Resistance and Encroachment in Everyday Life:
A Feminist Epistemological Study of Qajar Era Iranian Women's Travel Journals

By

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Abstract:

This dissertation is a study of Iranian women's everyday resistances in Qajar-era Iran, the period prior to the Constitutional Revolution (1906). Mobilizing feminist epistemology, and specifically feminist standpoint theory, which calls for the uncovering of women's hidden knowledge, I analyze five personal life narratives of Qajar women writing between 1880 and 1905. My analysis challenges previous narratives about the women of the era.

This research is made possible by the discovery of five travel journals written by four Qajar women, uncovered in private and public collections since 1995 and as recently as 2010, which have received little scholarly attention, to date. Contrary to the commonly accepted historical reports in which the agency of Qajar women was undermined, these personal writings tell a different story. The question at the heart of this investigation is *how does the perspective of everyday resistance reveal new knowledge about the agency of Qajar era Iranian women?* Building on recent developments in feminist epistemology regarding the importance of everyday resistance and epistemic injustice, this dissertation identifies these elements at work in the Qajar women's travel writings, shedding light on the relations of power in their lives more generally, and identifying the ways in which these women overtly and covertly exercised agency.

In doing so, I synthesize feminist standpoint theory with the works of feminist theorist Bettina Aptheker on the dailiness of women's lives, anthropologist James C. Scott's work on the everyday forms of resistance in the lives of the dispossessed, and sociologist Asef Bayat's theory of quiet encroachment. Employing discourse analysis methodology, I take and extend these theories to be applicable to the Qajar context: specifically, I extend Bayat's theory of quiet encroachment to what I call *epistemic encroachment* as it is mobilized in written form in the life narratives of Qajar women.

Dedication:

To Mehr,

the light that shines over the mountain peaks at the break of dawn…

and

To Mohammad,

Everyone knows
Everyone knows
That you and I saw the garden
Through that cold sullen window
And we picked the apple
From that far and playful branch.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

"It was Thursday evening, the last day of Rabi' I, 7 Aquarius 1332 [27 February 1914]. The afternoon was dark and overcast, gloomy as my reveries. Sitting in a half-lit room, I was busily occupied in painting. Outside it was snowing heavily, and no sound was heard except the whiffling of the wind. A despondent silence and stagnation, heightened by the dim red glow radiating from the heater, enveloped me.

I was utterly oblivious to the melancholic youth who sat behind in an armchair, watching with an indulgent eye my clumsy and haphazard brush strokes on the young woman's face that I was painting. From time to time he heaved a doleful sigh. Finally, he said, 'You work too hard and tax your brain too much. It would be well for you to rest a little. The light, too, isn't very good, and it's rather difficult to paint right now.'

Startled by his totally unexpected voice—for I had thought I was alone—I twitched involuntarily and cried, 'Ah, Solayman, were you here all this time?'

With a peculiar laugh he said, 'Your agitated and chaotic state of mind makes you forget everyone present, including yourself. You are so frequently lost in thought that it causes me concern. When you feel a pensive mood is coming on, it would be better if you occupied yourself with enlivening conversations, or walked outside to admire nature, or read some history book.'

With a bitter smile on my lips I let out a cry impulsively and said, 'Oh my teacher and dear cousin! My past and present life excites both wonder and anguish, and you expect me to be interested in another's tale? Isn't the review of one's personal history the best undertaking in the world?'

Shrugging his shoulders, he said, 'Ah, but I don't consider the ups and downs of individual experience as history. If your life story is truly as strange and remarkable as you say, why don't you tell it to me so that I may profit from it?'

I answered, 'The story of my life is so weighty and replete with difficult situations that I couldn't finish recounting it even if I spent every hour of an entire year. Besides, it alternates so rapidly between sorrow and laughter that it's bound to perplex the listener.'

With an inquiring look he said, 'Well, well, surely you must be joking?' But then, quickly seeing the seriousness of my face, he forgot his facetious mood and said thoughtfully, 'Madam, would you please tell me your story?'

'No,' I said.

With the utmost earnestness he began pleading for my story. The more I refused, the further he importuned. Finally I said, 'I don't have the strength to relate it to you verbally, but I do promise to write it all down." Fully gratified, he thanked me. And here I think it appropriate to describe briefly this teacher of mine and introduce him properly before I proceed to tell my story."

(Taj al-Saltana 77)

I first became interested in the knowledge that could be uncovered through women's life writing when I read my maternal great grandmother's short autobiography. The daughter of a military man working under Reza Shah, Khanoum Jan had the chance to attend primary school and was considered an educated woman for her time. She went on to become one of the first teachers in the first all-girls school in my hometown of Neyshabour, but her academic career was cut short after Reza Shah's (r. 1925-1941) unveiling decree in January 1936, and she was forced to stay at home. Many stories from my mother and my aunts from both sides of the family indicate that for hijab-observing girls who went to school during the reign of Reza Shah's son,Mohammad Reza Shah (r. 1941-1979), the situation—although much improved—was still far from ideal. My paternal aunts were forced to quit school because they did not want to remove their headscarves and they homeschooled themselves with the help of guidebooks. I was born and raised in Iran after the 1979 Revolution, a period that has been very different from the Pahlavi era in many respects. Growing up under a highly ideological political system, I was taught at school and elsewhere that after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iranian women had finally found a high status and a dignified place in their society. But my own experiences with injustice, namely the compulsoriness of Islamic hijab for women, were enough to make me see that this claim was invalid.

Prior to my move to Canada, I assumed that the general Western portrayal and understanding of Iranian women—and Middle Eastern women by extension—was a more comprehensive one, given the free flow of information and the apparent lack of censorship. This assumption also proved to be wrong as I not only studied the literature about Western encounters with the Muslim world and especially Muslim women, but also through my lived experience of being an Iranian Muslim woman in Canada. What was starkly missing was a narrative of Iranian

women as people with agency; in charge of their own fate and active in their struggles against various forms of oppression.

The literature about Iranian women, and more specifically about Qajar era women, who are the focus of this dissertation, can be categorized into two types. One is the conventional literature, which as I discuss in Chapter 3 has been problematic in the way it has been done in any era for how it presents women as passive recipients of injustice. Two is the critical literature, which is more recent and looks beyond conventional approaches and the history of record into areas that have been largely ignored.

In the conventional category, the Pahlavi narrative portrayed Iranian women as in need of modernization, the Islamic Republic narrative emphasised that they were in need of being de-Westoxified[1] and the Western narratives often represented them as in need of saving. What all these narratives have in common is a given assumption that Iranian women lack agency, that for whatever reason they are unable to claim their rights and to resist oppression. That they need rights, freedom, and proper status to be *sought for them*, to be *fought for them* and to be *given to them*. This perspective ignores the agency of the people—especially women—and excluding the important component of everyday resistance in power relations in both past and present narratives about Muslim women. The result has been increasing dissatisfaction over gender inequality in many Middle Eastern and Muslim countries, and the abuse by Western powers of the women's rights narrative in favour of neo-colonial adventures and disastrous and destabilizing wars in the Middle East.

[1] In Persian gharbzadegi. The term which was coined by Iranian philosopher Ahmad Fardid was popularized by Iranian secular intellectual Jalal al-e Ahmad. According to Oxford Islamic Studies Online the term is used "to describe the fascination with and dependence upon the West to the detriment of traditional, historical, and cultural ties to Islam and Islamic world. Defined as an indiscriminate borrowing from and imitation of the West, joining the twin dangers of cultural imperialism and political domination." ("Westoxification")

Critical studies on the other hand have shown that Iranian women of any generation were far from passive recipients of injustice and oppression. Research conducted by Afsaneh Najmabadi, Homa Hoodfar, Vanessa Martin and Leila Papoli Yazdi and many others working on marginalized voices has challenged the conventional approach to Iranian women's history and shown that pushback, resistance, bargaining, and circumvention has always existed in one way or another, albeit not always clearly visible to the outsider.[2] This was my comprehension as I started to think about new places where one could find examples of Qajar women's resistance and agency, and the ways that this resistance and agency could be explained and theorized. Since these kinds of resistance usually happen at the level of seemingly mundane everyday life, they are hard to find in history books, as those books often focus on exceptional individuals and major events. One place to learn about Iranian women's everyday life is their own life narratives. This is an area that has not been fully examined in critical studies, partly because there were hardly any primary sources (life writing of Qajar women) available to study.

The most well-known female autobiographical account of the era is written by princess Taj al-Saltaneh, the daughter of Naser-al-din Shah. The opening lines of her memoir quoted at the opening of this chapter, capture many aspects of my dissertation. Consider the following: one of the goals of feminists has been to show that women are often erased from history, with their lived experience in everyday life often being deemed too insignificant to be of historical importance. For instance, in her conversation with her male cousin and tutor, Solayman, Taj explicitly faces this line of thinking when Solayman says: "I don't consider the ups and downs of individual experience as history" (Taj al-Saltana 77). Taj counters by emphasizing the importance of the ordinary lives of women and their experiences. Her resistance to the idea of

[2] Najmabadi, Martin, and Papoli Yazdi's work on which I draw in this research stretch from Qajar Era to early Pahlavi era. Hoodfar's sociological research mostly focuses on contemporary Iran.

everyday life as being insignificant is an indication of the times, as the Qajar era seems to be the earliest period in Iranian history from which we have records of Iranian women writing about their everyday life in prose. The only example of life writing we have from a woman before the Qajar era is written in verse,[3] likely to justify its value as something worthy of being recorded and preserved, utilizing the high status of poetry in Persian literature and culture. Even the writings of Qajar women mostly have a stated justification beyond merely recording everyday life: to describe a rare journey and report important information in a travel journal, or in the case of Taj, to provide insight from a different perspective on important historical figures and events, as well as to detail the significance of her own role as a royal. Nevertheless, these writings provide a rare window into the everyday lived experiences of Iranian women in the Qajar era.

The preface to Taj's memoir works as a symbol of the entire narrative and of what Taj does through the act of writing. Taj starts by describing herself painting the portrait of a woman in a dimly lit room while she is about to tell us her personal story as the daughter of Iran's ruler in one of the most pivotal eras of the country's history. This is an era for which mainstream history has arguably documented very little of the role of women in the unfolding of events. Taj explicitly expresses a feminist position, arguing that what men believe to be worthy of recording as part of the historical record is not the only way of thinking about what is significant and worthy of archiving. The excerpt is an exchange between a man and a woman, both born and raised into the royal family. Yet, as exemplified in Solayman's disbelief in the "wonder and anguish" of Taj's life story, they had very different life experiences due to their different genders. Facing her seriousness and insistence on the validity and significance of her experiences, Solayman implores Taj to narrate her life story right there and then. Taj explicitly

[3] Shahrbanoo Beigom Esfahani who wrote her entire Hajj travelogue in 1708 during Safavid era. Of course, there may be more examples from the time, as well as earlier periods that have either been lost, or not yet unearthed.

challenges Solayman's assumption that all she has to say can be condensed into a few hours of conversation and reinforces the significance of what she has to say by emphasizing that it is worth recording in writing. Taj accepts to "write it all down" rather than tell her story orally (Taj al-Saltana 77).

Not only did she write her story for Solayman, but she chose to write for a general audience. She describes him, explaining who he is, which is a clear indication that she is not just writing for him, or even for her immediate family who already know him, but for a broader audience. Her memoir addresses this broader audience right from the outset, not waiting for Solayman's approval and acknowledgement that her story is significant enough to be told to a broader audience.

Taj is writing in 1914, in the aftermath of the Constitutional Revolution (1906-1911), and is likely observing first-hand how the narratives around this significant historical event are taking shape. Her writing is an implicit assertion that what is being deemed historically relevant excises the experiences of at least half the population: that of women, not to mention the variegated experiences of different facets of Iranian society from the lower classes. In choosing to write rather than narrate, she is acknowledging the importance of recording women's personal history and personal experiences, and also the role that such records can play in shaping the historical record. Taj wants to write herself and her personal story into history in a very intended way, and wants to be taken seriously. This is the sense in which Taj's memoir, and my dissertation, can be considered part of the broader feminist epistemological project.

While Taj's memoir has been studied in the past, new memoirs have surfaced in recent years that capture the life writing of Qajar women in the form of travel journals: The *Mecca*

Travelogue of Farhad Mirza's Daughter[4] (w.1880, pub. 2010), the *Travel diaries of Mecca, Holy cities, and Naseri Court by Aliyeh Shirazi*[5] (written between 1892-1894, pub. 2007), and the *Hajj Diaries of Vaqar al-Dowleh*[6] (w. 1900, pub. 2010), the *Tehran Travelogue of Khavar Bibi Shadlou*[7] (w. 1904, pub. 1995), and the *Fars Travelogue of Sakinah Sultan Vaqar al-Dowleh*[8] (w. 1905, pub. 2004). These travel journals are the focus of analysis in this dissertation. Three of them were first published in *Miqat Hajj Journal* (Journal published by Iran's Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization), and were discovered in the archives by Dr. Rasoul Jafarian, a Shiite clergy and Professor of History in the University of Tehran. Two of them were found in personal archives and published by the family members and descendants of the writers. The parts of these journals that I quote in this dissertation are translated for the first time into English by myself and made accessible to English speaking readers. Unlike Taj's memoir, which was written after the Constitutional Revolution, these newly uncovered travel journals capture the everyday life of Qajar women in the years leading up to this historical event. Although most of the women writers of these travel journals are of high social status, they are not as privileged as Taj. Also, unlike Taj, they typically write for a specific audience rather than a broad one, and they do not pursue an overt feminist political agenda in their writing. Nevertheless, these journals provide a rare and valuable window into the everyday life of Qajar women. The question I asked when analyzing these texts is *how does the perspective of everyday resistance reveal new knowledge about the agency of Qajar era Iranian women?* The lived experiences of these women have not

[4] Found by Dr. Rasoul Jafarian in Library Number 2 of the Iranian Majlis (parliament), number 1225 (archives, ج 2, ص 172).
[5] Found by Dr. Rasoul Jafarian in Tehran University Central Library. Repository: (393 Friday prayer-leader (Imam Jum'ah)).
[6] The manuscript is kept in a personal archive. It was edited and published by Dr. Rasoul Jafarian and Kiyanoush Kiani Haft-Lang.
[7] The manuscript is kept in a personal archive. Published by Qodrat Allah Roshani Zaferanlou, and Houshang Shadlou.
[8] Found and published by Kinaoush Kiani Haft-Lang.

been part of the traditional history of record, and have not been the subject of academic study. My dissertation addresses this gap, contributing to the history of Iranian women, especially the history of Qajar era Iranian women.

Personal Background in Relation to Theoretical Framework

I employ a discourse analysis methodology based on a synthetic theoretical framework. The major theoretical basis of this study is feminist standpoint theory and I connect the notions of hidden knowledge, situated knowledge and double consciousness from this theoretical framework to the work of Bettina Aptheker on the dailiness of women's lives, James C. Scott's work on the way peasants—the weak—resist the oppressor in ways that are not overtly costly to themselves, and Asef Bayat's work on how the powerless claim various spaces where power is enacted, and through these methods and practices quietly encroach on power. Growing up in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution of 1979, narratives of power, resistance and revolution were always prominent in my education, media exposure, and social conversations. But I hardly had any theoretical understanding or analysis of the power structures and relations in which I lived until I began my graduate studies at Shahid Beheshti University's English Literature program, known for a curriculum with strong emphasis on continental philosophy and theory. It was then that I first encountered Michel Foucault's work, and delved into it in search of analytical frameworks for the study of power and resistance, to the extent that Foucauldian theory became the central theoretical framework of my Master's thesis. However, I completed that thesis with the feeling that I wanted to extend beyond Foucauldian analysis to include other theories on the gendered character of power and resistance. Nonetheless, his conceptualizations have continued to inform my comprehension of other theorists as I have read and formulated my own understanding of power and resistance.

When I immigrated to Canada, my newly-found distance from Iran—both geographical and social—allowed me to reflect back on my position and actions in my pre-immigration life from new angles and perspectives. The notion of social resistance in modern Western democracies is often associated with the idea of *standing up for what's right*, which typically involves either some sort of formal complaint to authorities, a public plea on television or other mass media, or otherwise someone *making a scene* to set things right when they perceive the presence of injustice. Western culture and media in turn glorifies such social heroes that stand up for what's right, and considers their actions to be overall conducive, even necessary, for the health of society and its democratic institutions.

Back in Iran, however, things were different. On many matters especially those involving gender roles and women's rights, standing up for what is right is often not a pragmatic option. Avenues to voice perceived injustices were limited. Authorities and media are often party to the injustice. Under such circumstances, resistance takes on different shapes and meanings. To avoid penalty, it often takes forms that go unrecognized as resistance at all. These forms are what I take up throughout this thesis not as negative or lacking, but as important aspects of resistance especially in repressive regime, for relatively powerless members of the society. Plausible deniability is often needed as a defense. One could call it "Schrodinger's resistance," being at the same time both resistance and non-resistance depending on who's looking. For instance, when under compulsory hijab laws, I and many other women wore the hijab loosely showing more hair than what was considered *proper,* testing the limits; Music forbidden in public was often played in cars, as one toyed with the limits of public and private space.

These were not blatant acts of protest. They were the resistances of daily life that pushed boundaries in the face of injustice and sometimes managed to extend possibilities. These were

just the ways in which we lived our daily lives. They were not overtly coordinated, and yet through social synergies political resistances were mobilizing. Society was slowly changing, due to these praxes. There was no guarantee that everybody who engaged in these acts felt the same way about them. The experience of an everyday life full of these non-resistance acts of resistance had left me with a yearning to name and theorize these lived experiences. This has no doubt played a major role in my search for and choice of theoretical frameworks applied in the present dissertation.

Dissertation Structure and Overview of Chapters

After this introduction—in which I describe my own situated context and provide an overview of the entire project, Chapter 2 covers the theoretical framework, Chapter 3 is a critical literature review and gives the context for Qajar women's historiography, and Chapter 4 delivers the heart of the analysis. In Chapter 5, I conclude with some thoughts relating to the connections of this work with my personal life and standpoint as an Iranian woman in order to emphasise my own situatedness as a researcher. This is in line with the general philosophy of standpoint feminism that as a methodological principle invites the researcher to be upfront about their own situatedness.

Feminist epistemology is concerned with the way gender influences our knowledge, how we know what we know, and the criteria we use to decide what can count as knowledge and what cannot. I provide an overview of feminist epistemology in Chapter 2, with a specific focus on feminist standpoint theory identifying practical guidelines for applying feminist standpoint epistemology as a methodological foundation for scholarship. I start with a review of feminist empiricism, and then move to an in-depth account of feminist standpoint epistemology, its evolution, and key concepts including situated knowledge, double consciousness, and strong

objectivity. Then I discuss the postmodernist approach to feminist epistemology and its implications for standpoint theory. The notions of everyday life, the structures of power, the acts of resistance and encroachment have been of critical importance in feminist standpoint epistemology, and I cover these concepts in specific sections.

The work of feminist historian Bettina Aptheker on the dailiness of women's lives and sociologist Asef Bayat's notion of quiet encroachment, which he describes as "a silent, patient, protracted and pervasive advancement of ordinary people on the propertied and powerful in order to survive hardships and better their lives" ("Un-Civil Society: The Politics of the 'Informal People'" 57), inform my application of feminist standpoint theory. As mentioned earlier, women's voices and experiences have, for the most part, gone unrecognized and undocumented in historical records. Additionally, their experiences have been neglected in theoretical frameworks and research practices. Standpoint feminism suggests that we begin our research and the process of new knowledge building from "women's concrete experiences" (Sprague 56). My unique take on applying feminist standpoint theory with the use of the body of work on everyday resistance is to look for the foci of resistance and encroachment as sites of inquiry. In other words, I study these newly found travel journals—which are to my knowledge the only ones we have at this point written by Iranian women of the Qajar era—to identify the forms of quiet encroachment and everyday resistance to patriarchy and the ways in which they play against the boundaries of the sociocultural limitations that they face.

In addition to the theoretical significance of studying Iranian women's everyday resistance established in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 delves into the historical significance of studying the journals by Qajar era women. The imperial/colonial representation of Qajar women, as well as the official Iranian historiography of Iranian women during the Qajar dynasty (1794-1925)

have been sites of contestation. The distortion of narratives about Iranian women in colonial and imperialist texts is in line with the pattern thoroughly investigated in post-colonial scholarship. What I focus my attention on are the sources of distortion within the local context of Iran. Leila Papoli Yazdi, archaeologist of contemporary past, argues that the two regimes following Qajar dynasty, the Pahlavi (est.1925-1979) and the Islamic Republic (est.1979), have pursued patriarchal political propaganda to legitimize themselves. The Pahlavi regime presenting itself as a saviour of women from the Qajar era's backwardness, and the Islamic Republic portraying itself as a savior of women from both Qajar backwardness and Pahlavi Westoxification (Papoli Yazdi, "Introduction" 7-12). As a result, the Qajar era is often depicted as a time when women were restricted to the inner quarters of their homes, with no access to education or the public sphere, and with little agency at home or in the society. Roshanak Mansour summarizes the general image of Qajar women cast by Western travellers and the educational tracts[9] written by Qajar men for the women as such:

> Her life was spent in spaces where she selfishly feigned ignorance and was surrounded by vain deceitfulness. She was expected not to, ever, set foot in public spaces. Given the legal rights she was given, her value was no more than an "object." In writing she was referred to as "manzel (household);" where she could stay as a sigheh[10] wife, or someone with no rights. Her existence was surrounded in misery by the decisions made by her competitors and co-wives. She never knew what childhood meant, nor did she know what adolescence was. She had no access to education and

[9] These tracts, the most famous one of which is *The Education of Women,* were written by men for other men in order to teach them how to treat their wives and daughters. For more information see the introduction to *The Education of Women and The Vices of Men* by Hasan Javadi and Willem Floor.

[10] Sigheh or Nikah al-mut'a is literally translated as "temporary marriage." It is a type of marriage practiced by Shiite Muslims where the length of the marriage and dowry must be specified and agreed upon in advance. The length of the marriage can be anytime between a few hours to 99 years. A man cannot have more than four permanent wives, but can have as many temporary wives as he wishes. After the end of a temporary marriage, the woman must keep *iddah*, a period of abstinence intended to make certain she is not pregnant with the man's child. Children born to sigheh wives have the same inheritance and other rights as children born to permanent wives. The tradition is comparable to concubinage in the West. Although, in case of a concubinage the children of the union had no rights to inheritance.

> self realization, and before she knew herself she became a mother (and how great it would be if she had birthed a son) to make the life of her future daughter-in-law just as miserable.[11] (12-13)

But this bleak portrayal of the lives and agency of Qajar women coexisted with another one; one that pictures her as suddenly rising from a period of ignorance that had lasted as long as history itself. Mansour adds: "What surprised historians and witnesses equally, was the sudden appearance of such ignorant and domestic creature in the social realm; [after all, she was] a creature whose sense of patriotism and power of understanding political issues was not acknowledged by anyone" (13). With the exception of women's participation in the Tobacco Movement (1891 CE) and the studies on the life and image of Tahereh Qurrat al-Ayn,[12] the bulk of research about Qajar women is built upon this initial surprise at women's presence in the public sphere.

During the course of the Constitutional Revolution, Qajar women had supported the constitutionalists in different ways. *Tarikh –e-Bidari-ye-Iranian (History of the Awakening of the Iranian People)* refers to a demonstration by women in 1906, right in the midst of the Constitutional Revolution, in which they attacked the Shah's carriage in support of the Constitutionalist clergy who were in *bast* (sit-in, sanctuary) in the shrine of Shah Abd al-Azim (Nezam al-Eslam Kermani 361). Iranian women had dressed as men and fought along the pro-constitutionalist of Azerbaijan against the anti-constitutionalists (1899 CE), and they had raised funds for the first national bank by donating and selling their jewelry (1906 CE) (Sanasarian 20-21). Janet Afary has shown how from the very beginning women's demonstrations and protests were part of the new democratic movement in Iran, and how modern Iranian feminism can be

[11] Here and elsewhere in this dissertation, all translations from Persian sources are my own unless stated otherwise.
[12] Or Fatemeh Baraghani (b. 1814-1852), a leader of the Babi movement, theologian and poet.

traced to the constitutional Revolution (117). But, as Eliz Sanasarian points out, it was first with the encouragement of the clergy that women became involved in the Constitutional Revolution (21). Nevertheless, women's sociopolitical participation within the designated boundaries and their actions to break those very boundaries were not mutually exclusive and constantly overlapped. Nationalism and the Constitutional Revolution had introduced new lingo such as "Qanun [law]," and "Adamiyat [humanity]," which were important concepts to women and as Sanasarian points out, "exposure to such ideals had awakened in the minority of educated Iranian women a desire to be recognized on an equal footage with men" (23). Hence, to the dismay of even the "nationalist men," women who had participated in the Constitutional Revolution were not about to go home and return to their traditional roles and former status.[13] They started to form their secret societies, establish modern schools for girls, and start a women's press.

But as some newer research shows, Iranian women's participation in the public sphere did not suddenly begin in the course of the Constitutional Revolution. In *The Qajar Pact* (2005), Vanessa Martin digs into the consular records of the British National Archives, and the works of travelers from various nationalities who have passed through Iran, to conduct the first broad research on the participation of ordinary and non-elite social groups in the political processes of nineteenth century Iran. In Chapter 5 of her book *Popular Demonstrations by Women in Nineteenth Century Iran*, Martin shows that Iranian women were publicly involved in political activity much earlier than the Constitutional Revolution. According to Martin, Iranian women's demonstrations have a history that goes back to the nineteenth century and perhaps earlier, and

[13] In her presentation titled "A Gender Coup: Modernization in Iran," Esha Momeni addressed how the creation of national identity, the concept of civil rights, and modern institutions such as a centralized judiciary system rooted in religion, institutionalized patriarchy in Iran and resulted in women's further oppression. She argued that the economic and cultural transformation that came with the introduction and creation of the aforementioned concepts and institutions were similar to their colonial origins. Momeni concluded that while the Iranian male intellectuals of the past century "differentiated in ideology and politics, their position in regard to women remained consistent."

that the motives behind these demonstrations were mostly mixed and not necessarily secular (95-113).

Likewise, Leila Papoli Yazdi, Omran Garazhian, and Gowhar Soleimani Reza Abad, look into the archive of marriage contracts from late Qajar era preserved in the archives of Astan Qods library and argue that women's economic participation in the Qajar era was much more extensive than previously thought. Their research shows that women used the traditional/religious marriage system to their advantage, and that the economic power of a woman was not only advantageous to her family but when used collectively, it gave women the power to pressure local and national governments when needed (71-117).

