and concentration. Here, the participation dynamic inexorably describes a transition from *munis* (collective obligation) to *unus* (being one) in the wake of a collectivity (*com*) which perpetuates itself through affordance (see Diagram 4). This is why, in the New Testament, discussions and references to participation are mostly expressed in terms of *koinonia* (in its Platonic sense) which signifies sharing, and suggests an obsession with economic fixation, rather than *Methexis* (participation). (iv) The affective states that accompany the experience of participation are already modulated by the affordance between participants and the Whole, and the hegemonic autonomy of the Divine, which imposes unity with itself upon all modes of participation – *methexis*.

The Christian apotheosis promises a final unity with the God through a transcendental participation or *methexis* (or what Theodore Runyon calls Orthopathy)<sup>9</sup> – with the Son (as an indispensable intermediary or channel-regime of this exchangeability, the double-binding chain of the Atonement, the double-satisfier) and the other sons (men)

---

9. Theodore Runyon, ‘The Importance of Experience for Faith’, in *Aldersgate Reconsidered* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 93-108.



*Com-*: Coming together-ness of parties from both ends

Diagram 4. Monad's Communication Dynamics

taking part in a process of concrescence (the theological becoming grounded upon economic participation or *methexis*) oriented towards unification with God. But Islam openly rejects such a theologically relieving covenant. Man can never be unified with Allah and Allah will never be revealed to Man; the knowledge of Allah can be obtained neither through the affirmative desire of *cataphasis* nor the logic of negativity and emphatic negation of *apophasis*. In more precise terms, in Islam, unity with the Divine is eventuated neither on the ontological nor on the epistemological level. The son can never return to the father since there is no son and no father; there is only Allah, external to all beings and their surrounding outside *i.e.* the possibilities of their transgression. Because transgression is conveyed on the plane of affordance and the dynamics of 'being open to', a tactical line of openness constrained by

## COLLAPSE II

---

the plane of logistics rather than the subjective line of command. This radical outsidersness, however, is not prompted by the jealous impulsions of God, passed on to the victim(-ized) body of Man (a parasitic creed stubbornly energized and exploited by the exchangeability between *lex talionis* and victimology, their double-binding system carved on to the monopoly of God), but rather that immensity that is the undoing of Man, of all potential sons and the Father alike.

While God was the exclusive source of the revelation to Muhammad, God himself is not the content of the revelation. Revelation in Islamic theology does not mean God disclosing himself. It is revelation from God, not revelation of God. God is remote. He is inscrutable and utterly inaccessible to human knowledge [...] Even though we are his creatures whose every breath is dependent upon him, it is not in interpersonal relationship with him that we receive guidance from him.<sup>10</sup>

Islamic Apocalypticism is not a contemplating process, a river (a flowing transcendence or a process of concrecence [A.N. Whitehead])<sup>11</sup> tending towards unification with God, as the complete state of its refinement. It is a process which seeks to ultimately and fundamentally

---

10. Edmund Perry, *The Gospel in Dispute: The Relation of the Christian Faith to other Missionary Religions* (New York: Doubleday, 1958), 155.

11. *Concrecence* emphasizes an economical participation through the theological doctrine of *Diaconate* which assembles a regulating all together; the itinerary of this process is continuously guaranteed by the responsibility of each entity to serve and survive for the other, becoming a passive negotiator-field to save the continuity of the self-refining flux. In such a participation (*methexis*), one cannot escape and still survive; the entities which cannot bear this dynamic but fully economical participation are automatically forced to leave the dynamic network of pseudo-flux (forced to be dumped out of the dynamic course of the flow).