I place my research along the line of work done by critical researchers working on marginalized voices in Iranian modern history. The travel journals that I am analyzing have been found in personal and national archives in Iran in the last ten years and are so far the only Qajar women travel narratives that have survived—or have been found, despite the fact that writing these was a cultural practice and there were likely many produced informally by women of the same era. I argue that the distorted representation of women's roles and their history is part of an ignorance intentionally produced and perpetuated by colonial, patriarchal, and propaganda narratives. What I mean here by ignorance is not simply an absence in knowledge, but a condition that is sometimes actively produced to serve the domination of a certain group or groups (Sullivan and Tuana 1-2). Focusing on these Qajar women's travel journals—which have not been previously studied—challenges this ignorance by contributing knowledge to what we know and understand about Qajar women's lives, as well as the social relations and power relations of the time more generally.

Patricia Hill Collins recommends that we reclaim and uncover hidden knowledge by discovering, reinterpreting, or for the first time analyzing texts that have been unrecognized and unheralded (xii). Following this recommendation, I work with the premise that Iranian women's subjugate acknowledges present in various sites of expression ought to be extracted and analyzed. Although the writers of these travel journals are from privileged social classes, they have very little to no formal education, as evidenced by the style, form, and content of their writing. Compared to the literary quality present in much of the life writing by the prominent men of the time, these women's journals have little to offer at the level of literary contribution; still, the writers' standpoints as women connected to power yet oppressed by patriarchy offers a form of "outsider-within" perspective and content important to the study of Iranian history; these texts provide insights and information that are otherwise inaccessible—lost to the archive, given that women's perspectives of the day were not taken into consideration, let alone considered as somehow historically valuable and worth preserving.

In Chapter 4 "A Standpoint Analysis of Qajar Women's Travelogues," I study these travel journals jointly and comparatively with one another, and in some instances also in relation to the memoirs of Taj al-Saltaneh. The journals were all written in the years leading up to the Constitutional Revolution (1906-1911) and studying them in relation to Taj's memoir, which was written after the Constitutional Revolution, provides some useful points of comparison. The writers of these select journals hardly pay any attention to major socio-political events and focus mostly on everyday life; perhaps some may find the journals insignificant exactly because of this, but for me it is the exact opposite, as my theoretical lens calls specifically for the study of the everyday and the ordinary.

The journals are ideal sources for uncovering these women's situated hidden knowledge. The writers' focus on the everyday and the ordinary allowed me to concentrate intentionally on everyday life and to identify the points of resistance and encroachment in their daily lives. The feminist conceptualization of everyday resistance by Bettina Aptheker, combined with Asef Bayat's theory of social "nonmovements" and "quiet encroachment" help identify the defensive (i.e. coping) types of resistance, as well as the infringing (i.e., claim-making) encroachments exhibited in the travel journals. Throughout the analysis I have been wary of the postmodernist critique of feminist standpoint theory's approach to "subject" and been watchful of the grand narratives and discourses that shape the experiences and understandings of the journal writers. I have also been mindful that the journals were written with specific audiences in mind, which shapes their narratives in important ways.

From my analysis I contribute back to theory by arguing that life writing plays two important roles in quiet encroachment, that are currently not duly appreciated in Bayat's formulation. First, given that Bayat highlights the function of public spaces in creating the opportunities for social interactions that allow encroachment, I maintain that writing, namely life writing, also provides a powerful space for such interactions. Additionally, I argue that Bayat's concept of quiet encroachment can be supplemented with the notion of "epistemic encroachment" to add the fight for meaning as an important part of the fight for justice and the subversion of dominance. Through studying these implausible forms of resistance, or what Lila Abu-Lughod calls "small … resistances not tied to the overthrow of systems or even the ideologies of emancipation" (41) within the context of the everyday lives of Qajar women, I want to show the complexity of the systems of power and resistance and how they exist not only

in the locus of public spaces, but any other loci—be it concrete or virtual, where self expression is possible.

In Chapter 5, I conclude the dissertation with first a personal reflection, stressing my own situatedness and influences in conducting this research. Second, I provide a summary of the insights, and finally imagine possibilities for future scholarship along the lines of this dissertation and beyond.

Chapter 2 - Theoretical Framework

Each day is a tapestry, threads of broccoli, promotion, couches, children, politics, shopping, building, planting, thinking interweave in intimate connection with insistent cycles of birth, existence, and death.

--Deena Metzger

Introduction

The aim of this Chapter is to provide background on the body of theory in feminist epistemology that informs this dissertation, and to provide an overview of the theoretical framework that is later applied in Chapter 4, and that motivates the dissertation as a whole. Although my approach is heavily rooted in feminist standpoint theory, my goal is to nuance the application of this theory by taking stock of developments in various sub-schools of feminist epistemology. The chapter at hand explains the understanding of feminist epistemology that is applied in Chapter 4 and the reason why I give particular attention to the sites of everyday resistance and quiet encroachment in my inquiry, as ways to clarify the power dynamics in the context studied.

Beginning with a review of feminist empiricism, I move to a more in-depth account of feminist standpoint epistemology, its evolution, and key concepts including situated knowledge, double consciousness, and strong objectivity. I then address the postmodernist critique, or the postmodernist approach to feminist epistemology, and its implications for standpoint theory. Since the notions of everyday life, the structures of power, and the acts and processes of resistance and encroachment have been of critical importance in feminist standpoint theory, I devote specific sections to these concepts. A key contribution of this chapter is the argument that the theoretical body of work on everyday resistance—especially as formulated by Bettina Aptheker, and quiet encroachment as formulated by Asef Bayat—can help us identify where and how to apply feminist standpoint analysis to gain a better picture of the prevailing relations of power and dominance.

Besides showing the connections among feminist standpoint theory, theories of everyday life and resistance, the goal throughout this chapter is to derive practical guidelines for applying

feminist standpoint epistemology as a methodological foundation for scholarship. In the conclusion of this Chapter, I take stock of the main takeaways from theory that will inform the application and discourse analysis in Chapter 4.

Feminist Epistemology

Feminist epistemology is concerned with the way gender influences knowledge: how we acquire knowledge and the criteria we use to decide what counts as knowledge and what does not. Since the 1970s, there has been increasing focus on feminist theories of knowledge (Harding, *Whose Science?* 105). As Sandra Harding argues in *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?,* an important motivation behind these attempts has been the struggles of social scientists and biologists to add issues of women and factors of gender to the existing bodies of knowledge in their respective fields (19-25). The entire conceptual scheme of what was considered to constitute proper scientific method was blind to the existence of sexism and androcentrism in these fields, let alone able to develop methods to address them. In addition, most scientists considered feminism as merely politics and therefore saw it as a threat to their attempts to produce "pure," "rational," and "objective" science (Harding, *Whose Science?* 105). Harding argues that "the concepts of women and of knowledge—socially legitimated knowledge—had been constructed in opposition to each other" (*Whose Science?* 106). Several schools of thought in feminist epistemology have been articulated and elaborated, and these epistemologies both "borrow from and are in tension with "prefeminist" epistemologies" (*Whose Science?* 106). These are typically divided into the three general categories of feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint theory, and feminist postmodernism.

Feminist Empiricism

Empiricism, as Denise Leckenby defines it, "refers to the position and belief that the only knowledge source available to us is that which can be experienced and measured by our senses" (27-28). Feminist empiricists argue that sexist and androcentric biases in biology and social sciences are the result of "bad science," and can be eliminated by a more thorough application and strict adherence to existing scientific methods of inquiry (*Whose Science?* 111). But as Lackenby notes, feminist empiricists' research is as strongly connected to feminist perspective as it is to positivist approaches (28). Londa Schiebinger, historian of science, points out the goals of empiricist research:

> Research embodies many core feminist values … eliminating research that leads to exploitation of nature or other humans, resisting explanations stripped of social and political context … acknowledging our values and beliefs, being honest in our assumptions, being responsible in our language. (861)

These goals are feminist in their nature, and without the inclusion of women in both the subject of scientific inquiry and the process of knowledge formation, achieving them is unfeasible. Feminist empiricists argue that the inclusion of women and their experiences in sciences will not only benefit women's lives, but also help us achieve more objective scientific results that will in turn further illuminates our understanding of the human condition and truth.

It is feminist empiricism's claim to more "objectivity" that is the basis of the arguments of most of its critics. Harding, for instance, argues that objectivity is not objective enough, and it still silences and limits less privileged accounts ("After the Neutrality Ideal" 574). She states that "the methods and norms in the disciplines are too weak to permit researchers systematically to identify and eliminate from the results of research those social values, interests and agendas that are shared by the entire scientific community" ("Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology" 52). Such

criticisms have pushed feminist empiricists to re-examine their most basic assumptions, not just in the practice of science, but also their positivist methods striving to achieve "true" objectivity. However, many view feminist empiricism as an epistemology that just adds women to pre-existing knowledge structures, and does not pay attention to, or questions epistemological and ontological assumptions that formed those pre-existing structures in the first place.

Progress in the feminist empirical tradition has resulted in considerable convergence of this approach on many issues with both standpoint feminism and postmodernist perspectives, and a movement beyond naïve empiricism to the extent that many criticisms of feminist empiricism by other schools no longer reflect what many feminist empiricists believe (Anderson). Feminist empiricists espousing a naturalized epistemology inspired by W. V. O. Quine ("Epistemology Naturalized" 1963) concur with other schools that knowledge is situated, that facts or evidence are value-laden, and that a plurality of perspectives enhances the search for truth.

Feminist Standpoint Epistemology

Feminist standpoint epistemology is based on the premise that knowledge is situated, i.e., that knowledge construction is dependent on the specific physical location, interests, time in history, and culture of the subject that produces that knowledge and/or on whose experience that knowledge is based (Harding, *Is Science Multicultural?*). In striving for "objective" or non-situated knowledge, much of traditional scholarship based on positivist epistemology has ignored or been blind to perspectives from women and other marginalized and oppressed groups. In reaction, feminist research and activism has attempted to amplify women's voices and experiences that have been ignored and silenced. The notion of standpoint was pioneered by political scientist Nancy Hartsock. In her book *Money, Sex and Power* (1983), she distinguishes

between a standpoint and the immediate understanding of something or a situation by social actors. In her words, a standpoint

> is achieved rather than obvious, a meditated rather than immediate understanding. Because the ruling group controls the means of mental as well as physical production, the production of ideas as well as goods, the standpoint of the oppressed represents an achievement both of science and of political struggle on the basis of which science can be constructed. (*Money, Sex and Power* 132)

Feminist standpoint epistemology aims to help build a more just and equal society by starting the process of knowledge building from the perspective of marginalized and/or oppressed women through "uncover[ing] hidden knowledge contained within women's experiences" (Brooks 54). In other words, feminist standpoint epistemology rejects the positivist approach of "creating a view from nowhere," and favors the specificity of the subject due to its located-ness in time and place (Sprague 41). Put differently, a knower located in a particular position in the concrete world, has a specific view of something that may be lost to others. This does not mean that our knowledge is purely relative, but that "it is partial, local, and historically specific" (Sprague 41).

The concept of "situated knowledge" captures the opposition of feminist standpoint theory to the positivist claim to "objectivity." Feminist standpoint theorists, particularly Donna Haraway and Sandra Harding, have argued that a neutral observer, one that is able to see everything from nowhere and not themselves be seen is impossible (Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism*). They have instead introduced "feminist objectivity," a doctrine of embodied objectivity that accommodates paradoxical and critical feminist science projects: Feminist objectivity means quite simply *situated knowledges* (Haraway 581). In other words, in order to produce knowledge of and about something, one needs to see, and that seeing is embodied. The body that sees, has a gender, ethnicity, social class, economic and political

surroundings, among other factors, that influences their experiences of the world, which in turn influences the knowledge they produce.

"Feminist objectivity," Haraway argues, "resists simplification…because feminist embodiment resists fixation and is insatiably curious about the webs of differential positioning. There is not a single feminist standpoint because our maps require too many dimensions for that metaphor to ground our visions" (Haraway 590). So, the best way to produce knowledge of and about something is to view it from different positions. Theoretically, it is possible to build an agreement if we are able to take into account as many diverse perspectives as possible and connect as many distinct situated knowledges as possible. Hence standpoint theorists suggest that we are able to develop a better understanding of particular situations and power dynamics if we approach them from certain social positions otherwise ignored or silenced. While not all topics of knowledge claims are significantly subject to situated knowledges (e.g., mathematical logic), when it comes to knowledge claims regarding issues pertaining to women and gender, the gender and other aspects of the social situation of the knower are important factors, i.e., the knowledge is situated and gendered. Standpoint epistemology suggests that in such circumstances, it is fruitful to begin inquiry by investigating the lived experiences of women.

While the lives, deeds, and experiences of thousands of men has been recorded across cultures for centuries, women's lives, experiences, and participation in human affairs have been undervalued, if not completely neglected in knowledge building (Brooks 55). In the late 1960s and 1970s in the West, women, empowered by the rise of feminist consciousness, began to highlight and bring attention to the omission of women's voices and experiences in areas ranging from history, the humanities and social sciences to medicine, law, and business.

In addition to women's voices and experiences being left out and unrecognized in historical records, women's lives and experiences have been neglected in theoretical frameworks and research practices. Standpoint feminism suggests that we have something to gain by starting our research process from women's lives, that is, building new knowledge beginning from "women's concrete experiences" (Sprague 56). Patricia Hill Collins states that when we are making knowledge claims about women, it is women's "concrete experience" that is ultimately the "criterion for credibility" (276). Women's concrete experiences are the wide range of activities they engage in as part of their everyday lives. These activities range from cooking, cleaning, caring for family members—especially children—to the emotional work that women do in their professional work environment. These experiences have resulted in women developing particular knowledge and unique skills which are often taken for granted and undervalued. The feminist scholars' job is to uncover these knowledge and skills. For instance, Collins' research shows how African American women's skill in community building is derived from their role as caregivers of not only their own children, but those of their neighbours, friends and extended family (*Black Feminist Thought*). When women's concrete experiences become our point of entry for research, we are exposed to an entire set of knowledge that had been previously neglected. Thus, feminist standpoint epistemology provides a methodology of hidden knowledge discovery to approach the subject of women in different disciplines by starting from their lived experiences.

Feminist standpoint epistemologists further provide arguments as to why the discovery and study of such hidden situated knowledges is valuable in the sense of improving the quality of our knowledge claims. Key concepts in this line of reasoning are the notions of double consciousness/bifurcation of consciousness and strong objectivity.

Double consciousness is a concept introduced by sociologist W. E. B Du Bois in his ground-breaking *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) to refer to a sense of internal twoness African-Americans experience as a result of their subordinated position. Joyce McCarl Nielsen states: "Given that blacks in our culture are exposed to dominant white culture in school and through mass media as well as interaction with whites, we can see how it is possible that blacks could know both white and black culture while whites know only their own. The same thing might be said for women vis-à-vis men" (10). Feminist standpoint scholars have adopted the concept to refer to women's "heightened awareness not only of their own lives but of the lives of the dominant group (men) as well" (Brooks 63). In other words, women are more likely to be aware of men's attitudes, behaviours, and experiences *and* their own, while men are more likely to be only aware of their own mode of being.

The ruling class—in this case men—are more likely to ignore the way women are exploited and to neglect and conceal women's experiences because they benefit from maintaining the status quo, that is in preserving men's upper hand in power relations. As such, those in the upper levels of power relations, are likely to interpret and present the conditions and suffering of the subordinate groups as positive, and/or something essential to their nature: "the interpretation of reality that it presents will be distorted in characteristic ways. In particular the suffering of the subordinate classes will be ignored, redescribed as enjoyment, or justified as freely chosen, deserved, or inevitable" (Jaggar 56). In *Weapons of the Weak,* James Scott argues that any knowledge produced by subordinate groups is strongly supressed by the ruling classes, and in the suppression of these knowledges, the ruling class claims a seeming absent of dissent and likewise suggests that subordinate groups willingly take part in their own victimization (236, 318 and elsewhere in the book). When it comes to women, many of these forms of oppression

are justified as inherent to women's nature. For instance, when government, company, and business policies are devoid of consideration for the specific needs of young mothers (e.g. proper maternity leave, affordable childcare, etc.), women are often forced to leave their jobs after becoming mothers. This situation is then justified as women's own preference, and a testament to the nature of women as caregivers. As McCarl Nielsen points out, it takes women's "conscious effort to reinterpret reality from [their] own lived experience," and their "political consciousness" to resist the dominant narratives and world views of their society (11).[14]

In the field of sociology, Dorothy Smith introduced a similar concept that she dubbed "bifurcated consciousness." Smith observed that there are two modes of being for women: one grows out of their compliance with traditional roles, "the world of concrete particulars," and the other out of their knowledge of the men's world of "abstract activities" (*The Conceptual Practices of Power* 19). Smith argues that "the more successful women are in mediating the world of concrete particulars so that men do not have to become engaged with (and therefore conscious of) that world as a condition to their abstract activities, the more complete men's absorption in it and the more effective its authority" (*The Conceptual Practices of Power* 19). For women to establish themselves as competent and knowledgeable beings in society, or in Smith's case—a scholar in sociology—they must struggle to push beyond their expected roles as caregivers and facilitators. In this struggle women's consciousness becomes bifurcated for they have "working consciousness active in both [concrete and abstract worlds]" (*The Conceptual Practices of Power* 19).

[14] The example I have used here is about biological women, but the general argument about the justification of injustice and the lack of will to make meaningful changes for the betterment of a system or institution for women and other marginalized groups, through perpetuating stereotypes and myths rings true not only to biological women but also members of the LGBTQA+, radicalized minorities and those in the intersections of various marginalized identities.

Feminist standpoint theorists argue that the subordination of women in society, and the double consciousness that derives from it, positions women in places from which more accurate knowledge about the world can be generated. This concept is called "strong objectivity," and claims that knowledge produced by women is more comprehensive due to their double consciousness, than knowledge produced by the ruling class (i.e. men). Strong objectivity suggests that "women suffer a special form of exploitation and oppression…that provides them with a distinctive epistemological standpoint. From this standpoint, it is possible to gain a less biased and more comprehensive view of reality than that provided either by established bourgeois science or by the male dominated leftist alternatives to it" (Jaggar 57). In other words, given that women suffer more from the injustices of the status quo, they are more likely to be aware and conscious of its gaps and shortcomings; hence, able to have a more complete perception of its realities that those in more privileged positions.

Advances in Standpoint Epistemology

Feminist standpoint approaches have evolved over time in response to criticisms. Some of the early writing in standpoint theory implied a search for a singular "feminist standpoint." The problem with this concept is that it seemingly reduced all women to a group, and their experiences and view points to one experience and a single point of view. Postmodernist epistemologists have pointed out that this "unified standpoint" is usually the perspective of relatively privileged white women (Lugones and Spelman 573). As many feminist standpoint scholars have strongly acknowledged, women "occupy many different standpoints and inhabit many different realities" (Hekman, "Truth and Method: Feminist Stadpoint Theory Revisited" 227). Acknowledgement of the plurality of standpoints is now the mainstream view of feminist

standpoint theory. The same logic of standpoint theory that would argue for the epistemic value of white women's standpoints, also establishes the value of more marginalized groups:

> It should be clear that if it is beneficial to start research, scholarship, and theory in white women's situations, then we should be able to learn even more about the social and natural orders if we start from the situations of women in devalued and oppressed races, classes, and cultures. Most obviously we can learn how race, class, and culture shape the situation and vision of women in both dominant and dominated groups. This knowledge is impossible to come by if we start only from the perspective of the lives of women in the dominant groups, for the same reasons that starting from men' lives can not reveal the gendered character of those lives. (*Whose Science?* 179-180)

A more challenging criticism is that one cannot necessarily claim epistemic authority or privilege for a situated perspective only by virtue of that perspective belonging to an oppressed or marginalized individual or group (Longino). In other words, even if the knowledge claims of the dominant group are incomplete or invalid, the knowledge claims of marginalized individuals may also be invalid. As postmodernists would say, accounts of lived experience are not sources of pure truth, but themselves constituted by context and grand narratives.

As Anderson points out, many claims to epistemic privilege are commonplace and uncontroversial, such as auto mechanics being in a better position than consumers to know about cars. But if one is laying claim to a standpoint having epistemic authority, one must specify seven elements in support of such a claim:

> "(i) the *social location* of the privileged perspective, (ii) the *scope* of its privilege: what questions or subject matters it can claim a privilege over, (iii) the *aspect* of the social location that generates superior knowledge: for example, social role, or subjective identity; (iv) the *ground* of its privilege: what it is about that aspect that justifies a claim to privilege; (v) the *type* of epistemic superiority it claims: for example, greater accuracy, or greater ability to represent fundamental truths; (vi) the *other perspectives* relative to which it claims epistemic superiority and (vii) modes of

> access to that perspective: is occupying the social location necessary or sufficient for getting access to the perspective?" (Anderson)

In Chapter 4, I attempt to answer these questions in the context of the standpoints I study by identifying their "epistemic position." In response to criticisms regarding epistemic privilege, many standpoint feminists today relax claims to the authoritativeness of the standpoints being studied, and instead focus on the value in the diversity and multiplicity of standpoints:

> This kind of account enables us to understand how each oppressed group will have its own critical insights about the nature and the larger social order to contribute to the collection of human knowledge. Because different groups are oppressed in different ways, each has the possibility (not the certainty) of developing distinctive insights about systems of social relations in general in which their oppression is a feature. (Harding, "Introduction" 9)

This is an important point for my analysis in Chapter 4, as the women whose writing I study were by no means from the lower social classes of their day. On the contrary, their high social class is likely the main reason we have access to their writing today. Nevertheless, there are aspects to their standpoints that illustrate oppression relative to their male peers, and studying them sheds light on the nature of the broader social order of their time.

Bettina Aptheker argues that the standpoint of women "pivots, of course, depending upon class, cultural, or racial locations of its subjects, and upon their age, sexual preference, physical abilities, the nature of their work and personal relationships. What is proposed is a mapping of that which has been traditionally erased or hidden" (39-40). Smith, on whose work Aptheker draws, suggests that the variations of experiences and standpoint and the argument over whose standpoint is more valid should not be the main focus; the main focus of a standpoint epistemological approach is to start from the daily lives of more oppressed groups (i.e. women). She argues for "a revision of the relations of knowing" and proposes a method of inquiry that

extends “people’s own good knowledge of the local practices and terrains of their everyday/everynight living, enlarging the scope of what becomes visible from that site, mapping the relations that connect one local site to others” (Smith, *Texts, Facts, and Femininty* 188). What Smith suggests here is important in two respects: the inclusion of as many standpoints as possible, and the importance of pragmatism in our approach. Inclusion of various standpoints extends our knowledge of local practices and the sites where those practices take place. Once these sites are connected, like a map, it becomes visible how we are connected in the broader relations of ruling, and those, namely women, whose contributions and knowledge have been traditionally erased or hidden are written into this map. As Anderson puts it, “This shifts the privilege claimed on behalf of subaltern standpoints from the context of justification to the context of discovery: thinking from subaltern standpoints is more *fruitful* than confining one’s thinking to dominant perspectives.” In other words, looking from the perspective of the most marginalized can open our eyes to realities and gaps in our knowledge that we would miss if we limited ourselves to the dominant perspectives.

The Postmodernist Critique

Postmodernism is an umbrella term that is often used to pile together a number of diverse theoretical and epistemological perspectives. Judith Butler, starts her celebrated essay “Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of ‘Postmodernism’” by asking:

> Is it a historical characterization, a certain kind of theoretical position, and what does it mean for a term that has described a certain aesthetic practice now to apply to social theory and to feminist social and political theory in particular? Who are these postmodernists? Is this a name that one takes on for oneself, or is it more often a name that one is called if and when one offers a critique of the subject, a discursive analysis, or questions the integrity or coherence of totalizing social descriptions? (3)

Part of the confusion is that the word "postmodernism" is used to describe the work of some scholars and thinkers who themselves do not categorize their work a such, and more often it does not do justice to the diversity of theories and epistemological perspectives that are piled under it. However, for the purpose of this section, I am using the term to provide the readers with a brief description of the epistemological perspective that is categorized as postmodernist. I am also here referring to some theories as postmodern that are better categorized as poststructuralist.

As Patricia Lina Leavy states in her Chapter "Feminist Postmodernism and Poststructuralism," it was largely in response to the metanarratives produced by modernists, that postmodernism emerged (87). She points out that Lyotard "uses *modernism* as a term to denote any science that self legitimates with reference to a grand theory (and thus the theory reified by virtue of tautology)" (87). Thus, what postmodernism problematizes is the metanarratives' and grand theories' definitive claims for how something is. Postmodernism emphasises the contractedness of reality by the different social discourses at play.

Postmodern feminism has generated a lot of criticism in academia and among feminists, most notably due to its conceptualization of the "subject". As Hekman points out the problematic of the formation of women's subjectivity has always been at the center of feminist philosophy ("Reconstituting the Subject" 46). Postmodernism's departure from Cartesian logic, the meta-narratives and ideologies of Modernism also meant a departure from the concept of Cartesian "subject" as one that is fixed, one that creates knowledge and is the authority of what she knows, to "subjects" (plural) constantly in the making, constantly in flux. In this regard, postmodern feminism views empiricist feminism and standpoint feminism as ultimately consolidating essentialist assertions by referring to "women' as an identity category, and "women's voice" and "women's experience" as grounds on which knowledge can be built.

Given the dismantling of the Cartesian subject, and the discrediting of "women's experience" as grounds on which knowledge can be built, postmodern feminists are left with the question of explaining the concept of "experience". In other words, what is experience and how do we approach it through a postmodern feminist lens? This is a topic that Joan Scott tackles in her article "Experience." Scott addresses the problems with experience's verisimilitude by pointing out the problems that may arise when experience is used as evidence. She states:

> When experience is taken as the origin of knowledge, the vision of the individual subject (the person who had the experience or the historian who recounts it) becomes the bedrock of evidence upon which explanation is built. Questions about the constructed nature of experience, about how subjects are constituted as different in the first place, about how one's vision is structured—about language (or discourse) and history—are left aside. The evidence of experience then becomes evidence for the fact of difference, rather than a way of exploring how difference is established, how it operates, how and in what ways it constitutes subjects who see and act in the world. (25)

In other words, experience taken as evidence naturalizes discursive produced identities. It creates the illusion that experience is transparent, and increases the likelihood of the reproduction of ideological systems, or stereotypical conceptions, rather than contesting them. It overgeneralizes group and community experiences. Scott sees experience as "at once always already an interpretation and … in need of interpretation" (37). Looking at experience in this light takes away its authority and its force; it is no longer the bedrock of our knowledge about something, contrarily it becomes what we seek to explain, and about which knowledge is produced. Scott suggests that in studying experience, the historians should not "take as their project … the reproduction and transmission of knowledge said to be arrived at through experience, but the analysis of the production of that knowledge itself" (37). Scott draws our attention to the

constructed nature of experience, and suggests that any study of experience should consider the context of that experience and its discursive constituents. She summarizes her position as such:

> It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience. Experience in this definition then becomes not the origin of our explanation, not the authoritative (because seen or felt) evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced. (25-26)

Put differently, a postmodern feminist approach starts from experiences and the discourses that bring about and interpret those experiences to see how they are continuously forming the subject, rather than the modern approach to experience which starts from the subject as the source of experience, and then approaches those experiences as the source of knowledge.

Standpoint theorists have presented rebuttals and critiques of the postmodernist stance on epistemology, with key points of argument being that postmodernism's emphasis on the subject as constituted removes the locus of agency from the subject, devalues the lived experience of women and marginalized groups as sources of knowledge, and thus disarms the liberating capacity of their epistemology.[15] Furthermore, feminist postmodernism has been criticized for its rejection of the notion of "woman" as a category (Anderson). If no generalization about women or any other group can be made, then no effort to identify and counter systematic injustices against those groups will be possible.

However, in general the postmodernist critique does pose a valid challenge. When we think about both standpoint feminism's understanding of the subject as one that interprets and narrates an experience, and postmodern feminism's understanding of the subject as one that is

[15] For more on this see Susan Hekman's "Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited," and the comments to it by Patricia Hill Collins, Nancy Hartsock, Dorothy Smith, and Sandra Harding all published in *Signs* Vol. 22, No. 2, Winter, 1997.

shaped through discourses which bring about those experiences, we arrive at a subject-experience loop (See Figure 1). Hence, we are faced with a chicken-or-egg problem: do we start from the subject that interprets experience, or do we start from discourses that cause the experience that shape (continue to shape) the subject?

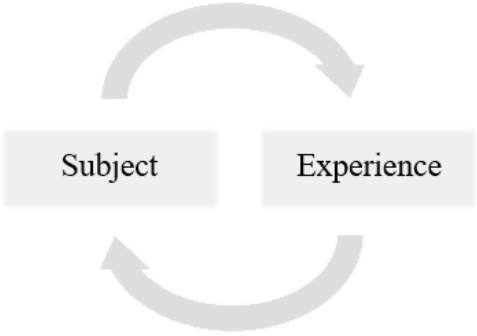

Figure 1: The Subject-Experience Loop

Arguably, it is through careful study of the nuances of this loop that we can build knowledge. In doing so, we have to be wary of the voices we listen to, and we should also be wary of the silences in those voices and in our own research. Whose voice and experience we pay attention t, and the silences that exists in both those voices and experiences and our research reflect the discourses that form them. In the same manner, those voices, those subjects' interpretations of experiences, and our choice of what and who deserves the attention of our study comprises our knowledge building process and eventually what we count as knowledge.

Overall, the postmodernist critique has had an impact on what is considered to be good practice in employing standpoint epistemology in one's scholarship. Nancy Naples and Salvador Vidal-Oritz argue that a standpoint epistemological approach can avoid the postmodernist critique by recognizing the socially constructed and fluid nature of social positions and identity, acknowledging the partial and incomplete nature of the vantage point of the oppressed, and

maintaining sensitivity to the ways in which standpoints are shaped by community and context (1-20). Given such precautions, standpoint epistemology may continue to be fruitfully employed as a methodology of starting from the experience of marginalized subjects as a 'site of inquiry'.

When taking the lived experience of women as the first point of inquiry, standpoint feminism becomes useful as it pays particular attention to the "everyday" aspect of experience and derives insight into the structures of *power* by locating acts and processes of *resistance*. These foci are key mechanisms through which research based on feminist standpoint epistemology can fruitfully advance knowledge. I elaborate on these points in what follows.

The Significance of Everyday Life in Feminist Standpoint Epistemology

The study of the everyday life is significant, because it is in the everyday that the subject lives the consequences of all actions and discourses. Henri Lefebvre argues "Everyday life is profoundly related to all activities, and encompasses them with all their differences and their conflicts; it is their meeting place, their bond, their common ground. And it is in everyday life that the sum total of relations which makes the human – and every human being – a whole takes its shape and form" (97). Experiences from the everyday life represent how all actions and discourses play out in the lives of subjects from different walks of life.

A feature of women's standpoints that gives them a unique richness of hidden knowledge is that these standpoints are usually from everyday life. Dorothy Smith argues that women have traditionally been assigned the kind of work that men (especially of the ruling classes) have not wanted to do. "Women's work" are, first, the kinds of work that relieves men of the need to take care of their bodies (ex. preparing food, cleaning…), and second, the kinds of work that women are traditionally assigned in the work place (ex. administrative work, secretary, typist…). By assigning these kinds of work to women, men become free to immerse themselves in the world

of abstracts. The better women do their work, the more invisible their work becomes to men. Men who are exempted of everyday tasks begin to see as real only what is in accordance with their abstracted world. Hence, these men do not see women's work as natural activity and not as serious work that is willed-albeit in within the constraints of patriarchy. As a result, women are excluded from the male conceptions of history, art, and culture (*The Conceptual Practices of Power* 18-19). Starting from the standpoint of women enables us to recover at least part of what is lost regarding women's everyday work in shaping the world. To start from women's standpoints means to start from everyday life.

In *Tapestries of Life*, Aptheker draws on Smith, Hartsock, and others to argue that if we start from the "dailiness" of women's lives we will arrive at understandings about both men and women's lives that are very different from the predominant accounts in conventional social theory. Aptheker draws our attention to the "fragmented and dispersed" nature of women's lives, to their everyday lives which exists in morsels "between a job, dinner, and the laundry" (39). She states:

> By the dailiness of women's lives I mean the patterns women create and the meanings women invent each day and over the time as a result of their labors and in the context of their subordinated status to men. The point is not to describe every aspect of daily life or to represent a schedule of priorities in which some activities are more important or accorded more status than others. The point is to suggest a way of knowing from the meanings women give to their labors. The search for dailiness is a method of work that allows us to take the patterns women create and the meanings women invent and learn from them. If we map what we learn, connecting one meaning or invention to another, we begin to lay out a different way of seeing reality. This way of seeing is what I refer to as women's standpoint. (39)

I take Aptheker's idea that "the search for dailiness" is a "method of work" as a key component of my methodology in Chapter 4, because it is through this method of work that I am able to

approach the life writings of Qajar women to find their resistance strategies—part of their hidden knowledge that provided them with ways of survival and push back to power. In her effort "towards a theory of form in feminist autobiography," literary critic Suzanne Juhasz argues that "dailiness" is a "structuring principle for women's lives" (222):

> When you ask a woman, "what happened?" you often get an answer in style that [is] ... circumstantial, complex, and contextual. You hear a series of "he said" and "she said"; you are told what they were wearing, where they were sitting, what they were eating; and slowly the story unrolls. The woman is omitting no detail that she can remember, because all details have to do with her sense of the nature of "what happened." A man, on the other hand, will characteristically summarize: give you the gist, the result, the point of the event.... In their form, women's lives tend to be like the stories that they tell: they show less a pattern of linear development towards some clear goal than one repetitive, cumulative, cyclical structure. One thinks of housework or childcare: of domestic life in general.... Dailiness matters to most women; dailiness is by definition never a conclusion, always a process. (223-224)

The "dailiness" of women's lives, as Juhasz argues here, impacts the way they think, the form and content of their stories, and makes women's stories and narratives about life significantly different from men's. The Qajar women I study in Chapter 4 seem to be writing at a time where it is only recently starting to be recognized that the dailiness of women's lives has any value worth writing about in prose. The texts I study do not discuss any major sociopolitical events considered to be historically significant, but that is exactly what makes them valuable for my analysis.

The Significance of Power and Resistance in Feminist Standpoint Theory

As a critical social theory, standpoint feminism has an agenda of being useful to the (usually) women who are the subject of study. According to Anderson:

> To serve their critical aim, social theories must (a) represent the social world in relation to the interests of the oppressed — i.e., those who are the subjects of study; (b) supply an account of that world which is accessible to the subjects of study, which enables them to understand their problems; and (c) supply an account of the world which is usable by the subjects to study to improve their condition.

In order to advance these goals, studies employing standpoint theory are heavily concerned with the structures of power in which women are situated. Dorothy Smith uses the term "relations of ruling" to describe this concept. Smith affirms that inquiry into the relations of ruling started by "experiences in the women's movement of a dual consciousness" ("The Relations of Ruling" 171). In other words, seeing how women dealt with the particularities of their traditional roles as well as the complexities of the discourses outside of the particular led Smith to re-contextualize the Marxist notion of "relations of ruling." Smith maintains that knowledge production has been such that ideologies, concepts, theories, and so forth have explained the society as if they exist outside of the society and relations of ruling whereas they are part and parcel of it and help reproduce it. She argues that women and other oppressed groups do not have place in the society's relations of ruling-which has itself emerged from capitalism and patriarchy.

Smith proposes an inquiry that starts from the actuality of women's everyday lived experiences to shed light on the relations of ruling: "Committed to exploring the society from within people's experience of it and rather than objectifying them or explaining their behaviour, [this inquiry] would investigate how that society organizes and shapes the everyday world of experience" ("The Relations of Ruling" 173). According to Smith, the standpoint of women puts us in the bodily sites, the local, and the particular sites of experience. This approach is alternative to the positivist view of studying social relations from an objective view—the view of people's activities that is stripped of the local and historical setting. Smith states that in the objectivist approach "extra-local and extra-personal relations of ruling, … the particularity of individuals,

their actual situation and site of work, the ephemerality of the lived moment, and so on, disappear" ("The Relations of Ruling" 174).

Another important concept in standpoint epistemology closely related to relations of ruling is the "matrix of domination." The term was first introduced by sociologist Patricia Hill Collins to describe the "overall social organization within which intersecting oppressions originate, develop, and are contained" (Collins 246). The notion of "intersectionality" in Collins' definition was first developed by Kimberle Crenshaw to refer to intersecting forms of oppression, for instance, at the intersection of gender and race, particularly the Black experience (1989). The aim was to bring to light the idea that there are different forms of oppressions that often work together in producing injustice: "[T]he matrix of domination refers to how these intersecting oppressions are actually organized. Regardless of the particular intersections involved, structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power reappear across quite different forms of oppression" (Collins 18). In other words, the matrix of domination is a concept that draws attention to how various social factors, including race, class, and gender, do not exist independently, and intersect with one another to create a cumulative impact on a person's experience of themselves and their lives, and their social standing.

An important implication of the theory of intersectionality for standpoint epistemology is that it is not acceptable to consider any group inequality (such as women vs. men) as necessarily more important than others (such as people of color vs. white, transgender vs. cisgender, colonized vs. colonizer, etc.) or more valuable for the uncovering of hidden situated knowledge. But whenever there is reason to believe that some form of inequality, power difference, or systematic injustice distinguishes one group or intersection of groups from others, the

experiences of those in lower power, marginalized or oppressed positions can serve as fruitful grounds for inquiry from a standpoint epistemological perspective.

To explain the value of approaching a concept from standpoints of lower power positions, Hartsock looks at how power has been historically conceptualized and points to Marxian methodology as a basis for standpoint theory. She uses the example of how "immediate accounts" of theories of social life "see the development of methods for raising the social productivity of labor as progress, pure and simple, without recognizing that these developments are at the same time the development of new means for the mutilation of human life" (*Money, Sex and Power* 133-134). This approach, which initiates from the perspective of the capitalist, treats power as a commodity that some have and some do not. Marxism, Hartsock argues, begins its investigation from the experiences of the workers, or the standpoint of the working class, which results in a different understanding of power: one that defines power as a relationship of domination. In this approach one group have power over the others by virtue of their access to and control over wealth.

Hartsock argues that Marxian theory is "useful more as a methodological guide to the feminist theorist than an adequate theorization of domination," and fails as "an encompassing theorization of power," since it does not "take account of or analyze the genderedness of power" (*Money, Sex and Power* 139). Hence, she argues for a construction of power that begins with the standpoint of women:

> An analysis that begins from the sexual division of labor, understood as the real, material activity of concrete human beings, could form the basis for an analysis of the real structures of women's oppression, an analysis that would not require that one sever biology from society, nature from nurture, an analysis that would expose the ways women both participate in and oppose their own subordination. ("The Feminist Standpoint" 478)

Beginning with the sexual division of labour that makes women responsible for domestic labour and nurturing, feminist scholars are able to define an alternative understanding of power relations. One that does not view power as domination, but as a "capacity." To better explain what is meant by power as capacity Hartsock draws on Berenice Carroll's argument in "Peace Research: The Cult of Power" (1972): "to be without the power of dominance is perceived as being very nearly without the power to act at all, or at least as being without the power to act effectively" ("The Feminist Standpoint" 607). Starting our investigation of power relations from the standpoint of women exposes us to experiences that changes the way we see and define power/power relations. Defining power as "capacity", or as Hanna Pitkin suggests, replacing "power over" with "power to" brings our attention to other aspects of power, especially the "powers of the allegedly powerless" (276). Carroll lists a number of manifestations of the "powers of the allegedly powerless." These include: "(1) disintegrative power, (2) inertial power, (3) innovative power; norm-creating power, (4) legitimizing power; integrative power; socializing power, (5) expressive power, (6) explosive power, (7) power of resistance, (8) collective power; cooperative power, and (9) migratory power; population power" (608-609). These "powers of the allegedly powerless" manifest themselves in various forms of *resistance*. Foucault's famous maxim that "where there is power there is resistance" (95-96) suggests that identifying acts and processes of resistance can serve as a flag for identifying the relations of ruling and shedding light on the structures of power. The locus of resistance reveals the extent to which a subject is overpowered as well as the extent to which the subject has power. Resistance happens at the point where force meets counter-force, and thus illustrates the particular balance of powers at play.

Resistance is part and parcel of power relations. Wherever there are "relations of ruling" there are "relations of resistance." Women and subjects in minority positions within a social entity employ different strategies in relations of resistance in order to survive, cope, move forward, and/or push for social change in a world dominated by the relations of ruling. Starting our research from their standpoints exposes us to these relations of resistance naturally, but intentionally looking for insights into the relations of resistance can be fruitful research strategy from a feminist standpoint and critical theory perspective. Although this point is often not explicitly made by Standpoint feminists, their emphasis on looking for points of "distress" or "complaints" in the daily life of women, is in line with the notion of locating points of resistance to understand the relations of ruling.

A feminist standpoint approach to resistance highlights not only the existence of resistance in women's lives, but also the different nature and forms of resistance when viewed from the perspective of women, as opposed to the androcentric ways in which the concept of resistance has traditionally been defined in society. Aptheker argues that a different kind of resistance has been "shaped by the dailiness of women's lives" (173), which is about "creating the conditions necessary for life" and "expanding the limits of the restrictions imposed upon them by misogynist, homophobic, racist, religious, and class boundaries" (169). I devote the next section to an expanded discussion of this form of resistance in everyday life, which is then followed by a section discussing Asef Bayat's extension of everyday resistance theory.

Women's Resistance in Daily Life: The Notion of Everyday Resistance

In the work of anthropologist James C. Scott, the everyday lives of subordinate groups are studied in terms of the forms of resistance to power that manifest themselves in everyday practices. In *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, Scott argues that

subordinated people have rarely been afforded the luxury of organized political activity. Their open resistance is usually met with strong suppression and is often dangerous and suicidal. Hence, they are far more likely to defy oppressive policies by employing an everyday form of resistance that is more subtle, patient, and low-profile rather than acting outright confrontational (xv). Thus, the absence or lack of records on street protests, rebellion, and organized activism should not be taken as a sign of indifference to or agreement with the status quo. According to Scott, everyday resistance is a form of "prosaic but constant struggle" between the oppressed and the powerful who benefit from oppressing the powerless (xvi). The everyday forms of resistance, A.K.A the "weapons of the weak," share four important features: 1) They require little to no coordination or planning; 2) They make use of the implicit understandings and informal networks; 3) They often represent a form of individual self-help; and, 4) they typically avoid any direct confrontation with authority.

The historical record usually captures major movements and revolutions and pays much less attention to the quiet everyday forms of resistance. This often results in attributing an exaggerated role to heroic individuals and single events and neglecting the gradual cumulative impact of years of everyday resistance by the faceless masses. In criticizing the ignorance around everyday forms of resistance in favor of the emphasis on "organized, large-scale, protest movements", Scott points out that this approach "emphasized willy-nilly the role of outsiders--prophets, radical intelligentsia, political parties--in mobilizing an otherwise supine, disorganized peasantry." and that it undermines the agency of those in marginalized positions, wrongfully concluding that "the peasantry is a political nullity unless organized and led by outsiders" (xv).

While Scott does not write from a specifically feminist lens, Aptheker makes essentially the same arguments from a feminist perspective in *Tapestries of Life*. Aptheker points out that

the everyday forms of women's resistance are not the same as, but inform their participation in "struggles traditionally recognized as resistance movements" (169), and because of its different form, it has often been omitted from the History recorded and told by those in power. Softer forms of resistance (with a small "r") are not considered significant with the standards of a capital "R" Resistance movement where success is measured "by the sweep of the changes it effects" (Aptheker 170). She argues that women's resistance in everyday life often involves change that is of a personal rather than political nature, and often the uncoordinated action of individuals rather than a coordinated alliance of large numbers of people. It is not necessarily oppositional or contesting for power, and its impact is steady and cumulative rather than revolutionary. Aptheker also argues that in the traditional androcentric conceptions of social movements and Resistance, the agency of women is undermined. In these notions, she argues,

> women, if they have been seen at all, generally have been considered as objects of oppression: either as the victims of circumstances to be rescued, educated, and brought into productive and public life; or as the backward and misguided pawns of reactionary (or counter revolutionary) forces to be won over to progressive and revolutionary movements. In neither case are women seen as an autonomous, purposeful, active force in history. (171)

As I further demonstrate in Chapter 3, the result of ignoring women's agency and autonomy is the perpetuation of faulty, incomplete and often wrongful narratives about them. In the case of many Muslim women and specifically women in Iran, these narratives have contributed to autocratic policies regarding women inside their countries, support for Western neo-colonial adventures from outside.

In his discussions of the epistemology of resistance, philosopher José Medina also emphasizes the importance of the everyday, using phrases such as "ongoing daily practices of resistance," "daily struggles of resistance" and "everyday struggle" but is seemingly unaware of

both Scott and Aptheker's work. Nevertheless, he too points out that ignoring the everyday results in an unduly exaggeration of the role of heroic individuals. Medina argues that exceptional individuals and groups who "display out-of-the-ordinary qualities and virtues (such as courage), are neither necessary nor sufficient for the social and cultural changes required for achieving greater degrees of epistemic justice" (225). He points out that "detaching the contributions that epistemic heroes make toward social justice from the social support that precedes and follows their actions is … a dangerous trap that the dominant individualism in Western cultures sets up for social movements of resistance" (187). While Medina and Scott both attribute this distorted view of history to Western individualism and hero worship, Aptheker explicitly notes the androcentrism involved.

A focus on everyday forms of resistance has particular value in its ability to challenge the narrative of helpless women in need of rescue by heroic leaders or outsiders. Scott, Medina and Aptheker all emphasize the tendency of the historical record to capture only major movements and revolutions, results in attributing an exaggerated role to heroic individuals and single events and neglecting the gradual cumulative impact of years of everyday resistance by the faceless masses. These historical records, as standpoint feminists argue, are men's accounts of great men and major historical events and often do not include the narratives of the oppressed, which in the case of women means an abundance of hidden knowledge is there to be uncovered by the feminist epistemological project.

Also noted by both Scott and Aptheker, is the notion that everyday resistance is based on the logic of survival rather than opposition, and that it often involves forms of coping and mechanisms of self-healing. Aptheker points out that the notion of 'coping' as a form of resistance goes against the usual connotation of the word which implies "more passive and

accommodating qualities" (180). This type of resistance is a form of emotional work, and for example, involves story telling among female friends:

> Women use stories in their everyday lives, and especially as a way of doing emotional work. Discussing the significance of talk among women friends, sociologists Fern Johnson and Elizabeth Aries showed the ways in which stories are shared. Disputing the dominant culture's trivialization of women's talk, Johnson and Aries described the intimacy among women friends and the compelling, therapeutic, tactical, and emotional support women provide for each other. As one woman put it, a close friend "makes you feel like a worthwhile human being—that you are capable of loving and sharing." (Aptheker 44-45)

Aptheker offers additional insights into the characteristics of everyday resistance that are particularly practiced by women. She argues that "women's resistance is informed by values of nurturance, beauty, connection, community, family and endurance" (174). It involves dealing with economic dependence on male provider's income, encountering daily harassments of male managers and colleagues, and coping with "internalized oppression," that is, coping "with their loss of confidence and self-esteem, with feelings of despair and depression, with a deep-seated passivity ingrained through years of female socialization" (Aptheker 175). She enumerates examples of women's everyday resistance in response to such challenges:

> In their efforts to resist the incursions and assaults on the quality of their daily lives women have bonded together in love and friendship, filled church pews, and sung in church choirs. They have held countless bake sales to raise money for every conceivable charity and community project. They have staffed child-care centers for little or no pay, negotiated interminably with school principals, teachers, welfare officials, social workers, and court clerks (many of whom are also women). They have made and mended clothes, cared for the sick and elderly, made something from nothing. (179)

These are the types of women's daily activities that, when understood and highlighted as acts of resistance, allow us to understand the history of social change in new ways, and to better appreciate the role of women in that history. I take this understanding as the basis for what to look for in the Qajar women's travel journals in Chapter 4, but I divide my analysis of everyday resistance into two categories based on Asef Bayat's extension of everyday resistance theory discussed next.

Asef Bayat's Theory of Quiet Encroachment and Social Nonmovements

In line with feminist standpoint theory, the theory of everyday resistance stresses the significance of everyday life as the place where resistance takes place. Asef Bayat's extension of everyday resistance theory, makes a distinction between two types of resistance. He argues that some forms of everyday resistance are considered more defensive and some involve active claim-making. In his book titled *Life as Politics*, Bayat pursues the same goal as everyday resistance theory: to explain social change through the cumulative impact of practices of ordinary individuals in everyday life. His work is particularly relevant for my purposes in this dissertation, because unlike most of the literature on everyday resistance, Bayat's theory was largely developed in the context of the Middle East, and particularly the practices of Iranian Women.

Bayat argues that the notion of everyday resistance is not conceptually satisfying for the phenomena he's trying to capture. Instead he puts forward the notions of "quiet encroachment" and "social nonmovements." To understand the meaning of these notions and their difference with everyday resistance, we must start with Bayat's criticisms of everyday resistance theory.

Bayat criticizes Scott for requiring intentionality in the notion of everyday resistance, whereas in his view a social nonmovement is only a movement by consequence, not necessarily

by intention. However, in my reading Scott's emphasis is on the intention to survive, rather than the intention to actively resist. Bayat's example of city dwellers who steal electricity by injecting wires illegally into public power lines actually fits Scott's theory well: the people who steal electricity are not "intending" to protest but "intending" to survive, which is what Scott requires. Scott would likely agree with Bayat's point that these acts are "not as deliberate political acts; rather, they are driven by the force of necessity— the necessity to survive and improve life" (*Life as Politics* 48).

Bayat argues that much of the resistance discussed in everyday resistance theory, is not really resistance in any substantial way. While everyday resistance theory notes the subtle, often invisible nature of resistance, Bayat argues that at times they are so defensive, passive, subtle and invisible that they barely have any effect on the subversion of dominance, and in fact sometimes only serve to support and perpetuate existing power relations. He argues that everyday resistance proponents "tend to confuse an *awareness* about oppression with acts of resistance against it" (*Life as Politics* 43) and that "much of the resistance literature confuses what one might consider coping strategies (when the survival of the agents is secured at the cost of themselves or that of fellow humans) and effective participation or subversion of domination" (*Life as Politics* 45). Relatedly, he argues that everyday resistance theory does not properly distinguish between "*defending* an already achieved gain (in Scott's terms, denying claims made by dominant groups over the subordinate ones) or making fresh demands (to "*advance* its own claims")" (*Life as Politics* 44). These more infringing and claim-making actions are what Bayat captures in his notion of quiet encroachment.

Bayat's theory of quiet encroachment and social nonmovements attempts to identify something in between purely defensive coping strategies typically labelled as "everyday

resistance," and the more confrontational social movements, outright activism, and acts of protest that he labels "contentious politics." The claims have to be small and incremental enough to avoid suppression (i.e., "quiet") but infringe in some way in terms of subverting dominance (i.e., "encroachment"). Since the ability of dominant powers to control is never perfect, the disadvantaged can take advantage of whatever relative freedoms are afforded. When practiced by large numbers, quiet encroachment evolves into a nonmovement, "that is, dispersed collective endeavors embodied in the mundane practices of everyday life, but ones that would lead to progressive effects beyond their immediate intent" (Bayat, *Life as Politics* 101). These social nonmovements follow a logic of practice that is action-oriented rather than ideologically driven. In Bayat's own words:

> In the Middle East, the nonmovements have come to represent the mobilization of millions of the subaltern, chiefly the urban poor, Muslim women, and youth. The nonmovement of the urban dispossessed, which I have termed the "quiet encroachment of the ordinary," encapsulates the discreet and prolonged ways in which the poor struggle to survive and to better their lives by quietly impinging on the propertied and powerful, and on society at large. It embodies the protracted mobilization of millions of detached and dispersed individuals and families who strive to enhance their lives in a lifelong collective effort that bears few elements of pivotal leadership, ideology, or structured organization. More specifically, I am referring to the mass movement of rural migrants who, in a quest for a better life- chance, embark on a steady and strenuous campaign that involves unlawful acquisition of lands and shelters, followed by such urban amenities as electricity, running water, phone lines, paved roads, and the like. (*Life as Politics* 15-16)

Such acts of encroachment are quiet rather than audible, individual rather than united, and do not have leaders. They are not protest but practice, merged in ordinary practices of everyday life rather than explicit and extraordinary deeds of mobilization and protest. They are eventually carried out by millions of (fragmented) people as common practices of everyday life.

Although Bayat's arguments about defensive or coping strategies of resistance having little effect on the subversion of dominance does not invalidate the epistemic fruitfulness of everyday resistance as a focus of inquiry, it does raise the possibility that if we distinguish between defensive and coping style resistance on the one hand, and claim-making efforts of a more infringing nature on the other, each can bear its own unique epistemic insights.

Key elements in Bayat's theory are mechanisms that engender social interactions, whereby the subaltern have encounters with more powerful groups in society, becoming more visible and salient to them. One such mechanism he labels 'everyday cosmopolitanism' whereby public spaces provide a conduit for different groups "to mix, mingle, undertake everyday encounters, and experience trust with one another" (*Life as Politics* 14). For Iranian women, these public spaces included "workplaces, universities, bus stops, rationing lines, shopping markets, neighborhoods, informal gatherings, and mosques" (*Life as Politics* 100). Bayat emphasizes the notion of "street politics" to emphasize the power of public urban spaced in engendering the interactions necessary to enable encroachment processes.