‘surrender’ to the impossible which remains external to being (absolute surrender or pure *Islam*). Submission occurs according to the imperceptible Will (*Hoda*) of the im-*posse*-ible (Allah). Everything is preserved and maintained by a pure externality, not because of the power – ontological or epistemological sovereignty – it imposes upon being, but for the sake of externality itself – the radical outsideness that simultaneously provides the possibility of being, affordance and survival. The process of surrendering and submitting (or *Islam*) which leads Man towards God is suddenly disrupted by *Qiyamah* (*Ghiamat*) which is wrongly translated as Apocalypse. *Ghiamat* is a vast desert where Man finds that he can never reach (possess or afford) the Absolute or the Unconditioned (*unbedingt*). Here Man is totally disillusioned (one of the functions of *Ghiamat* is an awakening, in the sense, not of resurrection, but of disillusionment, *entebaah*) of everything he ‘believes’ himself to possess, and of existence as ontological corollary of affordance. Islamic Apocalypse occurs where (not when) Man grasps the utter externality of God to himself (an externality based on the radical outside-ness of function and an unaffordable openness of communication – rather than on a distance, which in the Islamic account of the divine is regarded as the utter glory and generosity of God to Man). Deleuze and Guattari<sup>12</sup> diagram the Absolute in terms of a movement qualitatively different to relative movements but necessarily associated to them. In Islamic Apocalypse all movements which give rise to the Absolute (and flow ‘through’ and ‘as’ *Islam*) abruptly cease to process (they cannot install Man

---

12. Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 509.

## COLLAPSE II

---

as multiple or even One); the process of rendering a Unity by exception or subtraction fails before it is initiated. Before such an impossibility, the Deleuzian escapism to the Outside is an aesthetic movement based either on the idealism of reaching/possessing the Impossible (the active im-possess-able) or on becoming open to an absolute openness which can only be economically afforded and explored by the survivalist policy of 'being open to' and its escapist lines. This radical openness is so unrestricted that it turns all modes of openness ('being open to' in particular) and lines of escapism into a romantic struggle to tolerate it. However, every instance of toleration of this immense openness (even in the form of economical openness, escapism or 'being open to') results in a suffering which affordance and all economic regulations carry with themselves as the consequence of their restrictions and survivalist moderations. Economical openness (or escapism, which employs its dynamism on the plane of 'being open to' *i.e.* economical openness) as an instrument for moving towards Absolute Openness, operates in the form of an economic reformation of affordance and suffering. For such an economical openness relies on a movement or escape according to a subjective capacity – bound to the capacity of the Whole – which can crack at anytime, leading to a crisis of survival and toleration at different levels. This crisis or symptomatic side-effect associated with economical openness is both the result of the lack/capacity it must include in order to survive (regulation of communication) and of the radical openness which affordance cannot fully regulate and which, therefore, will eventually cut it (the subject of economical

openness) open. Is escapism on the plane of ‘being open’ therefore a reformation of Atonement, its reinvention in another territory?

Escapism presupposes that openness all happens on the plane of ‘being open to’ (it excludes the radical side of openness or openness from the Outside *i.e.* ‘being opened by’). The propulsive body of ‘the line of flight’ (Deleuze and Guattari) runs on this plane of openness to explore the Outside, or in other words, to be open to the Outside. Consequently escapism is involuntarily prone to unlimited appropriating functions and restrictions of capacity, since these maintain the openness for both the subject that escapes and the environment that affords and supports this escape – the capacity or affordance of the Whole. As the escape reaches critical levels in opposing the gravitational forces (territory, the State, organic life, *etc.*), its capacity for ‘being open to’ becomes a burden of tolerance and confinement (the limits of capacity) rather than a propulsive engine. To this extent, the over-tolerance for escaping becomes equal to suffering (*thlipsis megale*) for salvation. When it comes to the exigency of capacity, a scintilla of openness on the plane of ‘being open to’ – which is always oriented in opposition to the function of gravity but is aligned with affordance – can be likened to a tribulation whose conclusion (salvation) is not liberation from capacity but arriving at, shifting to, a reformed capacity.