Also emphasized by Bayat along similar lines is the "art of presence," which involves:

> ordinary daily practices of life—by working, playing sports, jogging, singing, or running for public offices. This involves deploying the *power of presence*, the assertion of collective will in spite of all odds, refusing to exit, circumventing constraints, and discovering new spaces of freedom to make oneself heard, seen, felt, and realized. The effective power of these practices lies precisely in their ordinariness, since as irrepressible actions they encroach incrementally to capture trenches from the power base of patriarchal structure, while erecting springboards to move on. (*Life as Politics* 88)

Bayat describes the art of presence, and his notions of quiet encroachment and social nonmovements in the context of post-1979 Revolution conditions of Iranian women, and the

gains they achieved through "an aggregate of dispersed collective sentiments, claim making, and everyday practices involved in diverse gender issues, chiefly, assertion of women's individualities" (*Life as Politics* 100). In describing how Iranian women faced oppressive policies toward women after the 1979 Revolution, Bayat writes:

> Women resisted these policies, not much by deliberate organized campaigns, but largely through mundane daily practices in public domains, such as working, playing sports, studying, showing interest in art and music, or running for political offices. Imposing themselves as public players, women managed to make a significant shift in gender dynamics, empowering themselves in education, employment, and family law, while raising their self-esteem. They reinstated equal education with men, curtailed polygamy, restricted men's right to divorce, demonized religiously sanctioned temporary marriage (mut'a), reformed the marriage contract, improved the employment status of women, brought back women as judges, debated child custody, and to some degree changed gender attitudes in the family and in society. Women's seemingly peculiar, dispersed, and daily struggles in the public domain not only changed aspects of their lives; they also advanced a more inclusive, egalitarian, and woman- centered interpretation of Islam. (*Life as Politics* 87)

The forms of quiet encroachment I identify in Chapter 4 have some parallels with the examples in Bayat's quote above. Women's resistance is often pragmatic, informal, everyday and despite not being coordinated, is practiced by a large group of individuals. The act of being present, often in unusual spaces and places, is an important component of resistance (e.g., the act of traveling). As I argue in chapter 4, the 'space' in which Bayat's "art of presence" is exercised is often the written word itself. It involves occupying space in the world of information and interpretation.

Methodology: Guidelines for Applying Feminist Standpoint Epistemology in Research

Connecting the links between standpoint feminism and the theories of everyday and resistance, I have come up with some key takeaways in terms of a methodology of feminist epistemological scholarship. While this list reflects my personal understanding of feminist standpoint epistemology, my hope is that scholars working in a variety of disciplines may find these takeaways useful as practical guidelines for how to conduct research and analysis with a feminist standpoint approach:

First, start with the lived experiences of women as the site of inquiry, especially in contexts where there is reason to believe that the situated knowledge of those women has been silenced or ignored.

Second, as the term suggests, it is necessary to seek a diversity of standpoints as a means of discovering otherwise hidden knowledge or knowledge we may have been blind to (as opposed to trying to establish a homogeneous or singular "women's standpoint"). This includes experiences of women from various groups, especially those in more marginalized positions where various intersections of gender, race, social class, etc. lead to different types of systematic injustice.

Third, recognize and acknowledge that the perspective of women or other marginalized groups is in itself partial and incomplete, even if it may contain new insight. Preferably avoid claiming any superior access to truth or validity of knowledge claims arising from the standpoints being studied but maintain that a map of knowledge that includes the coordinates for previously concealed/hidden standpoint knowledges is more complete than a map where only the perspectives of the privileged are mapped. If claiming any authority for the knowledge claims arising from the study of marginalized standpoints, one must be mindful of Anderson's seven

conditions to identify: (i) the *social location* of the privileged perspective, (ii) the *scope* of its privilege, (iii) the *aspect* of the social location that generates superior knowledge, (iv) the *ground* of its privilege, (v) the *type* of epistemic superiority it claims, (vi) the *other perspectives* relative to which it claims epistemic superiority and (vii) *modes of access* to that perspective. Even if not claiming any particular epistemic authority, identifying the epistemic position of the standpoints studied by specifying the above conditions, can be useful for any study based on feminist standpoint epistemology.

Fourth, be mindful of the pragmatic goals of standpoint epistemology as a critical theory that can reveal additional *truths*. Even if we do not claim that the standpoints being studied offer any uniquely authoritative or privileged access to truth, our research may offer truthful representations of reality "that are more *useful* to women than other truthful representations" (Anderson). According to Anderson, a critical theory with a social agenda must (a) represent the social world in relation to the interests of the oppressed groups being studied, (b) provide an account of that world that is accessible to them and allows them to understand their problems, and (c) provide an account which is usable by the subjects to improve their condition.

Fifth, identify points of resistance and encroachment on power in the lived experiences of women, both to highlight their agency in opposition to oppressive powers, and to better understand the balance, nature, and form of the relations of ruling and relations of resistance. Keep in mind that the resistance tactics and strategies employed by women are often pragmatic, subtle, low-profile, informal, "everyday" forms of resistance that, despite not being coordinate, are still mass movement practices by individuals and allow for their "'quite encroachment of the ordinary'. . . to better their lives by quietly impinging on the propertied and powerful, and on society at large" (Bayat, *Life as Politics* 15). This is why in many cases the everyday forms of

resistance may have remained invisible to observers and to the History of record. The idea that everyday and quiet encroachment can serve as guideposts to help us identify the structures of power when analyzing standpoints is implied in the existing literature on feminist standpoint epistemology, but perhaps not made as explicit as I have tried to make it in this Chapter.

Lastly, be mindful of the postmodernist critique of the subject, i.e., be conscious and vigilant about the ways in which the standpoints or accounts of experience being studied, as well as the perspective of the researcher, are themselves socially constructed, shaped and influenced by context, discourses and grand narratives. Any standpoint analysis should make an effort to identify the grand narratives, discourses and institutions that seem to be taken for granted and left relatively unquestioned by the subjects of study.

Conclusion

To the extent that it challenges existing bodies of knowledge and ignorance, the entire enterprise of feminist epistemology may be viewed as itself being a form of "epistemic resistance" (Medina) with an agenda to counter the "epistemic injustices" (Fricker) in society. It is a common moniker of feminist epistemologists in general—and standpoint feminists in particular—that "there is no social justice without epistemic justice (and vice versa)" (Harding "A Philosophy of Science for Us Today?" 1835).

Feminist standpoint epistemology starts with the assumption that knowledge is situated, and that knowledge situated in positions of less power is likely to be silenced or ignored, and thus uncovering it is likely to produce new insight, especially insights that challenges the structures of power and previously established bodies of knowledge. As Aptheker puts it:

> Under conditions of enslavement, persecution, and subordination women have had no way of articulating and handing on a systematic, collective, sustained way of

> knowing. Women's ideas, artifacts, writings, heritage have been fragmented, uprooted, interrupted by these conditions. Many things have been deliberately destroyed. Yet, many fragments have been and are being recovered. And in daily life women have always labored to give meaning to their experiences. In these ways the notion of an alternative way of seeing has been kept alive. In the dailiness of women's lives is preserved the evidence that there is and always has been an alternative to the beliefs, priorities, and values of the dominant cultures we have endured. (74)

The mere uncovering and highlighting of resistance where appearances indicate subordination is itself part of the pragmatic liberatory agenda of standpoint epistemology. As articulated by Ricky Sherover-Marcuse: "People who are the *targets* of any particular form of oppression have *resisted and* attempted *to resist* their oppression in any way they could. The fact that their resistance is not generally recognized is itself a feature of the oppression" (17).

An exemplary work of scholarship within this agenda of epistemic resistance is Patricia Hill Collins' "Black Feminist Thought." In this book she argues that U.S black women have historically been denied the traditional means of education and expression of their ideas, yet they have created subjugated knowledges some of which have reached us through different means (songs, prayers, oral stories, etc). Thus, in order to uncover this hidden knowledge, she invites black feminist scholars to "reconceptualize all dimensions of the dialectic of oppression and activism as it applies to African-American women," the black feminist researcher should reclaim "black feminist intellectual traditions" (Collins 13). This reclamation involves:

> discovering, reinterpreting, and, in many cases, analyzing for the first time the works of individual U.S. Black women thinkers who were so extraordinary that they did manage to have their ideas preserved. In some cases this process involves locating unrecognized and unheralded works, scattered and long out of print. (Collins 13)

This type of "unrecognized and unheralded" sources of subjugated knowledge is what scholars working from a feminist standpoint perspective find fruitful to look for, and the kind of source I

study in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation when I approach five previously unstudied life narratives by Qajar era Iranian women.

Iranian society has been chiefly patriarchal in the Qajar era and since then. Hence, there is strong reason to believe that the voices of women from the era have been silenced or ignored in various ways. For instance, in the field of Iranian studies, Afsaneh Najmabadi is one of the earlier scholars to draw attention to the omission of women's voices and experiences in modern Iranian history. Her book, *The Story of the Daughters of Quchan* (1998), explores how the telling and retelling of the story of the human trafficking of about two hundred and fifty girls from the district of Quchan in the year preceding the Constitutional Revolution contributed to popular mobilization against autocracy.[16] She also investigates how this story came to be forgotten, and what this forgetting tells us not just about the political culture of modern Iran, but the modernist historiography of the country.

Although the women whose travel journals I am analyzing in this research are from privileged social classes, they have very little to no formal education as is evident from their writing. Compared to the literary quality of the life writing by the prominent men of the time, these travelogues have little to offer. The manuscripts are full of grave spelling mistakes; still, their standpoints as women connected to power yet oppressed by patriarchy offers a form of "outsider-within" perspective that is important to study.

From a feminist standpoint perspective, I work with the assumption that the complex workings of different forms of power and resistance cannot be fully appreciated by only investigating exceptional events, or the extraordinary acts of exceptional individuals. Therefore, these informal travel journals are ideal sources through which to uncover the subjugated hidden

[16] In 1905, Quchani women and girls were sold by the poor peasants in lieu of the taxes they owed to the local government. Some of women were kidnapped by the Turkomans tribesmen who raided the region.

knowledge of Qajar era women, as they contain accounts of their everyday lives and the nature of the dailiness they experienced. Rather than focus on exceptional leaders and rebels, these sources allow me to focus intentionally on everyday life and everyday resistance in the quotidian life of Qajar women.

In analyzing the travel journals, I focus on the loci of resistance and encroachment on power, and particularly the everyday forms of resistance practiced and mobilized by these women in their everyday lives. Adopting such a lens not only contributes to our better understanding of the lives of Qajar women, but also helps us analyze the ways in which these women exercised their agency to resist patriarchal and oppressive power in their everyday lives in order to cope and survive, and even slowly encroach on power, improving their own lives. More broadly, studying these Qajar women's travel journals with a focus on everyday forms of resistance contributes to the body of knowledge about resistance—as more nuanced than straightforward political organizing. At the same time, I remain mindful of the fact that these women's writings may not be entirely reliable, given that their interpretations of their experiences is always already shaped by the context and discourses of their time, not to mention the explicit socio-political pressures of middle and upper class social norms and cultural expectations.

Chapter 3 - Narratives of Ignorance around Qajar-Era Iranian Women

In the first chapter [of *The Education of Women*], the author has said that if a man takes the hand of his wife and wants to put it into the fire, that wife should obey him, be quiet and silent, and show no resistance. On my God, Mowlana, with such an intelligence and understanding, if you had not composed this book, what would have happened?

(Bibi Khanoum Astarabadi, *The Vices of Men* 67)

Introduction

Mention of the Qajar Dynasty (1794-1925) provokes two sets of contrasting images: it is an era marked by humiliating defeats to foreign powers, loss of national territory, wars, famines, epidemic diseases that crippled the nation, and incompetent rulers whose extravagance, and lack of political perceptiveness enraged the citizenry. By contrast, it is also a period of cultural flourishing: the era that saw the beginning of Iran's quest for democracy, the Constitutional Revolution (1906-1911), the publication of political and literary presses (the first one being *Kaghaz-e Akhbar* with its inaugural issue published on May 1, 1837), the establishment of Iran's first modern-style college (Dar-al-Fonun est. 1851), and the beginning of women's movement.

Some of the earliest known examples of Iranian women's life writing stretch back to the Qajar era. The most famous one being the memoirs of Taj al –Saltaneh, which was first published in 1983. It was translated into English in 1996 and published under the title *Crowning Anguish: Memoirs of a Persian Princess from the Harem to Modernity 1884-1914*. The most extensive study of this memoir is Abbas Amanat's introductory essay to this translation. Now, the discovery in the past fifteen years of five new women's travel journals-that are the focus of this dissertation provides an opportunity to uncover some of the hidden knowledges of Qajar women, and gain a better insight into their everyday life.

As these manuscripts are the subject of study and analysis in the next chapter, in this Chapter I make the argument for why they are appropriate sites of feminist inquiry according to the criteria outlined in the previous Chapter. While Chapter 2 describes the theoretical framework for my analysis in Chapter 4, in this Chapter I advance the argument that the context of that analysis (Qajar era Iranian women) is a fit for the theoretical framework. To do this, I provide a brief review of evidence that various narratives have distorted, silenced or ignored the

voices of Iranian women and common perceptions of them, especially as it pertains to the Qajar era. It is important to know these narratives to be able to answer the research question of this dissertation (*How does the perspective of everyday resistance reveal new knowledge about the agency of Qajar era Iranian women?)* and to understand how this question's answer, which is in line with the new critical approach to Qajar women's lives, challenges these narratives.

As Leila Papoli Yazdi has noted "the general image that exists today regarding the sexual politics of different eras [in Iran] is by and large distorted," one that brings to mind narratives of "the oppressed Iranian women, the lewd and crude men, polygamy, and abusive and loveless marriages" ("The Evolution of Gender Discourse" 96). I argue that the predominance of such distortion is the result of intentionally produced ignorance perpetuated by colonial, patriarchal, and propaganda narratives about women in Iran. I use the term ignorance here as it is defined by Nancy Tuana and Shannon Sullivan in *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance;* ignorance is not only "a gap in knowledge, an epistemic oversight," but also "consciously produced" at times, and "unconsciously generated" at others to serve the domination of a certain group or groups (13).

The idea that colonial and imperialist narratives would be distorted is relatively unsurprising, as this is in line with a well-known general pattern thoroughly investigated in post-colonial scholarship. More interesting perhaps, is the forces of distortion at work locally within Iran. Papoli Yazdi argues that these forces are mainly the way in which the two post-Qajar regimes that have risen to power in Iran, have sought to legitimize themselves through patriarchal political propaganda. The Pahlavi regime (1925-1979) narrated its rule as having pried women out of Qajar era backwardness. The Islamic Republic (1979-present) portrays itself

as saving women from sexualization and Westernization, now identified with the aggressive modernization agenda of the Pahlavis.

In other words, the two modern states of Iran have both largely ignored the histories of Qajar women or perpetuated ignorance around Qajar women's lives in the service of their own patriarchal agendas and propaganda narratives. They have done so at times through forming specific narratives about Qajar women that fit their agendas; but often the ignorance exists because both of these modern states had such an intense focus on aggressively shaping the women of their own era into the form that matched their ideology that there was not much room left for extensive studies on Qajar women. Thus, in what follows, I delve into the three major narratives of ignorance (imperialist, Pahlavi, and Islamic Republic) around Qajar women. Literature around and about these narratives is abundant and varied, and what follows is a snapshot of that literature which I am covering for the sake of clarifying each category. I want to emphasize that this chapter focuses on the official narratives of Iran's two modern states around Qajar women, and is not an overview of women's rights movements, feminism, and/or women's conditions under these two states. During both the Pahlavi and the Islamic Republic era, Iranian women have made major advancements. In some cases, especially during the Pahlavi era, these advancements have been in line with the state policies, and supported by the state.

The Imperialist Narrative: Women that Need to be Saved

Western representations of the Iranian women of the Qajar era are often rooted in either colonial agendas, or ignorance regarding the complexities of culture in Qajar era Iran. The country's strategic geographical location and proximity to India, Afghanistan, and Russia, and the discovery of its oil-rich lands in the early twentieth century (d. 1908), have meant that Iran has been the site of ongoing international power-struggles since the 1850s (Papoli Yazdi; 'The

Evolution of Gender Discouse" 96). Although Russia and Western powers never established a formal colony in Iran, it can be argued that the country was under indirect foreign rule politically and economically, and the corrupt practices of its rulers have aggravated the harms caused by imperialist avarice in the country.

In the nineteenth century, most Europeans who travelled to Iran and other Middle Eastern countries were diplomats and representatives of their respective governments or churches. Some were adventurers and antique experts who came in hopes of finding hidden gems. There were also those who respected the culture and traditions of the countries they visited and tried their best to understand the intricacies of the cultures they encountered and to describe it fairly. But, as Edward Said mentions in his monumental work *Orientalism,* many of the European visitors to the Middle East viewed these cultures through a lens of superiority, believing in the righteousness of their own way of life, religion, morality, and attending social and political institutions. Through an orientalist lens, these outsiders assessed the social and cultural success of Middle-Eastern nations relative to their alignment with European ways of being and doing, seen as the evolutionary apex of cultural standard; divergence and difference were understood as failure, or more specifically as being uncultured and inferior.

European discourse on "Oriental despotism,[17] the notion that Muslims are incapable of self-rule, began in the eighteenth century with European political philosophers like Montesquieu who made statements such as, "People of the East are best suited to despotic governments and cannot by themselves form democracies" (244).[18] But it was in the nineteenth century with the

[17] The notion of "oriental despotism" regarding the East in general, goes back to before the advent of Islam dating back to at least Herodotus (484-425 BCE).

[18] Today this view is manifested in the notion of "'Middle East Exceptionalism, meaning the Middle East is exceptionally immune to democratic movements, values and institutions" (Mahdavi 103). Critical scholars, including Asef Bayat and Mojtaba Mahdavi have challenged this notion. For more on the discussion see Mojtaba

growth of imperialist projects and new stakes in the wealth of the East, that European officials and missionaries displayed a new level of concern over oriental despotism, mobilizing the wellbeing and liberation of Muslim women as justification for this focus. For instance, Lord Cromer, the British diplomat and colonial administrator in Egypt during the 1870s argued that "Islam as a social system has been a complete failure," because "first and foremost, [it] keeps women in a position of marked inferiority" (Baring 564). He believed that the Christian faith elevates women and that the "Christian [man] respects women … the Moslem despises women" (Baring 581). The narrative is a classic case of Spivak's notion of white men saving brown women from brown men. Interestingly, at home in Britain, Lord Cromer was the founder and president of the "Men's League for Opposing Woman Suffrage" (f. Jan 19, 1909) (Owen 368). These European men talked with much confidence and postured good will about their mission to emancipate Muslim women and save them from the backwardness of their own cultures and their own men.

But such interpretations of Iranian women's lives, and by extension Muslim women's lives, were not exclusive to male travelers who had no access to the "andaruni" (private quarters) of an Iranian household. Many European women, such as the wives of officials and those who did missionary work in Iran, who had been allowed privileged access to the inner quarters of Muslim homes were also antagonistic in this regard. These European women further contributed to imperialist discourses regarding Muslim women, albeit often unintentionally. For instance, in a book about her missionary work in Persia, Mary Bird writes, "There is no word for home in the Persian language, because it has not been required; the Moslems have none of the associations

Mahdavi "Universalism from Below: Muslims and Democracy in Context," and the journal *Sociology of Islam* Vol 2, 2014 special issue on "Contemporary Social Movements in the Middle East and Beyond."

and tender memories which that word awakens in us" (22). As Nima Naghibi argues in *Rethinking Global Sisterhood*, "The dismissal of the idea of a Persian home life positions Bird within a wider discourse: the dissemination of Christian domestic ideology … [which] played a leading role in the nineteenth century evangelical missionary projects" (4). Although the direct and stated aim of the missionaries in Persia, and other Middle Eastern countries, was to disseminate the Christian belief and the words of Jesus Christ, they contributed to the colonialist project that saw the European way of life, including the Christian religion, as superior to the beliefs and lifestyles of Muslims, and they played a major role in the subjugation of people of color and non-Christians.

Bird describes Christianity as a light in the "aimless, hopeless, sad lives those Moslem women lead" (60), arguing that only women missionaries could save them from such lives for two reasons: "universal sisterhood and Western women's unique access to what they called the 'harems' of the East" (Naghibi 6). In this regard, European visitors to Iran and other Middle Eastern countries saw polygyny as proof that Muslim women were treated like property.

What is perhaps even more important is that these accounts by Western travellers and Western residents in Iran were largely derived from the lifestyles of the upper-class, and these travellers rarely had experiences with nor observed the lifestyles of working class, peasants and even middle-class women. As Guity Nashat has argued, most Europeans who wrote about and debated these issues were not interested in the plight of Iranian or other Muslim women, but rather were motivated by the tendency to blame the religion (Nashat 7).

One woman visitor to Iran recounts how a male physician to Iranian women has described them:

> The Persian woman is often neither doll nor drudge. I have known some who were recipients of apparently true love, respect, and solicitude on the part of their husbands, as their sisters in Christian lands; some who were very entertaining in conversation, even in their husbands' presence; some who were their husbands' trusted counsellors; some who were noted for learning; some who were successfully managing large estates; some who have stood by me in my professional work, in emergencies demanding great strength of character and freedom from race and sectarian prejudice. ("Darkness and Daybreak in Persia" 214)

Besides assuming that all women in the West—the Persian women's "sisters in Christian lands"—are blissfully married for "true love," the doctor's observation shows that there were possibilities for Persian women to have control over their financial matters, have an opportunity for education—although like in Europe the quality of their education was dependent on the financial status of their families—and be an integral and important part of their husbands' decision making. However, the woman who refers to the doctor's observation is quick to note that "these are the exceptions" ("Darkness and Daybreak in Persia" 214).

Although the focus of women missionaries' activities in Iran and elsewhere was health and education for women and girls, many still failed to acknowledge that for the majority of Iranian and Middle Eastern women who lived in the rural areas, access to resources such as clean water and medicine was more important than what Europeans described as their veiled status. For the European visitor, Muslim women's veil was above all else a symbol of their oppression caused by Islamic laws and customs which "place[d] women on level with beasts of burden" (Van Sommer 15). As Annie Van Sommer states in her interpretation of the story of Sarah and Hagar, it is the Christian women's duty to save Muslim women:

> The story of Hagar, the mother of the Arabs, tells us of a young girl sacrificed for the scheme and then the jealousy of an older woman who should have loved and pitied her. And it seems to some of us that it needs the widespread love and the pity of the

> women of our day in Christian lands to seek and save the suffering sinful needy women of Islam. (15-16)

It is not just Van Sommer's dismal description of the status of women in Muslim lands that is reiterated in every chapter of her book *Our Moslem Sisters: A Cry of Need from Lands of Darkness Interpreted by Those Who Heard It*, but also her view of the West, specifically of Christian women as saviours of Muslim women, that is prevailing throughout not just this book but the mainstream literature of the time. In this literature, the outlook on Muslim women, their religion and cultures, assumes the West, specifically Europe, to be as the foremost example to which all should aspire. It completely ignores the possibilities and inner workings of Middle Eastern cultures. In other words, the "sisterhood" that was promoted by Western women saw the Eastern women as "others" that needed to be saved. It ignored their agency, and not only did not seek to fortify a solidarity among women across the East and the West, but assumed that Western women were superior to Eastern women, mainly on the grounds of their superior religion.

The Pahlavi Narrative: Women that Need to be Modernized (but Remain Domestic)

Reza Shah, the first of the two Pahlavi monarchs, ascended the throne via a slow but steady rise to power. He first became Minister of War through a coup d'état supported by the British and Prime Minister Seyyed Zia Eddin Tabatabaee (PM under the last Qajar king) in 1921. Reza Shah then rose to the rank of prime minister himself in 1923, and eventually arranged for the *Majlis* (parliament) to depose the then reigning king, Ahmad Shah, the aforementioned last Qajar king, who was in France at the time, in 1925. On April 25, 1926, Reza Shah crowned himself Shah of Iran and established the Pahlavi dynasty[19].

[19] He was declared the Shah by parliament earlier on December 12, 1925.

Unlike the Qajar Shahs, the Pahlavis did not have the royal blood or the *Farr(ah)*[20] that justified their appointment as rulers of the country. Reza Shah was born in the village of Alasht. His father was a low-ranking military in the Qajar army, and his mother was a Muslim immigrant from Georgia. He had no royal lineage. To define a specific "Pahlavi" identity and legitimize his throne, Reza Shah adopted for himself an image as nationalist leader and stern supporter of modernization and technological advancement. Nationalist discourse in Iran has a history stretching back to long before the Pahlavi era, but the Pahlavi nationalist narrative had a unique character. As Nikki Keddie observes:

> Under the [late] Qajars Iranian nationalism was mainly the province of radical intellectuals who wanted to institute major modern government reforms, and saw these reforms as having a basis in pre-Islamic Iranian practices, while they attributed Iran's recent decline to the power of the entrenched rulers and the Muslim clergy, with some also blaming Islam and Arab rule. The Pahlavi shahs adopted the state-strengthening part of this program and, in order to weaken the power of the clergy and to provide support for a centralized national state, these shahs and many intellectuals glorified pre-Islamic Iran. (6)

The Pahlavis defined the new dynasty's identity as a natural offspring of the pre-Islamic Empires. Due to this propaganda pre-Islamic Iran came to be seen as an idealized example of an independent and strong nation-state, while the Arab-Islamic conquest came to represent as the starting point of cultural and political decline. Given the historical evidence suggesting that Iran's greatest contributions to the world in terms of literature, philosophy, mathematics and other sciences happened after the Arab-Islamic conquest, these views on Islam and Islamic culture as causes of demise were the first instances of how Pahlavi propaganda distorted the history of what came before them.

[20] Literally "glory". In Persian mythology it is said to be bestowed by god/s to the few chosen.

To construct a modern nationalist state, the first Pahlavi Shah started a set of reforms that aimed to on the one hand, create a strong central government "free of clerical influence, nomadic uprisings, and ethnic differences," and on the other hand would contain "European-style educational institutions, Westernized women active outside the home, and modern economic structures with state factories, communication networks, investment banks, and department stores" (Abrahamian 140).

Of all Reza Shah's reforms, the ones concerning women were the most controversial and most effective in terms of propaganda. As Guity Nashat observed "[Reza Shah] used issues concerning women to bolster the state's image as modern and to undermine and discredit the ulama who believed women should be confined to domestic activities" (21). Women's bodies and conditions were the best target of Pahlavi's modernist propaganda. Parvin Paidar notes:

> Despite his repressive measures, Reza Shah's views and policies on women were widely popular amongst reformist men and women. This popularity spread across opposition and non-opposition reformists. Hasan Taqizadeh, Mohammad Taqi Bahar, Mohamamd Forouqi, and Ahmad Kasravi were among those intellectuals who, despite being dismissed by Reza Shah, supported his policies. (114)

The reason for their support as Abrahamian notes was that they were hoping Reza Shah would achieve the reforms that the Constitutional Revolution was unable to achieve; most importantly the separation of religion and politics (*Iran Between Two Revolutions* 120-127).