In Islam, Man does not reach the Absolute, nor does the Apocalypse manifest the Absolute. Unlike other apocalyptic revelations, Islamic Apocalypse is a disruption for a transcendental process towards an Absolute which is

## COLLAPSE II

---

impossible; a cessation, manifesting neither a succession nor an interlude but an utter terminus for transcendental Absolutism. Islamic Apocalypse is a momentary process for dismantling all manifestations of Absolutism, only highlighting the absolute externality of God as the Imperceptible or irreducible exteriority – ‘The secret of God is eternally ungraspable by Man’; the Quran does not speak about the concealment of a secret but of the utter inaccessibility of the radical externality of God. This latter always remains secret, not in the sense of a mystery [*muein*] whose accessibility varies between the initiated and the uninitiated and according to the epistemological tools at ones disposal, but in the sense of ‘being ungraspable and unthinkable forever’ for everyone. According to Islamic scholars, it is the limitless generosity of this externality that, despite its radicality, makes ‘being’ possible for Man by posing itself as refractory impossibility. Theology in general, particularly Christian theology, is vigorously involved with the act of giving or the biblical *didômi*, and the measure of this act is determined by the emphatic limit of the act of giving in the sense of the Divine which is Revelation, or the epistemological Gift. The Gift of Revelation – by the necessity of the aforementioned affordable structure of Revelation – abstains from excess and ceases to be radical in itself and in the act of donation. The principle of gift-economy consolidates around its compensability. When a gift is afforded by the receiver of the gift, it can also – potentially and by virtue of the capacity of the receiver who has already met the expense or level of the gift – be paid back or re-gifted at least with a gift of equal or lesser value. When the gift is Revelation or the

ultimate giving and Man is the receiver, the potential re-gift is proportionally equal to the possibility and the existence of God (*Esse*) itself in Revelation. The radicality of the gift originates from its exorbitance (it is outside the cycle of exchangeability), the absence of any opportunity to counterbalance or compensate it, and its externality to satisfaction, hence reducibility to a content. In Islamic theology and according to explicit Quranic verses, the ultimate gift from Allah averts satisfaction and does not satisfy Man in terms of providing what the human deems enough (*satis*). Nor can it be exchanged or compensated. Allah's gift attests to the immensity of the ultimate act of giving: the ultimate gift is essentially external to possession and possessability. If Allah's gift were to satisfy, or position itself as exchangeable, it would bring human being to extinction, an epistemological inferno and an ontological eradication; the gift then would contradict the act of giving and its gift-ness by becoming the act of absolute seizure or abolishment in the name of confiscation. The gift is merely the disclosure (in terms of unfolding) of Allah's externality on a radical and all-encompassing level, the affirmation of refractory impossibility and the repudiation of the possibility of an *apocalyptic* (unveiling) of a content, whether of God or of Man, which again should be differentiated from the content of the Divine in the usual understanding of Apocalypse. Disillusionment is the function and realization of such a gift. Islamic *Ghiamat* manifests enlightenment under the holocaustic luminosity of radical outside, and presents human possibility, of both ontological and epistemological potentialities, in the wake of refractory impossibility.

## COLLAPSE II

---

To this extent the monotheistic belief – *hena theon, unum deum* – does not describe a rewarding destiny in Islam; it submits the *cogito* to an externality for which belief is at the same time a plethora of uselessness and a minimally organized line necessary for attaching to the eradication of itself as it blindly pursues the eternal Unrevealable. Islamic Apocalypse is an anti-absolute politics. God is the only Unconditioned; it is neither grasped nor unveiled and thus cannot ‘come into being’ transcendently; it is eternally external to Man, it is the Absolute as the desert of un-restriction (*ab-solvere*) for which Man or ontological potency is a restriction, a *modus* and a deterrent. Upon such an unfathomable externality, Man is left deserted; yet he is not abandoned, for this externality is mapped as an extra-proximity, utter and ungraspable closeness (‘We are closer to him than his jugular vein’ – thus the Quran). This is a panorama similar to the Survival Economy (*libban*, of Germanic origin) or what is commonly called life but is the territory of living (afforded Life or the process of affording life) and (un)Life, or life in its externality to affordability. Life is external to survival yet survival is allowed to live by means of the very ‘possibility of containing’ – or capacity – that Life makes accessible for it (either for the eradication of survival or in order to lure it elsewhere). What is given to Man is precisely what unlives for him. According to Islam, Man is liberated in *Ghiamat* not by joining the divine but through a disillusionment from his own being, a disillusionment made possible by the externality of God not the quiddity of this externality (*i.e.* the *Wesen* of God). *Behold the Outside, you shall not explore it!* For such an openness comes forth as a reactionary extinction by and through being, an

inevitable self-destructive repercussion triggered by the affordance of capacity. But its unfathomability can be grasped; this indeed is the way that ‘Return to God’ is depicted in Islam. According to Islamic commentators, *Ghiamat* (the Insurgency) – which, again, is wrongly translated as Apocalypse (the moment of uncovering or revelation, *apocalyptio*) since even in *Ghiamat*, Allah is ungraspable and unrevealed to Man – promises a simultaneously brutal and glorious encounter of Man with what is radically external yet closest to him; awakening this externality for Man and awakening Man to grasp the radicality of this externality – the Unrevealable, the irreducible, full-fledged horror.

Revelation is extruded from the dynamic vector of a ‘loving to know the unknown’ as Augustine suggests, but not a loving of the unknown itself. In Islam, however, the Unknown itself is venerated in its full externality to the *cogito* and to love. Reverence then is influenced by an *outsiding* glory (radicality of outsideness) as an affect passing and emerging through existence, not in the sense of an advent or arrival from an outside which affords a tendency, that is to say, a constraining extension, but as a perpetual foreigner. Advent can only be registered as an event when it is fulfilled or reaches its tendency, a status where its foreignness ends (arrives at an orientation). Anything that has the quality and movement of an advent is bounded by a condition and a destination corresponding to that condition; its outside-ness is only provisional. To approach an unattainable without anticipation of reaching it and in the absence of a destination as a position to be possessed, the movement and its affect must be inherently

## COLLAPSE II

---

upheld in relation to *xenos*, as a resident but ceaseless outsider (*xeno*) – insistent alien.

When the Unknown is unknown because of its radical externality, not because it is superior to human knowledge<sup>13</sup> – a position which can be afforded if not communicated or fully identified in itself – epistemological disciplines, in the same vein, unfold as alien tools. For such an unknown imbued with refractory impossibility, mysticism or contemplative theology proves itself to be not only otiose but a romantic project, a symptom of the loss of hope in a rigorous encounter with radical externality. If mysticism culminates in the form of an epistemological salvation or deliverance through initiation, its principles are constantly refuted by refractory impossibility, as simultaneously pusillanimous and irrelevant exploitations of ignorance on behalf of a redeeming unknown.

‘Apocalypse’ is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.<sup>14</sup>

---

13. The latter is exemplified by the theologies of Augustine or Aquinas. (*‘In finem nostrae cognitionis Deum tanquam ignotum cognoscimus’* [Thomas Aquinas, *Boetium de Trinitate*]). Following Aquinas who did not pursue the heretical trail of his remark and did not travel to the outer limits of his theology, one comes to this conclusion about the Divine as the *superiora* of knowledge: that ‘God exists as ignorance’. This does not denote that God is ignorant or is ignorance in itself but that God existentially registers itself in human knowledge as Supreme Ignorance. Therefore, the true existence of God as the ultimate knowledge (immutable wisdom and knowledge in its full presence) is dependent on human knowledge or real ignorance as something capable of being transcended, if the God’s true face is to be unveiled (namely, ‘God as ignorance’ realized as ‘impeccable knowledge’).

14. John J. Collins, ‘Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre,’ in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, ed. John J. Collins (*Semeia* 14, 1979), 9.

Schelling's obsession with Revelation (*Philosophy of Mythology, Philosophy of Revelation*) which re-presents the Judaeo-Christian account of Revelation and is a pivotal *quodlibet* in non-Islamic monotheistic religions, is rendered completely obsolete in the Islamic account of Apocalypse (*Ghiamat*) and is regarded as heresy. It is described by Schelling as 'that which exists [...] only in order to see if I can get from it to the divinity'. Such a statement is based on the primal prophetic promise of Revelation, the promise that the divinity must be eventually revealed or exposed to Man through transcendence and its anabatic movements. The true glory of the lord is exposed to Man when it is revealed ['God can be known' (John 1:18; 14:7; 17:3,6)]. In Islamic Apocalypticism, such a promise is absent and is regarded as *Kufr* (apostasy). Motahari, the Iranian Islamic scholar, once suggested that the glory of Allah bursts forth at the exact moment when Man realizes that nothing of Allah can be revealed to him. According to Islam, in such a moment one encounters the utter mercifulness of God, for if God reveals itself, all modes of survival and being would be rendered impossible. If God were to reveal itself, everything would be overkilled. According to Islam, the most merciful moment (supreme glory) is the moment when Allah shows Man that despite its utter externality to all beings, they exist precisely by virtue of this externality. Allah's radical supremacy is delineated more according to its degree and radicalness of externality and openness than to its authority over being (According to Islamic literature, Allah does not need to enforce authority; authority is the consequence of this externality which maintains the survival of all beings for if Allah reveals itself, the undoing