Eliz Sanasarian categorizes the Reza Shah era reforms regarding women into three major areas: "changes in marriage and divorce laws, expansion in educational opportunities for women, and prohibition of the veil" (61). The new civil law that was confirmed in 1931 contained one hundred articles specifically pertaining to family law. The women's journal *Alam-e-Nesvan*

(Women's World, 1920-1934), was one of the major supporters of Reza Shah's reforms. In 1932, Mastureh Afshar, one of their editors, wrote:

> Are we aware that whenever they want to, men can throw their wives out of the house? Are we aware that women's illiteracy, lack of knowledge, and superstitions are harmful to society, the country, and the family? … Do we know that in villages far from the capital, people illegally marry off a ten year-old girl to a sixty-year-old man? … Today we have a government that listens to sensible arguments and protects women and children …. We can raise our cries and have our complaints heard by the authorities who will of course help us. [Mastureh Afshar, 'Are We Aware of Our Own Position in Society?' *Alam-e Nesvan*, 5 September 1932:193–194. Quoted by (Rostam-Kolayi 166)

This quotation supports the regime line that as opposed to the previous Qajar dynasty, the new Pahlavi regime was an ally to women, and supported women's various causes. *Alam-e-Nesvan* "considered the most acute problems of family life to be child marriage, temporary marriage (sigheh), polygamy, venereal disease and other threats to women's health, and, more indirectly, prostitution" (Rostam-Kolayi 166). They published stories about young women struggling with STDs passed on to them by their husbands:

> My parents caused my misery and gave me, like a slave, to someone whom I'd never seen and whose name I didn't know. They knew I was opposed to this marriage, but whether I agreed or not was irrelevant… I was a young, miserable, victimized girl, an eighteen-year-old with a heart full of hopes, sacrificed by my only supporters, my parents … My first night of humiliation, that is my wedding night, passed and in fifteen days I had syphilis. Hamideh Niku, 'The First Unfortunate Moment, or My Marriage Night,' *Alam-e Nesvan*, 2 November 1923:34–35. Quoted by (Rostam-Kolayi 167)

Rostam Kolayi observes that this genre of stories of women forced into marriage at a young age by their families and contracting STDs from their husbands, "became a regular feature in *Alam-*

e-Nesvan" and were "contrasted with idealized images of modern romantic love that was said to foster happiness, respect, and absence of divorce" (Rostam-Kolayi 167). It is not surprising that the writers and contributors of *Alam-e-Nesvan* were major supporters of Reza Shah's family law legislation.

Once the family law legislation came into effect, it became evident that unlike other articles of the new legislation which were quite secular, the family law was significantly more lenient towards Sharia (Sadeghi 58).[21] Polygyny was not banned, but marriage contracts (permanent or temporary) had to be registered with the Ministry of Justice; the woman could put any conditions in the marriage contract such that if they were not observed or broken by the husband, she could repudiate herself on behalf of her husband;[22] the man was required to inform the woman if he had a wife; and that only people who reached puberty could marry. All of these laws were supported by the Sharia and were/could be practices prior to Reza Shah's era and under the Qajars.

Consequently, the new laws were ultimately not as novel or as progressive as many women activists had hoped. The only difference was that the registration of marriages made it harder for men to be polygamous without their wives knowing. However, when the law was first implemented, many cities and villages did not have a registrar and although religious courts were abolished by Reza Shah, the clergy still performed the marriage ceremony.

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[21] For more information on this see Fatemeh Sadeghi *Gender, Nationalism and Modernization in Iran (The Era of the First Pahlavi).* She argues that Reza Shah's new marriage and divorce law supported and consolidated the patriarchal structure of the traditional family. She further argues that this confirmation of the civil law was in no way in contrast to the state sponsored nationalism and merely displayed another aspect of it which is that state sponsored nationalism never aimed to change the structure of the traditional family but was designed to approve of it.

[22] Under Sharia, men do not need a reason to divorce their wives; women on the other hand do not have the same prerogative and cannot get a divorce. If the husband officially gives the wife permission, she can repudiate herself on the husband's behalf.

As Rostam Kolayi notes, *Alam-e-Nesvan*, still published several articles praising Reza Shah's new family law for the limitations that it placed on polygyny (169). What is missed out in these articles, is that polygyny was not as widespread and as common as they claimed and was mostly an issue among the upper-classes to which *Alam-e-Nesvan* writers mostly belonged. Thus, for the common Iranian women whose lives were portrayed as loveless and disease-stricken prior to being improved by the Pahlavis' new legislation, not much changed.

Another one of Reza Shah's major projects is considered to be his facilitation and popularization of women's education. Until the opening of girls' schools, and women writing for press, there were not many professional options for urban middle to upper class women. Rural women always contributed to the family economy by working on land or weaving carpets, etc. Poor urban women could work as "seamstresses, spinners and weavers, or went to work in other women's homes as maids, nannies, midwives, healers, preachers, matchmakers and sales women. Some women worked in public baths and mortuaries and others played music, sang and danced in women-only and mixed bands" (Paidar 41). Reza Shah's support for women's education and entering the work force, meant that once his power was consolidated, an increasing number of schools for women opened in big cities and allowed them to prepare for entry into the newly established modern University of Tehran in 1935 (Nashat 21).

Although the spread of education and public schools for women was altogether a positive advancement, the mindset behind it was not an egalitarian one. Reza Shah himself saw women's education and work as complementary to their traditional roles:

> Reza Shah never advocated a complete break with the past, for always he assumed that our girls could find their best fulfilment in marriage and in the nurture of superior children. But he was convinced that a girl could be a better wife and mother, as well

> as a better citizen, if she received an education and perhaps worked outside the home long enough to gain a sense of civic functions and responsibilities. (Pahlavi 231)

In line with this view, some intellectuals of the time had very specific ideas of what jobs were appropriate for women. In the article "Women Must Work," Reza Khalili wrote:

> After the spread of European culture, including monogamy, delaying marriage, and avoiding divorce (which will hopefully become widespread in the future), we, in Iran, now desperately need the aid and support of women. Otherwise, men cannot financially support women who imitate Europeans without doing all they do…it is necessary for a woman to provide for part of the expenses through what she earns, just as the man strives to support the family…. Women must work, possess skills, and be able to have a profession. By 'profession', we don't mean working in offices, business ventures, or factories. What we mean is that women must know crafts or trades so that in case they cannot marry or have to stay at home, they can provide for themselves…. Right now there are jobs specifically for women but unfortunately occupied by men. These are teaching in elementary schools, midwifery, nursing, tailoring, etc. These are better suited to women… Some urban women are employed making socks and carpets. In addition to financial benefits and overcoming idleness, the work of these classes shows clearly that no harm is done to their household management and child rearing. *Alam-e Nesvan 2* (March 1932):92-96 quoted by (Rostam-Kolayi 172-173)

But Reza Shah's most radical action, that in many cases subverted the positive affects of the two aforementioned changes, was issuing a decree known as *Kashf-e Hejab*[23]. In the official declaration of this edict, the Prime Minister Mahmud Jam explained the reasoning behind it:

> An ignorant woman who lives under the hijab is incapable of preserving her own prestige and honor and is always subject to men. She cannot provide assistance to her family and her husband, and she will always need a guardian or a master. If women

[23] Unveiling or Hijab ban. Although the unveiling of women is the major effect of this decree, but it also prohibited men from wearing all forms of traditional clothing. Kashf-e Hejab was only one part of the sartorial reform policy.

> are educated and enter society they can better manage their family affairs and their own affairs, as well as provide real support for their men. (Jafari et al. 70)

On the day that the edict became law (January 8, 1936), Reza Shah, attended a graduation ceremony with his wife and two daughters wearing European-style clothes. In the ceremony he addressed the women and girls of Iran, saying:

> I am extremely delighted to see that women have become aware of their rights and entitlement ... Women of this country not only could not [before unveiling] demonstrate their talents and inherent qualities because of being separated from society, but also could not pay their dues to their homeland and serve and make sacrifices for their country. Now women are on their way to gain other rights in addition to the great privilege of motherhood. We should not forget that half of our active labor force was laid idle. Women should consider today a great day and use the opportunities available to them to work for the progress of the country. I believe that we must all work sincerely for the progress and happiness of this country .... Future prosperity is in your hands [because you] train the future generation. You can be good teachers to train good individuals. My expectation is that now that you learned ladies are becoming aware of your rights and duties towards your country, you should be wise in life, work hard, become accustomed to frugality, and avoid extravagance and overspending. (Paidar 106-107)

This state-sponsored women's awakening advocated for European forms of fashion and argued that removing the hijab would result in women being empowered to decide their own fate. As Fatemeh Sadeghi notes "in imposing the removal of Islamic hijab, the hijabless women became a symbol of transition from primitivism to civilisation" (51). Thus, Kashf-e-Hijab was arguably more of a ploy in Reza Shah's modernization project that addressed the appearance of society, rather than a genuine effort that aimed to emancipate women.

The law and the coercive and oppressive way that it was executed resulted in the further oppression of religious/traditional women and caused a major rift between the modern, usually

upper-class minority and the religious/traditional majority. Olive Suratgar, the European wife of an Iranian man recounts the seeing the police in Tehran "tearing scarves from the women's heads and handing them back in ribbons to their owners" (132). Once the law was executed, many women chose not to leave their homes. The government started by first, enforcing the law among its own staff. Women whose husbands worked for the government were also forced to appear hijabless in public or their husbands would be immediately dismissed. Women who worked as public sector teachers, or the small number of women who worked as government employees had to either forego the hijab or risk losing their jobs.

Once appearance in public with the hijab was banned, many women chose to give up on a public life altogether, and many chose to simply not leave their homes (Jafari et al. 51). Many families who lived in the cities moved their base to more remote villages where the law was not as strongly enforced. My maternal great-grandmother, Mulouk Qashqai, who was the principal and a teacher in the first girl's school in Neyshabour also wrote about her life. In her unpublished memoir, she recalls the day that the edict of Kashf-e-Hijab was implemented as such:

> We had a garden in Einabad which we went to during the school's summer break to escape the heat. We were there when the news broke that the hijab edict has been issued, and the royal family were the first to go without hijab, and all the members of the schools also had to go hijabless. When my husband found out, he told me: don't go to school until the edict has been removed. He was completely against [the law], and I was so in love with teaching that I was willing to suffer any difficulty to be able to teach. But all my insistence was futile, and so I only taught at that school for two years. The patrons of the school sent after me and insisted for me to return, but my husband would not agree and even moved our home from Neyshabour to Saadabad. (See fig. 2)

Saadabad was a village near the city of Neyshabour. It was not specific to my family or to people in Neyshabour, but throughout Iran many men who could afford to move their wives out of the city and into nearby villages did so, because due to the absence of police forces in the villages, the law was not as systematically enforced[24]. My paternal grandmother, Kolsoum Asadi, who was related to my maternal great-grandmother recalled the village of Saadabad as a "women's land" during the day where they walked around and visited each others' homes without observing strict hijab as all the men were at work in the city. They would wear chadors when going out in the evenings as the men had returned from work. The family maintained this lifestyle until Reza Shah's deposition in 1941 (a period of 5 years).

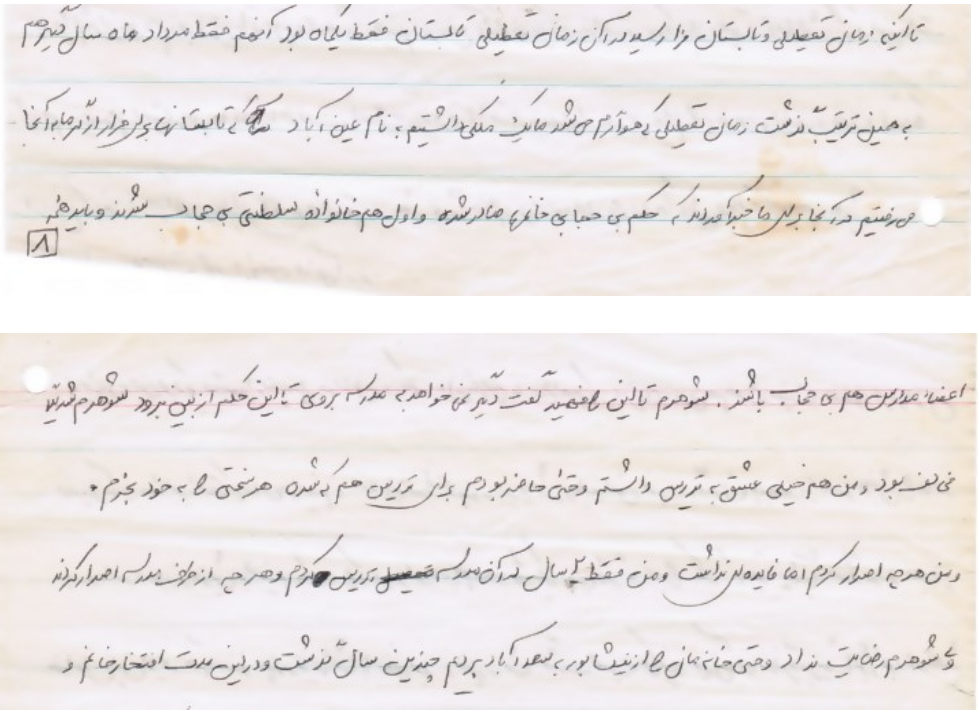


Fig. 2 from my maternal great-grandmother's memoirs

[24] My grandmother mentioned this in a conversation. But in his monumental *A Social History of Iranian Cinema Vol 1,* Hamid Naficy also refers to a similar experience by the women in his family: "Many city women fled to the less-policed villages. My paternal grandmother, Fatemeh Okhovat, and her children for example, left Isfahan for the village of Pudeh (now Puyanshahr), but when royal police also began harassing villagers for veiling, she and her family returned to Isfahan. There, she and many women in the family opted to stay home during daytime, making their public forays—to the baths, for example—only in the dead of the night" (149)

Modern schools were one of the first sites in which Kashf-e-hijab was systematically enforced (Rostam-Kolayi 171). This resulted in many families pulling their daughters out of school. Although Kashf-e-Hejab was not legally enforced after Reza Shah's abdication, women who observed the hijab had a hard time finding jobs or remain in school. My two paternal aunts, who went to school during the time of Mohammad Reza Shah,[25] quit school after they came of age (9 years for girls). One homeschooled herself to get her junior-high degree and the other went back to school to get her high school diploma in her late thirties after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. My mother and her sister, who were teenagers at the time of the Revolution, recall my grandmother constantly being called to school to talk about her daughters' appearances, fielding questions about why they wore headscarves. My mother remembers the principal humiliating them by labeling them backwards and uncivilised, telling my grandmother that it was for the safety of all the children attending her school that my mother and her sister needed to remove their headscarves. The female headmistress's justification was that she had no way of knowing if the girls were hiding bombs under their scarves.[26]

The hijab ban benefited a small number of women, mostly from the upper and upper middle class, who wanted to avoid the hijab, but the majority of urban women who saw the traditional hijab as a sign of being an observant Muslim were put at a disadvantage. Many Iranian women who were observant Muslims never forgave Reza Shah for prohibiting the Islamic hijab in public (Farman Farmaian 95). For the majority, the ban on wearing the hijab, resulted in confinement and an increasingly restrictive lifestyle. Not only did they lose their

[25] At this time women were not forced to take out their hijab in public by the police, but to go to school, or work for the government women had to remove their headscarves.
[26] They lived in a relatively small city, Neyshabour, where most families knew one another. My mother's family has lived in Neyshabour for generations, so they were well known. Their school was in the same street as their house, and right in front of it. The principal's accusations were considered quite absurd.

access to modern education, if any girls' schools were available in their cities and towns, but through the forceful implementation of this law they lost access to public spaces, such as the street, and the bazaar, choosing to stay out of public rather than to act against their religious beliefs. Quite in contrast to the realities of how this law impacted women's lives and liberties on the ground, Pahlavi propaganda advertised Reza Shah, with his *Kashf-e Hejab* law, as a champion of women's emancipation. For example, a graphic book about the life and achievements of Mohammad Reza Shah, published for children in 1976 describes Reza Shah's Hijab ban:

> Reza Shah the great could not tolerate the backwardness of women. Finally, on the 17th of Dey 2494 (January 8, 1936), he took a major step towards this goal… He asked my mother and sisters to attend an official ceremony without niqab and chador. Then he ordered Iranian women to remove niqabs from their faces and chadors from their heads. Thus, the Iranian woman made her first step towards understanding her social rights. (*The Regained Glory* 9). Fig 3

Fig. 3, *The Regained Glory*

A publication on the occasion of the crowing of Mohammad Reza Shah (the second Pahlavi), by Shiraz (Pahlavi) university titled *From Cyrus to Pahlavi; an Image of Iran's Royal History,* connects the Pahalavi dynasty to the ancient empires of Persia, and describes the improvement of women's conditions as one of Reza Shah's major achievements:

Iranian women who had been suffering due to the limitations of hijab for centuries, became free of it during this period and were able to acquire knowledge and share in social services just like men and equal to them. (Thalberg 95) Fig. 4

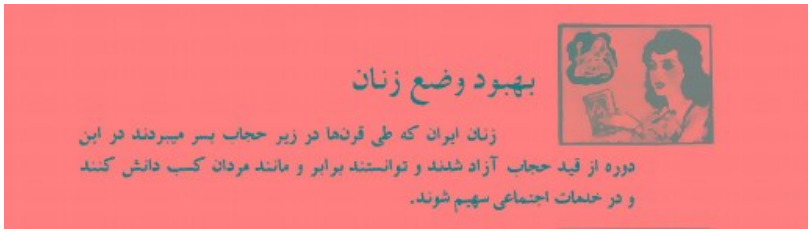


Fig. 4

The Cover of *Zan-e-Ruz Weekly* journal. no 148 reads: The revolution that Kashf-e Hejab caused in the Iranian woman's life!

Kashf-e-hijab was justified as an important way of modernizing the country and emancipating women. To embolden this image of Reza Khan and the Pahlavi dynasty, narratives of the religious/traditional majority was ignored and excluded.

Reza Shah's image as a liberator of women through the order of Kashfe Hijab, was one also supported by many elite and intellectuals of the time who criticized his autocratic ruling in other areas of social and political life. For instance, Parvin Etesami, a leading Iranian female

poet, supported the Kashf-e-Hejab edict (Bamdad 103-104) and wrote a poem on the occasion. The initial lines are:

> Until this day. Women in Iran could not be called Iranians,
> Because for them ways to serve were barred;
> Only anguish and grief lay open.
>
> They lived and died apart, in the corner of solitude;
> Truly they were no more than prisoners, in those now bygone days. (134-135)

Male intellectuals such as Ahmad Kasravi, a well-known historian who was anti-clergy and was assassinated in 1946 by religious fanatics for his views, also supported the Pahlavi's patriarchal approach to women's emancipation. Kasravi criticized women's veiling, seclusion, and illiteracy, but still defended the "natural" role of women in the family and criticized "European-style liberation for women" (Paidar 114). He maintained that it was women's natural role to raise children and manage the house, and that women's "physical weakness and mental vulnerability made them unsuitable for serious social responsibilities" (Paidar 115).

Hasan Taqizadeh, Iranian politician (active both in the late Qajar and early Pahlavi eras) famously said that "outwardly and inwardly, in body and in spirit, Iran must become Europeanized," but also remained close to the socially conservative version of women's emancipation supported politically by Reza Shah, and intellectually by Kasravi. While supporting women's rights in marriage and divorce and admiring those who found careers in science and politics, he maintained that women's main responsibility was to produce and raise children. He believed that it is women's responsibility to acquire "civility, chastity and patience;" that with women's advancement, men too will be reformed, so on one hand "women are men's teachers and can influence them in adopting the best of human qualities" and on the other hand "they are the mothers of traditions and customs thus they are the main pillars and

strong foundations of nationality, creed, language and heritage." To him, women were "bastions of chastity" and "the main link in the chain of ancestry" (Afshar 160-161).

Women's advancement and their movement was supported under Reza Shah as long as they remained tied to male guardianship and state sponsorship (Sanasarian 67). As a result, eventually women's movements declined under his rule. As Parvin Paidar records in *Women and the Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran*, Reza Shah viewed democracy in contrast to rapid modernization and military advancement (108-109), hence women's independent organizations were closed down and banned, and their members were arrested and sent to prison. Women's independent publications such as *The Society of Nationalist Women* (Anjoman-e-Nesvan-e-Vatankhah), *Messenger for Women's Prosperity* (Payam-e-Saadat-e-Zanan), Women's Awakening (Bidari-ye-Zanan), *Women of Iran* (Zanan-e-Iran), *Women's Universe* (Alam-e-Zanan) were also closed down and the women who ran them were either imprisoned or exiled (Paidar 102). What these publications advocated—namely their criticisms of women's domesticity—was not in accordance with the new regime's ideology and the kind of nationalism that it promoted. Like Reza Shah, the intellectuals' support for women's advancement also had its limits and the independent reformists maintained the principal of male domination, and they made it clear in their writing (Paidar 114).

Najmabadi argues that while Reza Shah set criteria for what model citizens should be like and expected the citizens to view their role as "servants of the state"—which he equalled with country, in the era of his successor increasing oil revenues enabled the government to be more autonomous from civil society. Mohammad Reza Shah began to see citizens more and more as "beneficiaries of the state" ("Hazards of Modernity" 60). What this meant for women was that their "rights were to be royal grants" ("Hazards of Modernity" 60). Mohammad Reza Shah

began to increasingly see himself as the government and the state itself and adopted an identity as the mastermind of Iranian modernization.

During the second Pahlavi's reign, the reformer identity manifested itself in his "White Revolution," also known as "The Shah and People's Revolution (1963)." The White Revolution was a series of reforms launched by the Shah beginning in 1963, marking an era that Najmabadi dubs "Mohammad Reza Shah's transformative years (1963-78)." These top-down reforms gave women the right to vote, allowed women to run for elected office, and to become lawyers and judges. The reforms also included raising the legal age of marriage for women to fifteen.

In the process of these reforms, the few remaining independent women's organizations that had survived the 1950s repression—often run by upper-class women and which had introduced many initiatives—were now eliminated altogether or brought completely under the control of the state under the supervision of the Shah's sister, Ashraf Pahlavi. The purpose was to control "the pace and details of reform for women" (Najmabadi "Hazards of Modernity" 62). By doing so, the Shah, or as activists and politicians of the time would call it "the system" (Dastgah) had denied the citizens, in this case women, from engaging in meaningful dialogue. Rights were luxuries granted upon society by the benevolence of the Shah. Najmabadi describes the two periods of Pahlavi state-building as such:

> An important shift occurred in the symbolic significance of the women's rights' issue in Iran. In the first period, women's status was seen as a symbol of modernity of the new nation and the new state. In the second period, it became the symbol of the modernity of the monarch and his progressive benevolence toward women. (Najmabadi "Hazards of Modernity" 63)

To emphasize the Pahlavi's identity as reformers under whose leadership women have lives more equal to men, past histories were distorted and narratives that displayed women's

agency and resistance to patriarchy—especially in Iran after Islam and more specifically during Qajar era—were ignored. Badr ol-Moluk Bamdad's *From Darkness to Light: Women's Emancipation in Iran,*[27] which is one of the first works outlining Iranian women's struggle for equality, is one such work. The book is significant for the insights that it brings regarding Pahlavis modernization process and the way it affected Iranian women; however, as an ardent supporter of the Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah's rapid modernization of Iran. Bamdad's book is an example of the narrative supportive of Pahlavi propaganda:

> In spite of a brilliant past, in which Iranian women had at times risen to be reigning monarchs and leaders in statecraft and warfare, the practice of secluding the female half of the community spread to Iran as a result of political factors and worldwide tendencies, such as Arab and Mongol invasions and increasing jealousy and fanaticism on the part of men, who dreaded any sort of association between their wives and strangers. Since the women had to be allowed out of doors from time to time if necessary tasks were to be performed, the practice of making them conceal themselves under thick coverings was eventually also adopted. (Bamdad 7)

In this narrative, the glorious ancient times is followed by a decline due to advent of Islam, and the adaptation of hijab by women. Bamdad goes on to describe the "decadent and autocratic regime of the Qajar Shahs" and when referring to women's participation in the Tobacco Protests (1891) expresses her "surprise that Iranian women sometimes took a firm stand" (8-9). Bamdad was part of the first group of students to attend the Women's Teaching Training College, and was also one of the first twelve women to study at the University of Tehran. She was a part of the first generation of Iranian women who benefited from the Pahlavi's modernizing policies, and became a successful educator and journalist. Her book—which appeared in two volumes in

[27] The book's Persian title زن ایرانی از انقلاب مشروطیت تا انقلاب سفید *Iranian Women from the Constitutional Revolution* [1906-1911] *to the White Revolution* [1963] was changed when it first appeared in English in 1977 seemingly to appeal more to the Western reader's perception of Iran and further contribute to the image that the Pahlavi's were casting of themselves to the West.

Persian, was published in 1968 and 1969, some ten years before the Islamic Revolution of 1979 when Iranian women took part in an uprising that overthrew a regime that Bamdad saw as their liberator.

While Bamdad mentions that the supporters of women's emancipation and kashf-e-hejab were members of royalty, and people of prominence, she describes the opposers as "violent and ignorant fanatics" and "women of the lower classes indoctrinated with the notion that to lift the veil is a woman's worst sin and disgrace" (94-95). Bamdad's contemptuous description of the parts of the city where prior to the enforcement of Kashef-e-Hejab people were more resistant towards hijablessnes, corresponds to the economic condition of people in those areas:

> … some of the pioneer unveilers who lived in the southern part of Tehran reluctantly had to put on veils when they set out, then take them off and hide them in their handbags when they reached the upper parts of the city, and then again put them on when they approached their homes. (95)

This dual economic/cultural divide described by Bamdad was only worsened once the decree was enforced. In praising the decree, Bamdad glosses over the marginalizing effects it had on many women: "After that day, women wearing veils were forbidden to circulate in the main streets of Tehran and the provincial cities. They were guided by the police into side streets" (96). As Nima Naqibi has aptly observed this admission by Bamdad unintentionally ironized the Kashf-e-Hejab decree that she praised so much, for it shows how "rather than dissolving the boundaries of *andarun* and *biruni,* Reza Shah in fact extended those boundaries to city streets" (46).

The Islamic Republic Narrative: Women that Need to be De-Westoxified

Mohammad Reza Shah's consolidation of the new state inevitably evoked transformation in oppositional politics. As Najmabadi argues, a central concept in the new oppositional politics

was *gharbzadegi*- Westoxication, popularized by Jalal Al-e Ahmad (64). The concept which was initially "accepted by a whole generation of Iranian radical youth in the 1960s and 1970s…involved a thorough break with past politics of whatever colour" (64). When it came to women, there was a consensus on the rejection of Westoxified or "gharbzadeh" women across secular, religious and traditional groups.[28]

Opposition to the Pahlavis culminated with the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Within months of gaining power, the Islamists abrogated the Family Protection Act, eliminated women from the judiciary,[29] implemented the segregation of men and women in public spaces, and made the wearing of Islamic hijab compulsory. The compulsory Hijab law was enforced by paramilitary groups and was as brutal, if not more, than Reza Shah's anti-hijab policies.