## COLLAPSE II

---

of Man will be inevitable).

On the topic of external sovereignty, Islamic scholars pose the question: if God is external and sovereign, then how can beings exist? This question is answered by recourse to an ungraspable generosity (not forgiveness) and Glory (both of which are purged of any quality) which surge up through beings as the only reason for their existence. Even the purpose of this Mercy and Glory will remain unknown, Outside: nothing of God itself will be revealed. With the consequence that applying the term Revelation (*apokalypto*) to the Islamic account of Apocalypse is highly problematic. Even on a technical level, Apocalypse, constitutive as it is of monotheism, is not designed for or capable of the particular functions that it presents in other monotheistic threads in the Last Day. *Ghiamat* (or *Qiyamah*), whilst it includes the diametric discourse of the Judgment Day and its monopoly on inevitability, as Al Faruqi points out, also adds a new and radical twist to the Apocalyptic politics common to all strands of monotheism; *Ghiamat* does not mean *apokalupsis* (involving the process of lifting the veil). Rather, it heralds *Ghiam* or rebellion, which is connected to *Sura Al-Takvir* (overthrowing). The Quran depicts *Ghiamat* – Ultimate Insurgency – as being governed not by a climax-oriented narrative, based on the consumption or depletion of the number of its possibilities, but on a series of participations, a chain of minor insurgencies (*ghiams*) which bring with them possibilities external to the capacity of the narrative.

Al Faruqi and Alameh Tabatabai both suggest that the Quran wholly withdraws from the diametric concealing/disclosing revelation of other monotheistic

Books, from the opening verse through to the end. It declares itself as an active cipher; it even shows a radical cynicism (or even hatred) for the facsimile by twisting the very foundations of monotheism as expressed in the Bible or Torah, progressively making itself unidentifiable, connecting what has already been told to anonymous (both in the sense of *an-onoma* and *a-nomos*) lines which make its contents accessible through an ulterior structure. This deviation from the familiar path culminates in the nomenclatural system usually associated with the Last Day; *Ghiamat* (Ultimate rebellion, Insurgency, Standing to respect, Awakening in the sense of disillusionment) becomes the substitute for all other names in Apocalyptic literatures which frequently suggest revelation (with *velum* at the center), resurrection or strict judgment (functioning through the dynamic scaling and measuring processes of *metron*).<sup>15</sup> The unity of the Advent Hope is frequently expressed by such phrases as ‘the last days’ and ‘the end of the age’ (Heb 9:26). Apocalyptic thought apparently arose within Judaism following the sixth century Babylonian exile of the Jewish people. Although the book of Daniel is the only complete example of an apocalypse in the Hebrew Bible, other passages contain ideas that are either apocalyptic or similar to apocalyptic thought – Examples

---

15. *Metron* (Greek origin), to be found etymologically encrypted in English words such as Dimension (from *dimetiri*: measure out), meter, etc. Keeping well in mind the famous doctrine of Protagoras, ‘Man is the metron of everything’ (*pantōn chrematōn metron anthrōpos*), *metron* can be translated as Scale, Measure, Standard, and Value. According to Sextus Empiricus *metron* expresses *criterium* (scale, measure) but Heraclitus and Sophocles saw it as certifying dominance, a domination over something. Therefore, *metron* indicates that both measure and dimension interconnect with Power, Justifying and Reasoning. The critique of *metron*, then, diagrams how dimensions (namely *metron*) bring Power into effect, mobilizing and propagating it.