The justification for these new reforms followed a narrative that considered the new Islamic laws as the natural inclinations of women which helped them fulfill their true potential as God intended, while prior to the Pahlavi era women were limited, and during the Pahlavi era they were sexualized, westernized and expected to fulfill "men's roles" which is against their nature:

> The social presence of women [in Islamic Republic] is considered based on laws and regulations defined by Islam. According to this view, besides being present in society, women are expected to consider certain boundaries especially in their relationship with men. The most important aspect of it is the observation of Islamic Hijab, and it is expected of the Muslim women of the society to show that hijab is not contradictory to social life. (Toqrankar 240)

Shiite Islam, much like other Abrahamic religions, is a product of historical process that has gone through many changes. However, the clergy who rule Iran present their own specific

[28] For a better definition of who was considered a gharbzadeh woman, and the thin line between ommol (too traditional) and jelf (too loose) see Najmabadi "Hazards of Modernity and Morality," 65-67.
[29] Although with the passing of time, Iranian women in 2019 can now hold all positions in the judiciary except for judges in certain courts.

reading of as the only one credible. They further argue that what is prescribed by Islam is what corresponds to the laws and orders of nature. In his book, *The Rights of Women in Islam,* Ayatolla Morteza Motahhari, the Shiite cleric who is considered one of the significant theorists of Shiite jurisprudence regarding women, and whose work is heavily drawn upon by the cultural policy makers of the Islamic Republic, argues that the *natural* differences between the sexes complemented by conformity to Islamic law results in the fulfillment of the purpose of divine creation. From the idea of the purpose of creation, and his deduction of the meaning of justice according to Islam, he concludes that God, in his all-encompassing wisdom, wills women to occupy a position subordinate to men (Motahhari 11-172).

As just one example of how this thinking around the "woman question" was narrated as part of official and popular discourse after the Islamic Revolution of 1979, see how it is expressed in *Zan-e-Ruz*, a woman's weekly journal, published April 7, 1984:

> Colonialism was fully aware of the sensitive and vital role of woman in the formation of the individual and of human society. They considered her the best tool for subjugation of the nations. Therefore, under such pretexts as social activity, the arts, freedom, etc., they pushed her to degeneracy and degradation and made of her a doll who not only forgot her human role, but became the best tool for emptying others of their humanity ... In Western societies where capitalism is dominant ... women's liberation is nothing but the liberty to be naked, to prostitute oneself ... In the underdeveloped countries ... women serve as the unconscious accomplices of the powers-that-be in the destruction of indigenous culture. So long as indigenous culture persists in the personality and thought of people in a society, it is not easy to find a political, military, economic or social presence in that society ... and woman is the best means of destroying the indigenous culture to the benefit of imperialists… In Islamic countries the role of woman is even more sensitive. Islamic belief and culture provide people of these societies with faith and ideals ... Woman in these societies is armed with a shield that protects her against the conspiracies aimed at her humanity, honour and chastity. This shield is verily her veil. For this reason ... the most

> immediate and urgent task was seen to be unveiling ... Then she became the target of poisonous arrows of corruption, prostitution, nakedness, looseness, and trivialities. After this, she was used to disfigure the Islamic culture of the society, to erase people's faith and drag society in her wake toward corruption, decay and degradation... It is here that we realise the glory and depth of Iran's Islamic Revolution ... Today the Muslim woman has well understood ... that the only way for her social presence to be healthy and constructive is to use Islamic veil and clothes ... It is clear that an active and effective presence of women ... in many positions such as education, medical professions, higher education is indispensable. So those in authority should prepare the grounds for women's participation in society. Faithful and committed women should expand their abilities in order to be prepared to carry out important social tasks and responsibilities that the Islamic Revolution has placed on their shoulders. Quoted by Najmabadi ("Hazards" 68-69)

The Islamic Republic discourse on women veiling was a reaction to both the colonial discourse on Muslim women and the Pahlavi's unveiling policies. But it did condone the Pahlavi discourse on the Qajar era in how it sees Iranian women prior to the nationalist discourse as limited, passive and absent from society-except for limited occasions that involved supporting clerical verdicts or supporting men in nationalist discourse.

For example, one of the stories emphasized in Islamic Republic-era history textbooks is that of the Tobacco Protest (1890), in which the clergy had a leading role. In 1890 Naser-al-Din Shah signed a contract with British Major Gerald F. Talbot and gave him the ownership over Iran's tobacco industry, including full control over cultivation, sale and export for 50 years. This contract became the cause of the Tobacco Protests of 1891-92, which became the first major alliance between the ulama and the intelligentsia (Sanasarian 16). In opposition to the Tobacco Concession, Grand Ayatollah Mirza Hassan Shirazi issued a fatwa against tobacco use. Following the fatwa, large numbers of people including the women in the Shah's own andaruni

refused to buy and smoke tobacco. When even his wives refused to bring him the hookah, the Shah was forced to cancel the contract.

This discourse also justifies the advancement that a number of women made during Pahlavi era in social and political life merely due to either their familial or sexual relations:

> …from the five women who became senators in the last four rounds of senate parliament, most were either the wives or relatives of politicians, and high ranking militants, or corrupt women that entered senate because of their relations with the court and as a result of one of the courtiers' recommendation… (Toqrankar 98-99)

However, what both the Islamic Republic, and Pahlavi discourses have in common when it comes to women is their attention to hijab and how each regime's patriarchal approach to women results in each turning women's bodies into a battleground on which their wars of modernity, nationalism, religion, and independence are fought. The Revolution of 1979, and the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) that followed it, brought the necessity of women's participation in social affairs to the foreground. As a result, women could not be asked to simply go back home. But Islamic Republic discourse continued to see its ideology as the guarantor of women's rightful place in society, for which, in their view, Iranian women should be thankful.

It is important to mention that the political opposition groups which were against the establishment of an Islamic regime, and which were secularist or influenced by leftist thought and guerilla movements also did not see women's role and status beyond that of the supporters of men. Haideh Moghissi's study on the political movements of the present century in Iran and the role of women therein concludes that despite all their ideological and political differences, the Islamists, the nationalists, and the leftists never had the issue of women, their status and their

role as one of the central matters in any of the mass movements and did not see women's role beyond the supporters of men's struggles for their ideologies (73).[30]

Revisiting the History of Qajar Women: Critical Perspectives

Given the three narratives outlined above, the general image presented of Qajar women, depicts them mostly as passive, ignorant, silent, and voiceless with the exception of some extraordinary instances of sociopolitical participation. Even in the post-Qajar era in both Pahlavi and Islamic republic discourse, Iranian women have only gained a respectful place and voice as long as it is in line with the ideology of the benevolent state—as their patron and concerned father, who bestows certain rights upon them.

A major part of the feminist scholarly agenda, in Iran as well as around the world, has been to revisit the past, and through excavation, interpretation and re-interpretation engage in "reconstructing the participation of women" (Aptheker 172) in narratives of history where their role has traditionally been ignored or downplayed. The more historically distant and less documented a context is, the more difficult it becomes to engage in this exercise. As noted by Afasaneh Najmabadi, "the premodern [Iranian] female voice was largely an oral voice, to be heard, rarely to be written and circulated" ("Veiled Discourse-Unveiled Bodies" 488).

But in recent years, specifically the past two decades, scholars focusing on the voices that have been silenced throughout the history of Iran have enjoyed increased academic proliferation in both Iranian and Western academia. Below I outline some of the takeaways and learnings

[30] It should also be noted, that during both Pahlavi and the Islamic Republic era, academic research funding came mostly from the state, and the state usually support work that perpetuates their agenda, see for instance Zohreh Bayatrizi's research on state sponsorship of sociological research in Iran in "Knowledge is not Power: State-funded Sociological Research in Iran Bayatrizi, Zohreh. "Knowledge Is Not Power: State-Funded Sociological Research in Iran." *Current Sociology*, vol. 58, no. 6, 2010, pp. 811-832.

from this line of inquiry, before moving on to describe my own approach to excavating the silent histories of Qajar women in the next section.

Political Participation

It is in the late nineteenth century and during Qajar era that we have the first recorded instances of Iranian women's active participation in political protest as part of the Tobacco Protest of 1891. In the early twentieth century and through the course of the *Iranian Constitutional Revolution* (1906-1911) we see the first recorded instances of women gathering in their own political councils and societies to discuss the current issues of Iran. At the time, newspapers such as *Sure-e Esrafil, Habl al-Matin*, *Mosavaa*t, and *Iran-e Now* published articles in support of the constitutionalists and women's suffrage. Soon Iranian women started to write in these papers not only about the democratic and national issues of the time, but specifically about issues pertaining to women, and the first women's weekly newspaper, *Danesh* was established in 1910 (Browne 84-85). Iranian women's public voice began to take shape and be heard.

For instance, various sources have been identified and studied the role of women in the Constitutional Revolution. In *The Story of the Daughters of Quchan* (p. 1998), Afsaneh Najmabadi explores how the telling and retelling of the story of the human trafficking of about two hundred and fifty girls from the district of Quchan in the year preceding the Revolution contributed to popular mobilization against autocracy:

> Chronicles of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Iran report many similar incidents. Yet, happening as they did in the immediate year prior to the Constitutional Revolution, that is, within the political context of increasing agitation against the central government, they became woven into a much narrated tale of outrage and grievance. They became a story. Known as "the story of the daughters/girls of Quchan" (hikdyat-i dukhtaran-i Quichan), this tale was narrated in many forms and by diverse speakers and writers. Muslim preachers lamented over the fate of the girls

> from the pulpit. Social Democratic militants used the story as a tale of the injustice of the rich and the tyranny of rulers. Once objects of traffic among men, within a year the daughters of Quchan had become an issue of national concern. They became topics of discussion among the deputies and the then-highly political public. The debates within Iran's first parliament (Majlis) in 1906-1908 over the nation's responsibility vis-a- vis their fate was a central part of consolidating the Majlis as a seat of national power. In their circulation as oratory, the daughters of Quchan provided one of the issues in a power contest between the parliament and the cabinet, which was selected by the new king, Muhammad 'Ali Shah (r. 1907-1909). ("Is our Name Remembered?" 86)

Najmabadi then investigates how this story was glossed over in major histories of the Constitutional Revolution, and what this forgetting tells us not just about the political culture of modern Iran, but the modernist historiography:

> …reading the texts of the Constitutional era makes it abundantly evident that the absence of the story of the daughters of Quchan in these histories could not have resulted from its lack of contemporary political and cultural significance. Rather, it is the larger plot of these histories that has marked that story as too insignificant to be included… In other words, it is the consequent developments and the subsequent historiography that produce certain events as causes, rather than the other way around. The disappearance of the story of the daughters of Quchan, not only from the grand scheme of causes of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution but even from the list of the simple events that produce "important effects and consequences" or as one of the matches "that detonate the gunpowder," is a case in point. Whereas both Kasravi and Taqizadah mention the initial event and its discussion in revolutionary literature as one of the causes of popular upheaval, in the currently dominant historiography of the Constitutional Revolution, the infliction of the bastinado on the three Tehrani merchants and the killing of two men of religion (with the occasional appearance of M. Naus) are invariably cited as the events that inaugurated the revolutionary upheavals. Through repeated recitations in history after history, historians have marked these latter events as the initial moments that started the revolutionary drama,

> relegating the story of the daughters of Quchan to oblivion. ("Is Our Name Remembered?" 100)

The histories of the Constitutional era, as Najmabadi argues, are narratives about great men and their grand ideas. In this context, there may be no intentional censorship, but "stories" that do not work well within the logic of the particular narrative of the Constitutional Revolution that a historian is trying to tell.

Vanessa Martin looks at decades earlier than Najmabadi for women's involvement in political protests. In the Chapter "Popular demonstrations by Women in Nineteenth Century Iran" of her book *The Qajar Pact* (p. 2005), she investigates the contemporary documents of the British archives to find records of Iranian women's demonstrations that were mostly "critical of government economic policy," and deduces that ordinary Iranian women were involved in political activity much earlier than the Constitutional Revolution mostly in the form of bread riots (Martin 100):

> Political demonstrations by ordinary women in the urban areas were often ostensibly bread riots, and therefore so termed. However, they usually represented a deeper malaise resulting mostly from wider economic difficulties affecting the community as a whole… Thus revolts by the wider community would not unusually start with a women's protest or bread riot, and then spread to involve the whole bazaar network, including the merchants providing the wealth, the 'ulama the moral leadership and intercession with the state, the men from the poorer quarters the might, and the guilds organisation and facilitation. (100)

Martin finds mentions of women's bread riots from throughout Iran (Tehran, Shiraz, Astarabad and Bushire) in the nineteenth century recorded by British consulates in Iran. The earliest one is from 1849 and took place in Tehran, but as she notes since the British diplomatic sources which provide the detailed accounts are scarce before that time, it cannot be claimed that similar riots

did not take place earlier (100). Martin considers women's roles in these demonstrations "peculiarly Iranian" and argues that it was influenced by the role of women in the Iranian/Shiite tradition of passion plays, *Ta'ziya*. Martin argues that in contrast to the Christian tradition, where women are portrayed as peaceful and forbearing in the Iranian Shiite tradition of Ta'ziya plays, women are in the centre of the battlefield. While one cannot fully claim that the choreographed and organized bread riots were one hundred percent an extension of the Ta'ziya, the possible connection cannot be ignored (100).

Economic Participation

Much of the previously outlined narratives have ignored or downplayed the significance of women's forms of participation in the economy that already existed in the Qajar era, and the ways they used the traditional/religious system to their economic advantage.

In "Oil as Quagmire: An Archeological Study of Women's Economic Participation and Ownership in Contemporary Iran" written by Leila Papoli Yazdi, Omran Garazhian and Gowhar Soleimani Reza Abad, the authors look at the marriage contracts as well as the *Waqf* contracts (charitable endowments) of late Qajar era preserved in the archives of Astan Qods library. The study reveals new knowledge regarding Qajar women's economic participation and demonstrates that state intervention into marriage and divorce laws during both Pahlavi and Islamic Republic regimes, may have actually minimized women's economic participation in the past hundred years:[31]

[31] The study also touches upon the relationship between the discovery of oil in Iran and its sociocultural effect on women's economic participation, an issue that remains of high interest to scholars around the world, namely in places such as Alberta, Canada, where oil plays an important part in the culture and economy. For more on this see University of Alberta scholars' work on petrocultures: *Petrocultures: Oil, Politics, Culture* edited by Sheena Wilson, Adam Carlson, and Imre Szeman Wilson, Sheena et al., editors. *Petrocultures: Oil, Politics, Culture*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017.

> Because of this detailed economic mechanism [of dowry, hebeh and mehrieh[32]], the majority of endowers were women until the end of Qajar dynasty. Also the tradable economic fund in Iran was equally shared among men and women. Economic equality was to the advantage of both men and women…Women's private ownership, high mehrieh, and participation in production were strong deterrents against extremism of certain religious rights that men had. Although there is not detailed census, but the body of available marriage documents from the time show that among the economically middle class, and the farmers polygyny was very limited and mostly happened when the wife could not bear children. (113-114)

This study indicates that women in the Qajar era enjoyed a bigger share in the economy than previously thought, and that compared to the Qajar era, Iranian women's economic participation in all periods after has relatively declined ("Oil as a Quaqmire" 73). Papoli et al, argue that through traditional and religious methods such as their wedding gifts, Mahrieh, and Hebeh, women gathered wealth which not only helped the family economy, but could also help them pressure the local or national government when the need arose ("Oil as a Quaqmire" 72). For instance, one of Naser al- Din Shah's wives, Anis al-Dowleh managed the tax of the city of Kashan and its surrounding villages, most of which were her property through mehrieh. She used her control over these areas to pressure the Shah during the Tobacco Movement ("Oil as a Quaqmire" 72-73). Papoli et al. also argue that even the poorest woman became a shareholder in her husband's wealth in marriage through mehrieh, and that even the most meagre possessions she took with her to her new home after marriage often helped with the economic production of the family ("Oil as a Quaqmire" 84).

[32] Mehrieh, Mihr or dower is a provision made by Islamic law where the husband has to gift a wife a financial entity which is agreed upon at the time of the marriage and settled on the bide.

Education

Despite Reza Shah's image as the sole force behind the modernization of Iranian women's education, there is evidence that women pursued the struggle for education much earlier in their own right. Access to public education for girls was included in the constitution in 1907, prior to Reza Shah's coming to power, and even before public schools, traditional schools—*Maktab Khaneh*—always existed; additionally, affluent people hired tutors to teach their daughters (and sons) at home.

The first school for Muslim girls, *Dabestan-e- Doushizegan* was also opened in 1907, by Bibi Khanoum Astarabadi. The school opening was protested by many, especially since clergy considered it immoral for women to study. As a result of pressures and threats, Bibi Khanoum had to close the school for a while before changing its name and reopening it. The story of Bibi Khanoum is representative of the long, hard and slow struggles of women to advance their rights and improve their condition over time, and resurfacing such stories contradicts the Pahlavi narrative that it was mainly the Shah himself who was responsible for the sudden modernization of Iranian women.

Polygyny and Marriage

As noted earlier, the practice of polygyny was a key element of the colonial narrative around Iranian women, suggested by that narrative to be indicative of an inferior way of life compared to the Christian European way of life. More recent scholarship indicates that the practice was not as widespread as the colonials claimed, nor was it considered as terrible as prostitution (Mabro 6).[33] Furthermore, the fact that polygyny was an officially recognized and

[33] For more information on the topic see also Fatima Mernissi *Beyond the Veil, Male-Female Dynamics in a Modern Muslim Society.*

regulated practice meant that it often provided benefits and protections to women who would otherwise not have access to such benefits and protections. For example, while children born to sigheh or additional wives of a Muslim man were considered legitimate, cared for by their father and inherited from him, the same was not true in colonizing nations: children born out-of-wedlock in Europe, for example, traditionally had no right to the wealth, nor the protection of their fathers, except in exceptional cases where aristocratic fathers had the means to provide (Mabro 25).

Some of the other marriage laws under the traditional Islamic system practiced in the Qajar era were also more progressive than their European counterparts. While women in Europe did not have the right to divorce, Muslim women did, albeit limitedly so; and while European women's inheritance or earnings were not legally theirs, the property and money that a Muslim woman earned and inherited was hers before, during, and after marriage.

Women also had options to set conditions in their marriage contracts. For instance, some of the marriage contracts from the Qajar era that are preserved in the archives of Astan Qods library demonstrate some of the conditions that the brides and/or their families chose to bring in the marriage contracts:

> [I]n a marriage contract dated 22 ze-al-Qa'edeh 1338 kept in Astan Qods library, a woman named Fatemeh Soltan required the right to chose the place of living from her husband Mirza Asadallah; or in a marriage contract between Qamar and Sheikh Mohammad Hasan in 1336 the wife has set conditions through which she can divorce herself on the husband's behalf : "The husband agreed to giving the wife advocacy for divorce from the day of marriage for fifty years if present or absent he fails to pay the wife four Tomans and five thousand monthly, for six month consecutively. The wife can then divorce herself on his behalf after pardoning half of her mehrieh (and if the mehrieh does not exist anymore by requesting nothing). (Papoli et al. 87)

As exemplified in the two aforementioned cases, the right to remain close to the bride's family, and to get a divorce in the case of the husband's failure to financially provide for the wife were the most common conditions sought by women. These conditions also indicate the importance of the women's family ties as well as her personal comfort.[34]

A Feminist Standpoint Approach to Revisiting the Silent History of Qajar Women

As the previous section has shown, research on Qajar era women has taken a variety of critical approaches in the recent years. This dissertation continues this project, but through a particular methodological lens informed by feminist standpoint methodology, emphasizing the notions of everyday life and everyday resistance.

Morgan Shuster, the American financial advisor to the new constitutionalist government who first publicised the existence of Iranian women's semi-secret political societies in the West in his *The Strangling of Persia* (1912), praised the Qajar women's participation in their country's affairs: "what shall we say of the veiled women of the Near East who overnight become teachers, newspaper writers, founders of women's clubs and speakers on political subjects?" (192). However, was this seemingly overnight appearance of Qajar women in the public discourse truly all that sudden? A focus on sudden radical changes brought about by heroic individuals in struggles over power is the result of traditional male-dominated and Western individualistic method of writing history. That is, the historical record has such a tendency to focus on radical

[34] In *Women with Mustaches and Men Without Beards* (2005) Najmabadi rereads Iranian modernity through the lens of gender and sexuality. She studies visual and literary material from the Qajar era, mostly nineteenth century, and demonstrates how notions of a strict pre-modern Islamic gender system are misleading. Her study is significant not only in that it writes women and gender minorities into history, but that it does so with regard to transformations of ideas about sexuality, gender, beauty, love, marriage, homeland and citizenship through history.

change and exceptional individuals so much so that, it neglects the gradual and cumulative impact of everyday resistance, years of daily choices by the faceless masses.

Aptheker points out that in engaging with the project of excavating, reinterpreting, and reconstructing history to revive the role of women, feminist activists and scholars have at times fallen into the trap of defining what is significant or what matters in history along the same parameters set by the traditional male-dominated histories. While contesting the boundaries of what is political, the women's liberation movement also defined resistance on essentially the same grounds as those conferred by masculinist tradition, although the priorities of women's concerns have often been radically different. That is, the assumptions about progress, social change, and social movement informed the actions of the women's liberation movement. The politics are oppositional, and the struggle is for power.

> In women's studies, and specifically in the excavation and interpretation of women's history, we have followed these same patterns. Since the early 1970s a lot of work has gone into reconstructing the participation of women in resistance movements ... All of these movements have exhibited the essential features of oppositional politics characteristic of resistance, albeit within more radical or more liberal traditions. Women's historians, including myself, have almost always also accepted the underlying assumptions about progress and social change. This has led to the creation of a compensatory history. That is, we have inserted ourselves as women into social history, as participants and supporters in movements initiated by men and as founders of our own women's movements for social and economic justice. (171-172)

While in my approach, the notion of resistance remains key, there is a fundamental recognition that the forms of resistance practiced by women are typically different, and to be found in the dailiness of their everyday lives. Their logic is often survival and coping rather than oppositional and power-seeking. They employ tactics that are pragmatic, subtle, personal, and uncoordinated.

In fact, it is exactly because of this low-profile nature that they tend to remain hidden from the historical record. Aptheker describes these forms of resistance in more detail:

> There is a women's resistance that is not "feminist," "socialist," "radical," or "liberal" because it does not come out of an understanding of one or another social theory, and it is not informed by experience in conventional politics. It is a resistance that exists outside the parameters of those politics and outside the purview of any of the traditional definitions of progress and social change. Women's resistance as I [Aptheker] am defining it here is shaped by the dailiness of women's lives. It comes out of the sexual division of labor that assigns to women responsibility for sustaining the lives of their children and, in a broader sense, their families, including husbands, relatives, elders, and community. This responsibility is knowingly accepted, albeit under enormous social pressure. Women's resistance also comes out of women's subordinated status to men, institutionalized in society and lived through every day in countless personal ways. Women's resistance is not necessarily or intrinsically oppositional; it is not necessarily or intrinsically contesting for power. It does, however, have a profound impact on the fabric of social life because of its steady, cumulative effects. It is central to the making of history, and, … is the bedrock of social change. Too often we have not seen this kind of resistance or appreciated its cumulative effects because we have been looking for social movements as these have been traditionally defined, and we have looked for the historical moments when these movements have reached their apex, making sweeping social changes. To see women's resistance is also to see the accumulated effects of daily, arduous, creative, sometimes ingenious labors, performed over time, sometimes over generations. (173)

In the following chapters I identify and study these forms of resistance in the five newly available manuscripts of life writing by Qajar women. These manuscripts are travel journals and are focused more on the everyday lives experienced by their authors, and hardly give any attention to major sociopolitical events. While other researchers may find them uninteresting precisely because of this, the above described lens makes them exceptionally suited to the purposes of this study.

Conclusion

In this chapter I provide historical background on the context of the core analysis of this dissertation (Qajar-era Iranian women and their travel journals) and argue that because of various forces at work to ignore or distort our understanding of these women, a feminist epistemological approach to uncovering hidden knowledge by taking their accounts of lived experience as a site of inquiry can be fruitful.

Traditional mainstream narratives around Iranian women are divided into three categories: imperial/colonial representation of women as women who need to be saved; the Pahlavi narrative that sees them as women that need to be modernized but remain domestic; and the Islamic Republic narrative which sees them as women that need to be de-Westoxified. These narratives around women contributed to the negligence and distortion of the history regarding Iranian women, namely Qajar era women. The focus of this chapter is the sources within the context of Iran, which are the reason behind this negligence and distortion. This chapter also briefly reviewed some of the emerging critical scholarly perspectives that have started to revisit the history of Qajar women. This critical research—to which my dissertation contributes—challenges previously held ideas in the conventional literature about Qajar women in many aspects including their political and economic participation. The five travel journals that I am analyzing are written by women and in the years leading up to the Constitutional Revolution (1906-1911). I place my research along the line of scholarly work on marginalized voices in modern Iranian history.

Chapter 4 - Everyday Resistance and Quiet Encroachment: A Standpoint Analysis of Qajar Women's Travel Journals

Introduction

A search for the earliest surviving instances of life-writing by Iranian women takes us as far back as the Qajar era (1789-1925),[35] in which the most famous such text, the memoirs of Taj-al-Saltaneh (a Qajar princess) was written. While Taj's memoir has been given critical attention, in the past fifteen years five new manuscripts, mostly travel journals, written by Qajar women have been published. To date, very few researchers have taken up these texts[36] that provides an important opportunity to inquire into the daily lived realities of Iranian women in the late 19th through to the early 20th century, a time leading up to the Constitutional Revolution and the demise of the Qajar dynasty.

In this Chapter, I provide a comparative analysis of five travel journals, and when applicable, I clarify their relationship to Taj's memoir. I refer to the four authors of these journals as Aliyeh, Mehrmah, Vaqar, and Bibi. The full list of source texts referred to in this Chapter is provided in Table 1, while Table 2 provides a list of authors, their full names and their backgrounds. These travel journals were all written toward the end of the Qajar era in the years leading up to a major sociopolitical event: the Constitutional Revolution (1906-1911). The fact that, unlike Taj's memoir, they were not written during or after the Revolution, is a useful feature for my study because Taj has the benefit of hindsight, writing after the Constitutional

[35] There is only one known exception, Shahrbanoo Beigom Esfahani (1708) whose entire Hajj travelogue is written in verse (as a poem), and not easily comparable with the ones studied here.

[36] There are two previous article-length studies on three of these journals. These are "Women as Pilgrims: Memoirs of Iranian Women Travellers to Mecca" by Amineh Mahallati, and "The Royal Harem of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (r. 1848-96): The Literary Portrayal of Women's Lives by Taj al-Saltana and Anonymous 'Lady from Kerman'" by Piotr Bachtin. The former article was published in 2011 and its main aim is to introduce four hajj journals by Iranian women: Safarnameh-ye Manzum-e Hajj written by Shahr Banoo Beigom Esfahani, the second is Safarnameh-ye Makkeh by Mehrmah Khanoum Esmat al-Saltaneh, the third one is Rouzanemh-Ye Safar-E Hajj, Atabat-e Aliat, Va Darbar-e Naseri by Aliyeh Kermani, and the last one is Rouznameh-Ye Safar-E Atabat Va Makkeh by Sakineh Soltan Vaqar al-Dowleh Esfahani. Besides introducing these journals, Mahallati ends the section about each travel journal with an excerpt that she has translated from that journal. Bachtin's article juxtaposes life in the andaruni of Naser al-Din Shah's court as described by both Alaviyyeh Kermani in her aforementioned travel journal, and Taj al-Saltaneh in Khaterat-e Taj al-Saltaneh in order to offer a more comprehensive representation of life in this space.