## COLLAPSE II

---

would include Zechariah 9-14, Ezekiel 38-39, and Isaiah 24-27.

In Islam, and particularly in Sunni accounts of Islamic theology, examples of revelatory apocalypse and even seeing Allah in *Ghiamat* can be found (Abu Hurairah, Al Bukhari, Al Hajjaj, *et al*). However, most of these apocalyptic attributes originated from Hadiths – and hence had been subject to alteration, hadiths having being collected in different times and by different narrators. Their authenticity being thus questionable, they could not maintain a lasting presence in Islamic theology and Islamic accounts of *Ghiamat*. Not only because of their disputable origin (as in the case of Abu Hurairah for example), but also because of their contradiction of the emphatic statements in the Quran regarding *Ghiamat* and absence of revelation, in Islam apocalyptic theology (in the sense of revelation and epistemological or ontological unity with God) did not succeed in extending its influence beyond classical and early Islamic theology. In Islam, explicit reference (*nas-e sarih*) to the Quran is prior to everything and must not be transgressed. Cultivated by the Al-Azhar School's rigor and animated by such figures like Mahmood Shaloot who inveighed against the classic theologians who advocated apocalyptic eschatology of Judeo-Christianity and worked mainly outside sectarian doctrine, the revelational doctrines were denigrated in Islamic theology.

---

16. *Apokrisis* or *ekkrisis*, the Anaximanderian universal pro-creationist process of separation which is a prerequisite for unification and ultimate union. The process of *Apokrisis* stratifies the universe into properly arranged layers (unlimited appropriation and regulation by lamination and stratification) which make unification as a dynamic process possible. This process of separation is prerequisite for the cosmic union/separation machinery of the ultimate unification, or in other words, the final union which functionally presupposes a series of separations and unifications leading

The externality of Allah cannot be oversimplified into a mere process of separation (*ekkrisis*).<sup>16</sup> Aristotelian philosophy shows us that separation always presupposes a unity through a cyclic transcendence of separations (of *chorismos*) and unions (of *to hen*) which rotates – or in more technical terms, refines itself – towards a distilled Quiteness or Unity with the Divine, a unity which is not present in Islam. Moreover, unlike other modes of monotheism, for Islam this externality is not the result of a primal moral collapse or original sin (the Revelation system of Christian redemptive history influenced primarily by Tertullian [ca.155-220]); it is intrinsic to the existence of being. Neither does this externality have anything to do with sinfulness or the concupiscent nature of Man – who in Judaeo-Christianity must be cleansed, introduced to *katharos* – since in Islam the present condition of Man is not sinful but normal; in the Islamic account, sin emerges only as a consequence of the mis-perception of this externality, as a result of latching on to the quiddity of this externality, Allah.

Islam does not construct itself on redemption and/or revelation. Redemption (the wayfarer becomes totally at one with God's way of redemption) is inseparable from its consequent hope and boredom or redeeming despair, and modes of development which are steered by the conjunctive bonds between these two. The promise of

---

to a purely distilled Unity (corresponding to the classic distilling mechanism). Anaximenes, however, developed the process of *ekkrisis* into the two processes of rarefaction (corresponding to separation) and condensation (corresponding to unification); we can follow these processes in the unificatory and distilling mechanism of Kerotakis (reflux condenser) which was invented and designed according to the cosmogonic traditions of alchemy and Aristotelian philosophy. On *Apokrisis*, see Theophrastus commentaries on Anaximander; also, Hippolytus' *Refutation*.

## COLLAPSE II

---

Revelation presupposes a reward for a vigorous transcendentalism through the loss of sin and the accomplishment of unity with God – or more precisely, the reformation of affordance, and the capacity of Man to turn the (latent) impossibility of the Unity with God into a possessable possibility. In Islam there is no such reward, no such promise; there is only the inexhaustible activeness of refractory impossibility or Absolute Openness, crushing affordance and the economic regulations of capacity, disillusioning Man from his repressive openness *qua* economical self- and environment-protecting communication. Externality is diagrammed by a simultaneous formidable closeness and externality of function, a concretization of ‘closer to you than your jugular vein’ (what a vampiristic horror!)