Revolution. Parts of her memoir reads very much like a feminist manifesto, but she has the benefit of knowing the outcome already, in the post-revolutionary period. Taj is of royal lineage, and criticizing from the inside with the pedigree to do so, which means that the amount of risk she is taking is not as big as someone like Aliyeh—who is not of royal lineage, and is the least privileged among the writers of the journals in terms of both power and wealth—if Aliyeh had written in the same direct and blatant manner. These texts focus largely on the everyday lives of their authors, with minimal attention paid to major sociopolitical movements or events. While other researchers may find them uninteresting precisely because of this, the theoretical lens I employ beckons the study of the everyday and the ordinary.

The structure of this Chapter is as follows. I first introduce the key texts by providing some background on each one, as well as their respective authors. Subsequently, my analysis contextualizes the social location of these authors, situating the value of their insights from the perspective of standpoint epistemology. Specifically, given that they were relatively privileged in wealth and social status for their time, it is important to clarify the value of their writing from a feminist standpoint perspective. As privileged women, their experience is not the universal experience of all Iranian women of the day; yet, it is exactly their privilege that gave them access to literacy and the means to write their travel journals.

Next, I apply a resistance perspective, informed by the theoretical framework of everyday resistance, especially its feminist conceptualization by Bettina Aptheker in her *Tapestries of Life* (1989), in conjunction with Asef Bayat's *Life as Politics* (2013) and his theory of social "nonmovements" and "quiet encroachment" to identify the defensive (i.e. coping) types of resistance, and the infringing (i.e., claim-making) encroachments exhibited in the travel journals. Throughout the analysis, I aim to be mindful of the postmodernist critique of reliance on

accounts of lived experience, assessing where the discourses of the time shaped the experiences and interpretations of these writers. Simultaneously, my analysis accounts for the fact that these women's writings, like any works classified under the banner of truth-telling genres, may at times be written to intentionally occlude certain realities; however, the genre specifically of *Khatereh Nevisi* (literal: writing memories) in Persian literature, is understood to be partly self-protectionist and the authors might well have self-censored due to concerns of reputation and reception, given that the specific audiences they had in mind were largely their closest friends, family and community members—often influential and powerful people—including the Shah himself who would sometimes read these narrative accounts of trips or weddings.

In concluding this Chapter, I take stock and reflect on what this study contributes back to the body of theory that informs it. I make the argument that writing, and particularly life writing, plays two important roles in quiet encroachment that are currently underappreciated in Bayat's formulation. Namely, given that Bayat emphasizes the role of public spaces in creating the opportunities for social interactions that allow encroachment, I argue that the written word also provides a powerful space for such interactions. Furthermore, I argue that Bayat's notion of quiet encroachment can be augmented with my own notion of "epistemic encroachment" to include the fight for meaning as an important aspect of the fight for justice and the subversion of dominance.

Background on the Focal Texts

Three of the Qajar travel journals document the authors' Islamic pilgrimage to the "Hajj." Commonly referred to as simply the Hajj, this trip is considered to be a Muslim's most important journey, and one of the five pillars of Islam. According to Islamic jurisprudence, the Hajj is a mandatory religious duty. Every adult Muslim is required to go on this pilgrimage at least once

in their lifetime if they can physically and financially afford it. Pilgrims not only believe in the spiritual powers of Hajj rituals, but also believe that the spiritual journey will help them overcome personal and physical struggles in their everyday lives. For instance, Vaqar—one of the Qajar women whose journal I am analyzing—indicates that she was unable to bear children and it seems that the pilgrimage is partially taken to pray for fertility (35, 88, 148).[37] In Qajar-era Iran, going on such a long, costly, and perilous trip was something that not many people could physically or financially afford; hence, it brought the *hajiyeh*, the female pilgrim, immense esteem in their respective communities. Upon arriving home, these women pilgrims would have been received warmly by their communities; their welcome would have been followed by a large feast during which the newly minted hajiyeh/haji would be called upon to narrate the stories of their pilgrimage. These travelogues would have been written with the authors' families and communities as the intended audience.

The first travel journal is by the eldest daughter of Prince Farhad Mirza, Naser al-Din Shah's paternal uncle.[38] Although not mentioned in the manuscript of her travelogue, her name was Mehrmah Khanoum Esmat al-Saltaneh. Mehrmah starts her journey from Tehran on 24 Ramazan 1297 (31 August 1880), accompanied by a number of other noble women and two maids. Their caravan headed West, passed through Iraq, visited the holy shrines of Mesopotamia before they went to Arabia. They stayed in Iraq for two weeks and visited the shrines of Shiite Imams in Kazemein, Najaf and Karbala. The journey from Iraq to Mecca was particularly dangerous and difficult, and the fact that women like Mehrmah had the ability, freedom and

[37] In a poem written for one of her companions, Sharaf al-Saltaneh, she says:

حضور حضرت عباس شکوه بنماین چرا که بی ثمرم من و از عقیمانم

I will complain to Hazrat Abbas Because I have not offspring, and I'm barren. Hazrat Abbas was the son of Imam Ali, first Shiite Imam. He died on the battle of Karbala.

[38] I discuss the issue of these women's upper social class and its implications for their epistemic perspective in relation to this study in detail in the next two sub-sections.

autonomy to take such a trip is itself significant as I discuss later. Mehrmah explains in detail the hardships she and others endure; according to her written account, one person dies from exhaustion and another is killed by Arab bandits. When they finally reach Mecca, they stay there for three weeks to perform Hajj ceremonies. They then leave for Medina. Although the route from Mecca to Medina is difficult, toilsome, and dangerous, it is not as bad as the trip they must later make to Jeddah, in order to board their ship back to Iran. Crossing Arabia, they fear not only desert bandits, but also local vagrants and thieves who had to be paid off before they would allow the pilgrims to pass. The group of pilgrims travelling with Mehrmah stay in Jeddah for three weeks before getting on a ship to Boushehr. The author mentions that she and some other pilgrims suffer severe seasickness, and two people even die. When she finally docks in Boushehr, she stays for ten days, and then carries on to Shiraz by donkey and camel, where she stays for two months and ten days. She travels through Persepolis, Kashan and Qom before returning to Tehran on 9 Rajab 1298 (7 June 1881). The journey is ten months long, in total.

The second travel journal is by Aliyeh Shirazi who lived in Kerman in Southern Iran. Although we cannot determine her exact social position and how she is related to the rulers of Kerman, it is clear from her journal that she is, in fact, from a distinguished family and close to the locally powerful Shaykhi faith, a creed that falls within the broader Shiite Islam denomination. Aliyeh's journey starts from Kerman on 25 Ramadan 1309 (23 April 1892). She starts her journey with a small group of relatives and acquaintances: Vali Khan, his wife, a maid named Taghafol, and a woman named Fatemeh who appears to be Vali Khan's sigheh wife. Throughout her writing, she describes the fate of all her companions, except for Taghafol of whom we do not hear anything after the first few pages. They take the route from Kerman towards Bandar Abbas in Southeastern Iran on the shore of the Persian Gulf. Although Bandar

Abbas is not too far from Kerman, the journey takes three weeks as Aliyeh's different companions fall ill from the outbreak of stomach flu. From Bandar Abbas they continue their journey on ship towards Bombay. They stay for a week in India and then join Indian and Afghan pilgrims on a voyage from Bombay to Jeddah. Before reaching Jeddah, they stay at an offshore quarantine for ten days. From Jeddah they travel to Mecca. After performing the Hajj, the group sets off for Medina. Vali Khan's wife dies on the way. From Medina, they set off to visit the shrines of Shiite Imams in Mesopotamia, but somewhere there Aliyeh's path diverges from Vali Khan's. Vali Khan also throws out his sigheh wife, Fatemeh, who is pregnant with his child[39]. Aliyeh takes Fatemeh under her wing, pays for her journey back to Iran, and the two women travel from the shrines of Mesopotamia to the shrine of Prophet Mohammad's granddaughter in Qom, Iran. From there Aliyeh sends Fatemeh on her way to Kerman, as she moves on to Tehran. She stays in the royal houses of Tehran, including Naser al-Din Shah's Palace for a year and a half before finally returning to Kerman on 12 Safaar 1312 (13 August 1894). The journey, along with her stay in Tehran, took a little more than two years and two months.

The third travel journal is by one of Naser al-Din Shah's wives. Her name was Sakineh Soltan Esfahani Kouchak, but she was given the title Vaghar al-Dowleh by Nasir al-Din Shah's heir Mozaffar al-Din Shah (r. 1896-1907). Although we do not know how old she was when she married the Shah, nor her age when the Shah was assassinated in 1896, it is evident from her journal that she was still young when the Shah died; she did not have any children by him (8, 23). A few years after the Shah's death, Vaqar married Mirza Esmail Khan Motasem al-Mulk who was the finance minister (Vizir) of the province of Lorestan. She is claimed to have had a

[39] No explanation provided in the travel journal as to why he did this.

good life with him, and at the time of her pilgrimage she had still not have any children (35, 49, 60, 88, 119).

Vaqar started her pilgrimage to Mecca and the holy shrines, on 1 Rajab 1317 which is 5 November 1899. First, she went to the holy shrines of Mesopotamia, from there she went to Aleppo, Syria. From Aleppo she went to Iskenderun, Turkey, where she took a ship to Jeddah, Arabia, and from there went to Mecca. She arrived in Mecca on 6 Dhu'l Hajja 1317 which is 6 April 1900 just in time for the annual Hajj pilgrimage. After performing the Hajj, she went to Medina. From Medina she decided to cross the Arabian desert back to the holy shrines of Mesopotamia. She revisited the cities of Najaf, Karbala, Kazemein, and Samarra once more before setting out for the Iranian border. Since her second husband was residing in Boroujerd for a financial government assignment at the time of Vaqar's return to Iran, she went directly to Boroujerd to join him. She arrived in Boroujerd on 15 Jumada I, 1318, which is 10 September 1900, almost a year after she started her journey from Tehran. She finally returned to Tehran on 4 Dhu'l Hajja 1318, which is 25 March 1901.

In addition to these three pilgrimage journals, there are two wedding travel journals (also recently discovered) that narrate the procession of celebratory convoys inside Iran. Both convoys took major routes, one from Bojnourd to Tehran and back, and the other from Tehran to Shiraz and back. These caravan journeys allow for an analysis of the narrators' social positions, gender, and agency. Their detailed accounts of processions and how these women authors were welcomed by governors, land owners, and peasants, provide a glimpse into rural Iranian society just before the Constitutional Revolution.

Safarnameh-Ye Tehran-E Khavar Bibi (1904) was written by Khavar Bibi Shadlou, who was close to fifty years old when she wrote the journal. Bibi was from a powerful Kurdish tribe

that ruled the northern province of Khorasan. She never married, but lived respectfully in her brother's and later her nephew's home, managing the andaruni's (inner quarters) of the two men's households. She died in 1919 at the age of seventy five (Zaferanlou 19-20). Her travel journal describes her journey from Bojnourd to Tehran in the winter of 1904. The purpose of the journey was to take her niece, Tarkan Bibi Shadlou, as a bride to Seif al-Saltaneh, the son of Hassan Khan Afshar, head of the police force, and to bring back Mehr al-Saltaneh, Hassan Khan's daughter as a bride to her nephew, Aziz-Allah Khan Shadlou. The marriages were arranged by the brides' fathers, and the couples had been officially married in absentia (Zaferanlou 19).[40] This journal ends abruptly when Bibi is informed of her brother's death. The journey took a little over one month.

Safarnameh-Ye Sakineh Soltan Vaqar Al-Dowleh (1905) was written by Vaqar—Naser al-Din Shah's widow whose Hajj journal I outline above. She takes the journey to Shiraz almost five years after her Hajj pilgrimage, in order to accompany Anis al-Dowleh, the daughter of Vajih Allah Mirza Sepahsalar-a Qajar prince and descendant of Fath Ali Shah, to marry Prince Mansour Mirza Shoa'al-Saltaneh, Muzaffar al-Din Shah's son and the governor of Fars (20). Vaqar's husband at the time, Mirza Esmaeel Khan Motasem al-Molk, is the head of the caravan. The journey takes one hundred days, including the twenty-day stay of the bride's companions in Shiraz.

While I do not analyze Taj al-Saltaneh's memoir, I mention the text here as a point of reference. The memoirs of Taj al-Saltaneh (w. 1924, p. 1983), a Qajar princess who has been

[40] In the introduction to the collection of the Shadlou family's travelogues, Zaferanlou mentions that both brides married at around the age of 22, which was relatively late considering that at the time girls generally married before the age of 12. Tarkan Bibi was eventually divorced after 3-4 years of marriage and moved back to Borjnourd with the only child from the union, a daughter named Touran. Mehr al-Saltaneh died 10 years after her wedding. She had 2 sons and 2 daughters (21).

referred to as a feminist and a socialist, was originally written in 1924 and first published for the public in 1983. Her memoir starts with a prologue in which she explains that she is writing her memoirs per the request of her cousin. Then she goes on to describe her childhood in Naser al-Din Shah's palace, her engagement, her father's assassination, and her marriage. She mentions issues that are rather taboo even for today, such as abortion and her husband's bisexuality. In the final pages of her memoir, she is talking about her divorce and the reasons behind it, although the narrative remains unfinished, and we are not sure whether she did not finish it or the rest of the memoir is lost. Together with Aliyeh's Travel journal, Taj's memoir is one of the two sources in which the women's quarters of the Naseri court is described by a woman**.**

Table 1: Table of Focal Texts in this Study[41]

Title	Date	Type	Author	Length
The *Mecca Travelogue of Farhad Mirza's Daughter*	Written 1880 Published 2010	Hajj journal	Mehrmah	59 pages. (37 letter size print)
Synopsis: Mehrmah is the wife of Vazir lashkar but is traveling without him. She takes the land route and goes to the holy shrines and Karbala before going to Mecca. On the way back from Jeddah she takes a ship to Muscat and Bushire before travelling back to Tehran by land. By the time she returns, her husband has passed. Her travel narrative details the route and what foods and other amenities are available. It also shows that she has some power to exercise as a Qajar descendant and the wife of the vizir.				

Title	Date	Type	Author	Length
The *Travel diaries of Mecca, Holy cities, and Naseri Court*	Written between 1892-1894 Published 2007	Hajj journal	Aliyeh	~209 pages as published book
Synopsis: Aliyeh accompanies the Khan, and a respectable lady who is apparently Vali Khan's wife and goes on a Hajj journey. She leaves Kerman and goes to India via the sea. After reaching Jedda and going to Mecca and performing the pilgrimage, she travels by land to the holy shrines and on her way back to Iran, decides to go to Tehran and stay there for a couple of moths before returning to Kerman. The reason for postponing her return is that she is running out of money. With many high-status connections in Tehran, she ends up staying there for one year. Her description of the Naseri court is detailed and can be compared to Taj's. As someone from outside the Shah's inner quarters, she has paid attention and recorded things about the every day life in the palace that no other pieces of life writing from the period which talk about the inner quarters of Naser al-Din Shah's palace, have.				

Title	Date	Type	Author	Length
Hajj Diaries of Vaqar al-Dowleh	Written 1900 Published 2010	Hajj & wedding journal	Vaqar	~167 pages as published book
Synopsis: Vaqar is one of the former wives of Naser al-Din shah. She goes on this Hajj journey after getting married to Mirza Esmaeel Khan Motasem al-Molk, a statesman. She constantly reminisces of her time in the andaruni of the Shah, and curses Mirza Shirazi, the Shah's assassin. She also compares her former status as the Shah's wife with her current status, lamenting the loss of her luxury and comfort. She mentions that she is young and does not have any children. She implies that part of the reason she is going on this pilgrimage is in the hope remedying her				

[41] All the journals listed in Tables 2 and here are written in Persian. All quotes from them are my own translations into English.
A note on citation format in the remainder of this Chapter: to simplify the writing and citations, all the authors will be referred to by their shorthand name (Mehrmah, Aliyeh, Vaqar, Bibi, and Taj), and their respective journals will also be cited using the shorthand name of the author. Since Vaqar has both a Hajj and a wedding travelogue, they will be cited as "Vaqar Hajj" and "Vaqar Wedding" respectively.

infertility through prayer. She is one of the most educated women in this group. She composes poetry.

Title	Date	Type	Author	Length
The Fars Travelogue of Sakinah Sultan Vaqar al-Dowleh	Written 1905 Published 2004	Wedding journal	Vaqar	~138 pages as published book
Synopsis: Vaqar, writes this journal some 5 years after her Hajj pilgrimage. In this journal she and her husband are accompanying the daughter of a Vizir from Tehran to Shiraz to marry her to the shah's son who is the governor of Fars. This is a state mission. Vaqar makes no mention of her former husband, the shah. She writes more formally and seems to have been written with the thought that Mozafar al-Din Shah and/or the women of his inner quarters are going to read it. It is full of prayers and well wishes for the new Shah and the new bride and groom.				

Title	Date	Type	Author	Length
Tehran Travelogue of Khavar Bibi Shadlou	Written 1903 Published 1995	Wedding journal	Bibi	49 pages. (31 pages letter size print)
Synopsis: Bibi is on her way from her native city of Bojnourd to accompany her niece who is off to marry the son of a vizir in Tehran, and to bring back the daughter of that vizir to marry her nephew. She is writing to report the costs of things as well as explain how events unfold for the other members of the household who were not travelling.				

Title	Date	Type	Author	Length
The Memoires of Taj-al-Saltaneh	Written 1914 Published 1983	Memoir	Taj	~190 pages as published book
Synopsis: The narrative (which is unfinished) covers everything from her childhood in the Shah's inner quarters, including criticism of the ways in which mothers and children were separated, to her engagement, her father's assassination, and her wedding. It includes accounts of her troubles and disagreements with her husband, her husband's bisexuality, the obsession of the upper classes with riches and power, her introduction to science and the development of her socialist and feminist ideas, her criticisms of her father, but mostly of her brother (the new king) and the reasons behind her separation from her first husband.				

Table 2: Table of Authors

Author Full Name	Author Shorthand	Author Profile / Background	Life Period (date range)
Princess Mehrmah Khanoum Esmat al-Saltaneh the Daughter of Farhad Mirza Motamed al-Dowleh	Mehrmah	Her Father was a Qajar prince and the Uncle of Naser al-Din Shah (Amoo) She was married to her third husband, minister of the Military, Mirza Mousa Vazir Lashkar Ashtiani at the time of the writing of her memoir (When she arrived in Tehran her husband had been dead for two months).	Born 1816-1817 and died 1888. She was around 63 years old at the time of writing.
Aliyeh Khanoum Shirazi	Aliyeh	She belongs to a powerful Sheikhi family, and is a relative of the Qajars but is not royalty herself.	No information about her age, although she calls herself "old" and has relative seniority to most other women.
Sakineh Soltan Vaqar al-Dowleh Esfahani Kouchak	Vaqar	She was married to Naser al-Din Shah, and after his assassination in 1896, she was married to Mirza Esmaeel Khan Motasem al-Molk, the finance minister of the province of Lorestan.	I estimated that while she was travelling in Shiraz she was more than 40 and less than 50 years old, based on the fact that (compared to her previous travel journal) she no longer mentioned fertility or her wish to have a child.
Khavar Bibi Shadlou the sister of Yarmohammad Khan Sardar Mofkham	Bibi	She is the sister of the head of Shadlou tribe, who were a Kurdish clan governing northern Khorasan. They were Shiites who were moved to northern Khorasan by shah Abbas some 300 years earlier to defend the borders of Iran from Uzbek invaders.	Most probably born in 1844, at the time of writing she was approximately 60 years old. She died around 1918-19 when she was 76 years old.
Zahra Khanoom Taj-al-Saltaneh	Taj	Princess, daughter of Naser al-Din Shah. Know for her beauty, and as the author of the first known prose memoir of an Iranian woman.	Born 1884 and died 1936

The Epistemic Position of the Standpoints Studied

It is not a surprise that the Qajar women who wrote these travelogues came from privileged backgrounds, since they could read and write—skills that at the start of the twentieth century were only enjoyed by five percent of the population (Abrahamian *A History* 2). Still, it seems that most of them had very little to no formal education, evidenced by their writing. Compared to the literary quality of the life writing by the prominent men of the time, these travelogues have few literary tropes to offer, and the manuscripts are full of spelling mistakes.

To clarify, the social location of these writers in the Qajar era Iranian society is that of privileged non-minority women from families close to wealth and power. This means that from a feminist standpoint perspective, it is mainly the aspect of their gender, and not necessarily their social status, that provides us with valuable insight into their lived experience and hidden knowledge. This insight is valuable on the grounds that most other available accounts of lived experience from their era are written by men. Women's narratives and perspectives shed light on various matters and issues in new and different ways. They sometimes notice and discuss new and different things that either belong to the realm of women and are not accessible to men or are not deemed worthy of attention and mention by men.

In some ways, the high social status enjoyed by these women is at least an enabling factor, if not a necessary condition, for us to be able to access their perspective. Not just because they could read and write, but also because they employed their social status as a resource, establishing a certain level of authority and importance, and affirming their role as what we would today call "influencers" in their society. Their status affords them mobility, allows them to access novel experiences and powerful people who would otherwise be out of reach, as well as to get their voice heard about those experiences and people. Their standpoints as women connected

to power yet bound by patriarchy offers a form of "outsider-within" perspective that is epistemically fruitful.

A closer look at exactly what constitutes status from their own standpoint, and how it is portrayed and affirmed by the Qajar women in their writing can be instructive in the sense that it provides us with a better understanding of what they themselves considered to be privilege or lack thereof. This in turn provides us with indications of the broader notions of status and privilege that were prevalent in the broader society of the Qajar era. In the following three sub-sections, I first investigate the narratives of the Qajar women around status and social class, and then move on to set the context by elaborating on some of the grand narratives and institutions that these women take for granted, in order to be mindful of the postmodernist critique of subject in standpoint feminism, and better understand the ways in which the focal 'subjects' of this study are themselves constituted. This helps us better appreciate the context and the epistemic position of the women whose writing I am studying. In the third sub-section, I begin the standpoint analysis by elaborating on some of the aspects in which their standpoints as women are epistemically fruitful.

Indications and Affirmations of Social Status

To be mindful of how the subject is shaped by its circumstances and experiences—while also shaping its experience and circumstances—I want to reiterate that the Qajar women whose journals I am analyzing here are privileged and frequently affirm their social status to the reader. They take pride in their social class, wealth, and status, which is in line with the idea that their audience is chiefly women of similar or higher social status, i.e., their social comparison group. They affirm their status by mentioning their privileged access to money and resources, particularly servants and employees as well as clean and luxurious bathhouses. Also notable are

their descriptions of receptions, elaborate hospitality, and welcome ceremonies held for them by others. They reference their connections and affiliations with political figures, wealthy families and people in power, especially the Shah himself. They also compare themselves with peasants and the poor, noting how they are often begged by the poor for charity.

Bibi is one of the most elaborate in terms of detailing the hospitality of others and the extravagant receptions of her caravan. On numerous instances she mentions the gifts, food, ceremonies, and lambs sacrificed in her caravan's honor. Another reason why she is elaborate in these descriptions is that one of her purposes for writing a travel journal is to report the journey to her brother, a point I will return to in the section titled **The Woman's Vantage Point** below. But among all the texts studied, sensitivity to status is most clear in Vaqar's Hajj journal, because it is written only four years after the assassination of Naser al-Din Shah at the hands of Reza Kermani. Vaqar used to enjoy the highest possible status and luxury for a Qajar woman as a wife of Naser al-Din Shah. Likewise, by the time of writing, she had also lost a significant amount of that status, even though her status is still relatively high, as she was now re-married to a powerful minister. Her loss was relatively recent at the time of her Hajj trip, and Vaqar's writing reveals that she has still not adjusted to it. Her narrative is peppered with expressions of grief and lament over the loss of her husband, but also the loss of her luxuries, and phrases that reveal her sense of lost status and associated insecurity. She is nostalgic for her former life in the Shah's palace.

As she visits the Shah's tomb before she begins her journey, Vaqar writes:

> At dusk on Friday I had the honor of visiting the holy Abdol-Azim's shrine and then the martyred Shah's tomb (God's light upon his grave), where I cried so hard my soul was about the leave my body! I cursed Reza Kermani a thousand times, and with a heavy heart, begged to take leave dismissed from his blessed tomb and his blessed

> portrait, and came out. By this very journey ahead of me, I plead to God to deem me worthy of the blessings that the Shah bestowed upon my humble self, and now that we are deprived of his blessed presence, to keep his love from leaving my humble heart, so I can lessen my weeping. (29)
>
> خلاصه غروب روز جمعه به زیارت حضرت عبدالعظیم مشرف شده و بعد به زیارت مقبره شاه شهید – نورالله مضجعه – به طوری گریه کردم که روح از تنم نزدیک بود پرواز کند!
> هزار مرتبه بر رضای کرمانی لعنت کرده و با دل پرخون، از مقبره مبارک و از عکس مبارکش اذن مرخصی گرفته، بیرون آمدم. خدا را قسم می‌دهم به این راهی که می‌خواهم بروم، نان نمک شاه را بر من کمینه حلال کند و چنان ما را از زیارت خاک پای مبارک او محروم شدیم، محبت او را هم از دل کمینه نبرد که بتوانم حالا دیگر گریه را کمتر کنم.

This opening sets the tone for her entire Hajj journal, in which she repeatedly exalts the former Shah, curses his assassin, and laments the loss of the luxuries afforded her as the wife of the Shah. When she enters Soltan Abad,[42] for example, she cannot help but compare that welcome to an earlier trip when she arrived in the city as part of the Shah's caravan: "May God never redeem Reza Kermani from the fires of hell, because I am not the lady I was that year. With such honor and glory we entered the city that year, so different from now" (149). She recounts with much joy that the servants of the holy shrines in Iraq recognized her as the former shah's wife, and asked for a higher gratuity to let her and her brother pass the gates and pay their respects to the Imams (126-127).

Her insecurity is most clear when she describes a large luxurious bathhouse that she had previously frequented. Now, however, she is uncomfortable about not easily being able to afford to book the entire place and having it emptied for her: "I don't usually go to bathhouses without booking the whole place…If I knew there were people in the bathhouse who knew me, I wouldn't go without reserving the whole place." (31)

[42] A city in Markazi province of Iran, now known as Arak.