### IN ISLAM, CHRONOLOGICS IS A HERESY.

The individual’s encounter through faith and grace with a personal God then salvation is contained precisely in the human surrender to God (*Islam* [Submission]) and that divine guidance (*huda*) which according to the Koran remains or should remain forever unaltered by time and history. Accordingly, there is no reason to conceive of revelation as something temporal or historical.<sup>17</sup>

Norman Brown is right to suggest that Islam is thoroughly apocalyptic but without a sense of ‘Time’ that could be grounded as the ordinance and understructure of the spectacles of Grand History (whether *Heilsgeschichte* or

---

17. Abdoldjavad Falaturi, ‘Experience of Time and History in Islam,’ in Annemarie Schimmel & Abdoldjavad Falaturi (eds.) *We Believe in One God* (London: Burns and Oates, 1979), 65.

*Weltgeschichte*). ‘Only the moment is real,’ Brown notes,<sup>18</sup> but goes no further. The moment is transient, its function is traced by its escapability, momentary variation and particle frequency, by its *gradus sine vestigio*; the moment in its entirety is an *uncogito* with a pulsatory intermittent existence, ungraspable by Man and inaccessible by mapped courses of action. All that is graspable are the moment’s trajectories, its tails which complicate and diagram time according to their spatial multiplicity, rather than the chronologies of Time. Too many traces left by the ever-escaping moment result in the loss of time, ‘untraceability of all narrative lines and temporal relations’<sup>19</sup> (= The Islamic Apocalypse, *Ghiamat*), the fall of the Kingdom – the emergence of a sinister imminence constructed not upon temporal relations or modes, but upon the loss of them. Such a constant imminence surpasses necrocratic terror: when Omega is always imminent and one cannot look backwards and ask what happened, the necrocratic fear of death – powered by anticipation of the future as well as the questioning of the distance to the Outside – is but a neutralized repression.

Time is absent in the Quran; the absence of any occurrence of the word *Zamaan* (Time: *chronos*) is one of its most noted enigmas. Instead of using the word *Zamaan*, the Quran frequently addresses events through the word *vaght*, conveying them through *vaght* and not *ramaan* towards *Ghiamat*. *Vaght* is concerned with ‘Whereness’

---

18. N. O. Brown, *Apocalypse And/or Metamorphosis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

19. Norman Brown writes, ‘the Quran breaks decisively with that alliance between the prophetic tradition and materialistic historicism – “what actually happened” – which set in with the materialistically historical triumph of Christianity?’ (*Ibid.*)

## COLLAPSE II

---

whilst also obscuring the quiddity of this whereness as spatial but unlocalizable ubiquity; it can only suggest an unchronological Now (neither permanence nor discontinuity; all entities are regarded as events through a denuded space with no chronologic dominance), a 'timeless where' through which beings are suspended but not stopped. But 'Where is Now?' The Quran never answers. 'Now' always remains anonymous; its ever-expanding Where which is essentially based on its whereness (the quality of its spatial continuity), is ceaselessly contagious. For whereness engineers terrains to remain ubiquitous and be actively divergent, a multiplicity which is a manifest epidemicity. Where is intrinsically and autonomously contagious. All manifestations of history (or even histories) are regarded as an infidelity towards this spatial and contagious Now (*vaght*) which is the most functional plane for utter submission (*Islam*) to the eternal externality of Allah, the pervading or epidemic impossibility. *Now* is the only plane on which Being can be saved from complete extinction by its illusions, which foam around its grand obsession with unity. Abdoldjawad Falaturi is possibly the first Islamic commentator who has rigorously worked on *vaght* in the Quran and on the Islamic sense of time (See his *Experience of Time and History in Islam*, and other essays).

In the sense of *Ghiamat*, is it too early or too late? Only by your 'participation' with this spatial Now (*vaght*), can you find out. We are always in a premature *Ghiamat*.

Islamic imminence escapes the doctrine of the Advent and the Christian Imminence. 'The great day of the Lord is near and hastening fast' (Zephaniah 1:14); 'O Sovereign

Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood?’ (Rev 6:10): such Nearness or Distance is at the heart of the Christian imminence, architectonically constructed on Waiting and Patience (‘Be patient’ [James 5:8-9], James admonishes believers). The affordable *esse* of the Christian God posits the Outside in terms of distance or opening-between (an openness that is situated in-between is affordance rather than openness). Distance and affordance realize movement only in the anticipation of reaching a destination, even if the destination is not accessible and only exists as an affordable event or entity. In terms of economical openness, what is afforded has already been achieved with the same scale of possibility and actuality. If distance potentiates destination, and destination actualizes distance, a movement that either travels according to the distance or according to and towards the destination would remain passive in its dynamism, because it would have already been presupposed by affordance. Such a movement, one whose course has already been afforded, does not undertake the risks of venture, instead it accepts the consequences of anticipation (immanent to distance and the afforded movement). Here opens a horizon of passivity as the inexorable glorification of patience and chronological toleration organized by the promise of Revelation, as a moral urgency of the Advent and Revelational Hope. Or, to be exact, this nearness of the Christian Imminence is articulated by the passivity of waiting and patience as the consequences of anticipation, whose endemic affliction is expectation, which in turn provokes hope and negative despair and gives rise to crises of faith (as for the first

## COLLAPSE II

---

century Christians who expected the grand return of Christ: “My master is delayed,” the unfaithful servant complains’[Matt 24:48]). And it is through this prolonging of hope and persistence as to the affordability of openness (of both Man and God to each other), that faith is manipulatively maintained. To this extent, the distance (wait, patience, nearness, expectation) of Christian imminence can be *metroned* (measured) either by Empirical or Existential Time. But Islamic imminence, spread over the epidemic Now, has no such bond to expectation, patience or waiting, and it cannot be measured since it is entirely based on furious participations (voluntary and involuntary, triggered by total openness fueled by a refractory impossibility that cracks affordance *ab intera, ab extra*) moved by the loss of the promise of the Revelation and the eternal externality of Allah.

If Islam’s process of submission affirms the radical externality of Allah as a refractory impossibility, and if Islamic Apocalypse supposes the loss of time, then for Christianity, Islam expands and inflames along the same chronopolitical dimension in which the Apocalypse deploys its cremating and concluding machinery, incinerating the western sense of time, cleaving the bonds between modes of historicity and western chronologies; a plane along which chronologies shrinks to momentary particles taking viral and swarming forms to spread through this spatial Now (or irrevocable imminence). Islamic *Ghiamat* is the vertigo of moments. For Christian chronologies, Islamic chronopolitics is that ‘radical disruption in the spatio-temporal relevancy of events’ which is generally called the Apocalypse. If War on Terror, on its western

front, is haunted not by *fin de siècle* scenarios but also by the political manifestations of the Apocalypse and emphatic finality, it is because western chronologics has engaged an opponent which only exists as a desert levelled of all idols or transcendental abominations to Allah. It is the desert that hosts, and looms as, the Apocalypse. It is a desert lurking in the disruption of chronologics, the corrosion of history and the collapse of the spatio-temporal continuity to the outside, because it is effectuated by refractory impossibility, not the other way around. This is not a question of a clash between civilizations but a radical Time-war, between chronologics and chronopolitics or what – by virtue of its dynamism, that is affected by the Outside and Impossibility – operates as Apocalypse or time-disruptive politics within other systems. Each Western tactical line in War on Terror must inevitably configure its program with reference to Islamic chronopolitics if it seeks to engage and afford the ‘conflict principles’ (correspondence with other war machines in space and time) which every war machine both upsets and affirms. If, on the Islamic front, the *Ghiamat*-apocalypse is always already-there and the entities of the *pax islamica* are already desert-nomads of this contagious Now, for the most part (but not entirely) it is the Western entities of War on Terror which are subjected to apocalyptic commotions and disruptions in time. While the Western chronosphere harbours a chronological cataclysm for the Islamic front, Islam’s chronopolitics betrays time and the Western chronosphere altogether.