Vaqar's writing includes many cases in which other people are willing to or obliged to go out of their way to ensure her comfort and luxury. For example:

> Around morning, the howdah[43] collapsed to the ground again, and I said: I've had it, I'm not riding this mule anymore. They went and took a Turk rider's mule, assembled our howdah on it, and we took off again. But this mule was also stumbling, and I said: we're just about to fall again. Then they brought me the fugleman's mule. (75)

> تا صبح نزدیک شده بود، یک دفعه دیگر کجاوه زمین خورد که من دیگر گفتم: سوار این یابو نمی‌شوم. رفتند یک سرنشین ترک را پیاده کردند، قاطر او را آوردند، کجاوه ما را بار کرده، سوار شدیم. این قاطر هم شل بود. گفتم: حالا زمین می‌خوریم. دیدم یابوری پیش‌آهنگ را آوردند.

In another example, she recounts that "I didn't like the house we had stopped in. I asked my brother to go and find us another house" and they change houses a couple of times before she finally settles in one (92). The luxuries coming with social class does not end in material affluence but extends to the realm of spirituality. In one instance, Vaqar came close to being refused the luxury she demanded due to religious rules, but she found a workaround. As part of the rituals of the Hajj ceremony, worshippers are supposed to personally collect a handful of stones and throw them at a pillar that symbolizes Satan. The ritual is called *Ramy-e jamarat*. Vaqar writes:

> I said: to be honest, I can't go collect stones on my own. They replied: for this ritual everyone has to collect the stones by themselves. I instructed them to go collect some stones, bring them near the house and leave them on the ground there. Then I collected them from the ground. I hope God will forgive me and accept it this way. (94)

> من گفتم حقیقت این کار از من بر نمی آید که خودم بروم سنگ جمع کنم. گفتند: حکما باید هرکس خودش سنگ برای جمره جمع کند. گفتم رفتند سنگ جمع کردند، آوردند نزدیک منزل روی زمین ریختند. من از روی زمین جمع کردم. انشالله خدا می‌بخشد و این نوع را قبول می‌کند.

[43] A howdah is a structure put on top of a camel or donkey in which the traveller sits.

In this case, for someone who does not have the physical ability to endure the heat and the struggles of gathering the stones by themselves, or the wealth to have servants do this for them, a major requirement of the Hajj ceremony is missed. The access to bathhouses that are mentioned earlier, also mean that the women have access to ablution with water, which is the prerequisite of religious ceremonies. In other words, their wealth also gives them access to more religiosity. I will come back to this point in a bit.

Compared to the other writers, Aliyeh has the lowest status and thus gives us an interesting point of comparison. She seems to have no direct connections to royalty. Correspondingly, she has access to less wealth and resources, fewer servants and employees, no slaves, and often must rely on her own skills and resourcefulness. She is the only author who mentions finances, even if by indirectly indicating that on occasion she cannot go to the bathhouse, or more accurately, she can only access unclean facilities. Indications of her lower status are prominent in her descriptions of her servant:

> I only have one manservant. At nights when the sun is about to rise, I wake up myself, start the fire, fire up the samovar [kettle], and prepare the hookah. Fatemeh and the servant are both asleep. I tell the servant: you're the one who's supposed to be doing these things. He tells me: I can't help that you wake up, I can't wake up that early. There's the servant's response for you. (Shirazi 101)

> من هم یک نوکر بیشتر ندارم. شب‌ها که طلوع صبح بار می‌کنند، خودم بر می‌خیزم، آتش روشن می‌کنم. سماور را آتش می‌کنم، قلیان درست می‌کنم.
> فاطمه و نوکر خواب هستند. به نوکر می‌گویم این کارها را تو بایست بکنی، می‌گوید شما خود برمی‌خیزید، من نمی‌توانم برخیزم. این جواب نوکر.

A few pages later she even writes about a conversation with her servant, which is far from the anonymous and dehumanizing ways in which the other writers write about their servants:

> I pray that God doesn't leave anyone without help. Doing the servant's work by myself is very difficult. Just setting up the beddings and folding them up again leaves

> me out of breath. This inconsiderate and selfish Fatemeh doesn't help with a thing. God give her some fairness. I've also hired an old manservant from Tehran, that I pray no one ever has to endure. His ignorance is such that he just does whatever he wants. He thinks I've never had nor seen a servant before. We turned out to be related too … he also talks so much it never ends, constantly bragging about himself. In the middle of the night I have to wake up myself to start the fire and make the tea. (Shirazi 111-112)

> خداوند بی‌کسی را نصیب هیچ‌کس نکند. خدمت کردن خودم خیلی سخت است. رختخوابم را که می‌اندازم، جمع می‌کنم، نفسم بیرون می‌رود. این بی‌مرّوت بی‌انصاف فاطمه، دست از پا خطا نمی‌کند. خداوند انصافی هم به او بدهد. یک نوکر پیرمرد طهرانی هم گرفتم که خدا نصیب کافر نکند. چنان جهلی دارد که آنچه خودش بگوید و بکند همان است. به خیالش ما دیگر توي دنیا نه نوکر دیدیم و نه داشتیم. قوم [و] خویش هم درآمدیم، در بچگی غلام بچه مادر مرحوم ملک بوده، بزرگ که شده نوکر آقا محمد تقی، آقا محمد ابراهیم [و] آقا حسین علی بوده. اینقدر پر حرف هم هست که نهایت ندارد. همه را از خودش تعریف می‌کند. نصف شب من بایست برخیزم، آتش کنم، چاي درست کنم.

The higher status women are also more dismissive of the plights of the poor in comparison with Aliyeh. They often complain about beggars accosting them for money. Bibi for example at one point exclaims "I've had it with the poor." (Shadlou 186) after a pauper manages to talk his way to getting five Tomans from her.

A point that stands out from the writings of these women is that in addition to wealth and power, *religiosity* is also an indication of social status for them. This is especially evident in their emphasis on the religious significance and virtues of the Hajj pilgrimage. Despite the fact that it is a costly trip, the journals focus on the two characteristics of *cleanliness* and *coveredness*—both signs of wealth (and lack thereof as a sign of poverty), and both considered requirements of Islamic faith. Thus, the women seem to accept and promote a relatively elitist interpretation of Islam, perpetuating a narrative in which higher social classes also have higher religious virtue. At one point in her writing, Bibi expresses surprise that women who are wearing proper religious coverings turn out to be poor beggars (Shadlou 178-179). Aliyeh finds it ridiculous that so many

people she sees in Arabia are not properly covered and refers to them in a derogatory manner as "butt-naked Arabs" (Shirazi 61).

Commenting on the conditions of the city of Bisotoun, Mehrmah writes:

> The place has astonishingly poor and dirty peasants. I have seen pots so dirty that if I describe them, no one will want to eat their roghan[44]. Every woman and child I saw in Bisotoun were as black as ink and discharge. It's clear that they are dirt poor. (Mehrmah Khanoum 64).

> عجب رعیّتهای فقیر کثیفی دارد. دیگها دیده میشود که اگر ذکر بشود، کسی روغن آن طرف را نخواهد خورد. زن و بچه هر چه در بیستون دیده شد، همه مثل ترشح و مرکّب سیاه بودند. معلوم میشود زیاد فقیر هستند.

Comments like this written throughout the women's journals illustrate the link between poverty and lack of cleanliness (Shirazi 76, 78-79) makes it clear that there is a direct link between cleanliness and religious virtue. She expresses worry that her religious deeds will not be accepted by God, because the hardships of the trip (especially while aboard a ship) are not allowing her to properly cleanse and follow all the religious rituals correctly. She repeatedly uses the word *najes* (Islamic word indicating a condition of not being properly clean according to religious rituals, and thus prayers and other rituals not being "accepted") and the expression "najes on top of najes" to describe the unclean conditions in which she performs her religious duties and rituals. For example, she writes:

> God forbid, when the ship goes through thunderous weather, God have mercy. I pray to God that everyone is able to fulfill this religious obligation [of pilgrimage] but through the ground route, not by ship, because traveling on a ship leaves you with nothing, neither prayer, nor worship, nor clean food. All najes on top of najes. You have to see it to believe it. (Shirazi 49)

[44] roghan refers to a form of clarified butter that was a famous export of Kermanshah where the bisotoun is located.

وامصیبت که کشتی طوفانی شود، خدا رحم کند. الهی، خداوند دین واجب را از گردن همه دوستان ادا کند، ولی از راه خشکی نه از کشتی، که هیچ چیز براي انسان باقی نمی‌گذارد، نه نماز، نه عبادت، نه غذاي پاك. همه نجس اندر نجس. تا کسی نبیند نمی‌فهمد.

Later she writes again:

> We wash our clothes with the water from the goatskin, we have no dishes, no tubs, we're not able to cleanse properly, all najes on top of najes. Not one of our prayers is proper. We didn't cleanse properly before the prayer, and we didn't properly find the Qibla[45]. (Shirazi 78-79)

رخت می‌شوییم با آب خیک؛ نه ظرف داریم، نه طشت داریم، نه تطهیری، نجس اندر نجس. یک نماز ما درست نیست. نه با طهارت کردیم، نه قبله را فهمیدیم.

Wealth, cleanliness and religious virtue go hand in hand in the world of these women, and the women tout these elements in their writing as indications of their social status.

Between the Qajar writers whose life writing I have access to in this study, it is possible to roughly assess their relative positions in society and the accompanying privilege and ignorance that comes with that position. The baseline of comparison is Taj, who is born into royalty as a princess, and is famous as Naser al-Din Shah's beautiful daughter. On the other end of the spectrum is Aliyeh, who has the weakest connections to royalty among the group, and correspondingly lowest level of wealth and luxury. Mehrmah, Vaqar, and Bibi are all somewhere in between Taj and Aliyeh. Among these three, Mehrmah seems somewhat better off than Vaqar and Bibi, perhaps because unlike them, she has a blood connection with royalty as the daughter of a prince. Between Vaqar and Bibi, Vaqar seems to have fallen from a higher place when she was a wife of the Shah, to a lower place after the Shah's assassination.

An interesting way to contrast Vaqar, Aliyeh, and Mehrmah's positions is to compare their experiences on the ship that they need to take to travel part of the way to Mecca by sea.

[45] The direction to which Muslims pray.

Aliyeh mentions repeatedly that her conditions on the ship are terrible and unsanitary, with no access to baths. It seems like she and her companions are placed on the deck rather than given a room. She writes about a storm, and how the water splashed on the deck, and about being kept in Quarantine once they got to Arabia. She refers to herself and other travelers on the ship as captives (*asir*). Vaqar on the other hand, seems to have a private room with a window that faces the sea (she is careful to note that rooms that do not face the sea are cheaper). Although her ship does not have a proper bath, they are able to find a dry bath on the ship, where servants bring her hot water and she is able to bathe. Mehrmah also notes that she resides in a private room on the ship, but as soon as she gets sick on the second day, she is transferred to the ship captain's private room, and the captain moves to a different room.

The women's social status did not only affect the conditions of their journey, but also the circumstances under which they wrote their travel journal along the way. For instance, Vaqar who is accompanied by her brother, forgets her pen and stationary in one of the stops on the way back to Iran. Her brother orders one of the ostlers to return to the previous stop and fetch the stationary, but he refuses due to the unsafety of the road. Luckily one of their companions volunteers to go back, and returns with the pen and papers. This is quite different from Aliyeh's experience, who is not even comfortable picking up her pen when the man she accompanies—the Khan, is present. She cynically complains: "By God, I don't have time to write two words. One must not do anything in Agha Khan's presence; one must sit quiet and silent, respectful. This of course, is how one should behave in the presence of greatness" (80).

Aliyeh mentions that she writes her journal "whenever [she] is alone, and [has] some privacy … behind the shelters, at night, and sometimes during the day" when the Khan is out

(Shirazi 78-79). Although she has initially asked the Khan to write the journal for her, it seems that the Khan's disagreement to do so meant that he disagreed to her writing the journal as well.

Prevailing Narratives and Discourses that Constitute the Subjects

As outlined in Chapter 2, we know from postmodernist theory that any study based on feminist standpoint epistemology aiming to start from women's experiences, must be conscious of how those experiences and how the subject understands and interprets them are themselves shaped by the broader forces of society, and its grand narratives, discourses and institutions. Four such factors that shape the subjects of the present study are the traditions, religion, class structure, and monarchy system of the Qajar era.

The Qajar women of these travel journals are writing before the Constitutional Revolution, at a time when the reverberations of change are just getting strong enough to be meaningfully felt by women in their positions. Within these women's world traditions, ways of life, and women's roles are well established. Traditional gender roles are intertwined with religion and its prevailing interpretations. The basic understanding of moral vs. immoral, right vs. wrong, are governed by prevalent interpretations of Islam in Qajar society. For example, it is common for women, especially higher status women, to cover themselves and avoid face to face interactions with men who are not their relatives. The understandings of religion held by these women are often flexible, contradictory, and self-serving. They proclaim their own religious virtue, while at the same time they question the religious clerics and the clerics' families for being too strict. For example, the writers of the journals regularly engage in music, song, and entertainment (although within private quarters), but in one social event where the wives of religious clerics are invited, they are careful to avoid any music and entertainment.

One practice that is likewise an expression of wealth is polygyny. For instance, Naser al-Din Shah has about eighty wives, and being the wife of the shah is considered an honor and privilege. But one does not need to be very rich to be polygamous. If a couple cannot have children, and the man can afford to pay for another adult's expenses, he is likely to take another wife for childbearing. Take for example, Bibi's depictions as she describes the lady of the house they are staying in while in the city of Dehnamak:

> The host is a fat and large woman. It's beyond obesity. She is unwell. The poor thing can't move properly. She holds a crutch with one hand, and a maid has to hold her other hand. She has a black slave [*keniz*] who cooks, and she's brought in another one as a sigheh for her husband. The poor husband and wife have no children, and this sigheh has been brought in for childbearing, but it hasn't worked out. (Shadlou 215)

> صاحبخانه زن فربه و گنده‌اي است، از فربهی گذشته ناخوش است. بیچاره نمی‌تواند حرکت کند. یک دست عصا گرفته، یک دست را هم باید یک نفر کلفت بگیرد. یک کنیز سیاه دارد. آشپز است. یکی را هم جهت شوهرش صیغه آورده. بیچاره زن و شوهر بی‌اولادند. این صیغه را هم جهت اولاد آورده نشده است.

It is very interesting that Bibi ascribes the agency of bringing a second wife into the household to the first wife, not the husband. One reason a first wife may choose the second wife is to make sure her own status and power as the manager of the household remains unchanged. Also notable in the above quote is the casual reference to the black slave that works for this family. This is a pattern observed in all the travel journals. The slaves and other servants are rarely ever referred to by name or given any particular attention. Their presence is unquestioned, indicating that the class divide is taken for granted. As a point of reference, Taj, who writes after the Constitutional Revolution pays particular attention to black slaves and explicitly decries the practice of slavery (Taj al-Saltana 81).

There are indications in the women's own writing, that the broader society and lower social classes view them as rentiers, or people who do not innately deserve the wealth and power that they have. For example, Bibi writes:

> What the servants do is that everywhere we go they spread the word to everyone that these people are accompanying a bride. This puts the burden of the world on me. In every house we stay in we spend at least four or five Tomans. All sorts of beggars come to our door, and one can't avoid giving them something because they beg pleading to his majesty's name. And they're not happy with one tenth or one fifth of a Toman, they want half a Toman or a full Toman. (Shadlou 184)

> نوکرها کاري که می‌کنند اینست که به هر جا می‌رسند آدم و عالم را خبر می‌کنند که اینها عروس می‌برند، عروس می‌آورند. عالم به سر من می‌ریزند.
> منزل نیست که چهار پنج تومان خرج نشود. از سید و عارف و درویش و فقیر که در هر منزل به اسم حضرت اجل عالی روحنا فداه نمی‌شود آدم ندهد. آن هم یکهزار و دو هزار را هم قبول نمی‌کنند. از یک تومان و پنج هزار دم می‌زنند.

According to the above quote, it seems that the servants in Bibi's caravan feel an affinity to others from lower levels of status and wealth, wanting to help them extract tips and charity from Bibi. Bibi complains that the budget for the journey is not enough yet her servants' loyalty is not so much with her as it is with the other people of the lower classes.

Some of the Qajar women writers anticipate that their writing will be read by the Shah or his wives, and adjust their writing accordingly. This is especially salient in Vaqar's second journal, where she seems to anticipate Mozaffar al-Din Shah personally reading her journal, and is cognizant that the Shah expects to be addressed with utmost flattery and sycophancy. Vaqar's expressed allegiance to the Shah goes beyond the usual pleasantries of the other women, and even her own writing in her previous Hajj journal. For instance, she often starts each day's entry by writing something along the lines of "We got up early in the morning, performed our religious duty [the Morning Prayer], and prayed to the holy existence of his majesty, the king of kings of the universe, which is also a duty" (45).

She constantly praises the Shah stressing her honesty, saying that she is "just a sincere woman" who feels "sincerity and love towards his holy highness" (110). On several occasions, including at her last acclamation of the Shah, she mentions that she praises him "for raising such great children" (110), an expression of hope for the future of monarchy which is rather ironic given the fact that she wrote her travelogue in 1905, the same year that the Constitutional Revolution started. Such intense acclamations of the Shah and the royal family are not just good markers for understanding why and for whom Vaqar wrote her travel journal, but also demonstrate the way in which the political regime of the time had disciplined its subjects to the point that they clearly self-censored and aggrandized the ruler. It shows us the extent of despotism that drove the families close to the royals to such sycophantic dishonesty, that blinded them to the fermenting turbulence of pre-Constitutional Revolution Iran. Also note that by the time that these women were writing, the Qajar dynasty had ruled for more than a century, and it was hard for anyone of them to imagine an alternative political system.

Qajar Society from Women's Standpoints

Authority Relative to Men

All of the Qajar women travel writers dedicate some parts of their writing to point out the constraints placed on them because of their gender, especially in regards to the freedom of mobility. Although they all have some extent of authority grounded in their status, seniority, and matriarchal position,[46] they all complain of a lack of authority in relation to men. The most prominent issue in this regard is the need to acquire permission from men to travel, to take

[46] In any Qajar household the father was in theory "the ultimate source of authority," but it was the mother who was revered greatly by her children, especially her sons (Nashat, "Marriage in the Qajar Period" 39). For instance, C. J. Wills, a European who practiced medicine in the country in the 1870s observed that in Iran "no man would think … of marrying contrary to his mother's advice!" (Nashat, "Marriage in the Qajar Period" 38).

certain routes in the travel, or other matters in which men had the final say when there was a disagreement. Vaqar, for instance is extremely irritated when her brother, who is her companion in this journey, does not let her take her preferred route as part of the pilgrimage:

> As much as I argued, he did not listen and ultimately they took me from the route of Aleppo [the route she did not prefer] ... For this misfortune, I cried a lot at night. Why can't they take me to visit the shrine of Zaynab (peace be upon her) at such an opportune time? Whoever the woman is and whoever the man is, the poor woman is always a captive to the man. (70)

> هرچه من پر گفتم، او کم شنید و مرا از راه حلب بردند...شب خیلی گریه کردم از عدم سعادت خودم...چرا باید وقت به این خوبی مرا به زیارت حضرت زینب – علیهاالسلام – نبرند. زن هر چه باشد و مرد هر که باشد، زن بیچاره اسیر مرد است.

The amount of complaining she does about this is noteworthy, given how much praise she gives her brother throughout other parts of the journal. She even tries a workaround by paying a group of men leading her caravan to take her to the city of Damascus, so she can visit the shrine of Zaynab.[47] They eventually refuse, and Vaqar complains: "I paid them an amount of money, and ultimately they didn't take me to visit Hazrat Zaynab's shrine. Now they have the nerve to talk back to me … whoever a woman may be, the men ultimately get their way" (83). She leverages her wealth and status, but her gender holds her back from getting where she wants to go.

In Aliyeh's journal, a sense of limitation and frustration in the presence of the Khan is salient. Unlike the other women who are traveling either without a male guardian or with one who is an immediate family member, a husband, or a brother, Aliyeh is traveling with a more distant male companion, whose exact relationship to her is unclear. As mentioned earlier, in Khan's presence Aliyeh was discouraged to write. After she parts ways with Vali Khan in

[47]The sister of Imam Hossein and granddaughter of Prophet Muhammad, she is praised for her outspokenness and eloquence as an orator.

Mesopotamia, she writes her experience in more detail, which seems to correspond to her descriptions of physical limitations in Khan's presence. Despite the hardships of travelling alone and her dwindling financial resources, she is content with her freedom once she has parted ways from the Khan:

> From Kerman to Najaf, neither did I see anything, nor did I enjoy a walk. Since the day I dismissed myself from the Khan's company, thank God I have seen everything and have eaten whatever I wanted. Thank God I am comfortable now. (Shirazi 93)

> از کرمان تا نجف که نه من جایی را دیدم و نه گردش کردم. از روزي که از خدمت خان مرخص شدم، الحمدلله همه چیز و همه جاها را دیدم و خوردم. الحمدلله آسوده شدم.

Aliyeh's lower status eventually allowed her more physical mobility when she parted ways with the Khan; however, while traveling with the Khan it did limit her and was the reason for a more extensive scrutiny when it came to acts of everyday pleasure, in this case: sightseeing and eating.

Women in the Qajar era, especially women of higher social classes, enjoyed personal financial independence. For instance, a recent study on the history of land ownership and land reform in Iran shows that a large number of land owners in the late Qajar and early Pahlavi Era were women (Karimi et al. 14). The Wealth that women acquired through inheritance, or Mehriyeh (dowry) was considered their own, and they could invest it in whatever way they preferred, typically for personal expenses. The personal wealth of the wife did not exempt the husband or male provider from being responsible to provide the main expenses of the household, and for the supporting costs of a trip. In some cases where the women had to depend on men for certain expenses, they are extremely frustrated and this frustration is expressed regularly in their journals. Having to request money and convince the men who do not fully understand the situation to oblige this request is a clear nuisance. Bibi, who uses her own money for her own

personal costs, sends a telegraph to her brother to inform him that the budget he has allocated for the journey is not enough to cover the expenses of travel and the wedding. Communicating by telegraph is slow and the travelers often have to wait days for a response. In Bibi's case, additional funds were denied. She writes in frustration: "I swear to God I'm not overspending. They have no idea what the expenses are like in Tehran" (Shadlou 207). Bibi is offended that her requests as her brother's representative and trustee in this journey are not being fulfilled by him. She even warns of the consequences this denial will have on the life of the bride. When Bibi visits Tarkan's house a few days after the ceremonies, Tarkan cries and complains to her aunt about the quips that she says are tormenting her. After recounting the visit, Bibi adds that "Mister Saham al-Dowleh acted on enmity rather than friendship [for not accepting my request to send more money for the wedding]" (Shadlou 204-205). Since Tarkan and her husband get a divorce a few years after their wedding, we can see that Bibi' prevision is realized. This is another instance of the importance of women's vantage point, while also demonstrating their lack of authority compared to men.

Internalized Inferiority of Intellect and Faith

Another instance of how Qajar society's normalized gender roles and their accompanying limitations on women shaped these women's understanding of their own subjectivity is indicated in their apparent internalized inferiority. These instances surface in the journals once every while through language and terminology that captures and perpetuates the idea of female inferiority—and the corollary of male superiority. The term "internalized inferiority" that I use here is akin to Aptheker's notion of "internalized oppression" (174). For example, when writing about how hard it is to describe the scene at the port in Bombay, Aliyeh writes "You can't really fathom it until

you see it. Even smarter and wiser people wouldn't be able to describe this, let alone me" (Shirazi 49).

Internalized oppression is most salient when the women use the term *zaifeh*[48] or "weakling" to refer to their kind or themselves. Mehrmah refers to a woman she helps along the way as zaifeh (66), and Vaqar is not hesitant to refer to herself and other women using the same term on several occasions. The "weakness" in the notion of "zaifeh" can refer to inferiority in both intellect and faith. On one occasion, we observe what is a fascinating internal dialog in Vaqar's mind—very much like a stream of consciousness piece—that illustrates her sense of conflicted-ness about internalized inferiority. When she is frustrated with her inability to describe Imam Ali's shrine in the way she thinks is befitting of his status, she writes "what can I, a brainless and intellectually deficient weakling [zaifeh], say that is worthy of the honorable Imam? What woman has the wisdom to be able to do that?" she goes on to berate herself: "Evidence of my stupidity is that this morning I was so afraid of the rain I cried like the rain, and when it came time to write this brief, I forgot the word "Saturday" and instead wrote the text under the heading for Friday. That's evidence that I'm deficient-minded." But then she quickly regrets her own thinking: "with this kind of reasoning I have disgraced all other women too … Oh God how many times do I keep bringing excuses worse than the sin itself" (Shirazi 49).

This quote and the sentiments it exemplify the beginning of the intellectually transitional phase that these women were experiencing. It embodies the internal conflicts encountered at the beginning of modernity. The belief that women are inferior to men, not only in intellect but also in faith,[49] was rampant and so ingrained in society that it was internalized even by a woman as

[48] The term is now considered a derogatory way to refer to women by Persian speakers.
[49] This comes from a famous passage by Imam Ali, the first Shiite Imam, in *Nahj al-Balagheh*, a collection of his sermons and sayings, which is not considered a strong source for verdicts in Shiite jurisprudence, but is nevertheless much revered.

elite as Vaqar. For example, at one point Vaqar expresses fear that God would not answer her prayers because she is a "shameful, sinful dog" (51) or in one case when Aliyeh is self-criticizing her handwriting, she calls it the "ugly, sinful writing of a weakling" (38) exemplifying both the intellectual and religious sense of internalized inferiority. Even when one's level of faith is seemingly unrelated to handwriting capability, she uses the word "sinful" (*najes*) to describe it.

Yet the above quote also demonstrates Vaqar's internal battle in that she simultaneously holds a critical view of the same discriminatory view that she has internalized. It is in this same manner that we observe more broadly in her writing—that while she understands that a woman's value should come from her own character and finds it troubling that it comes from the men she is associated with—she is still very clear in her feeling of entitlement to respect on the grounds that she was married to the shah. While the battles within may at times resemble hypocrisy by the writers of these travel journals, especially Vaqar, they are more than anything indicative of the transitions being experienced in the socio-cultural sphere at the beginning of Iranian modernity.[50]

Humour and Colloquial Style of Writing

The Qajar women travel writers' use of colloquial language gives an unprecedented view into conversational Persian of the time and the nature of social relationships in that period. It may be that it was the sense of internalized intellectual inferiority that has liberated these women from having to adhere to the formal and cumbersome style of writing that was popular and extolled in the Qajar era. Writing outside the norms of the formal writing of their time for a specific audience, and with no intention of wide circulation meant that these women were carving out a space for themselves and their voice, no matter how small that space was.

[50] For more on this see *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards* by Afsaneh Najmabadi.

The use of colloquial language and even cuss words indicates the transitional phase that Iranian women's narratives were going through. Afsaneh Najmabadi argues that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the entrance of women into the public discourse of modernity influenced their "writings of womanhood" and "produce[d] a sexually demarked language, a veiled language" specifically because they now they published articles in the newspapers and had male audiences as well as female readers ("Veiled Discources-Unveiled Bodies" 487-488). All these travel writers are writing in the same period that this transition is taking place. They did not write in the veiled language that the women who wrote for the press used, nor did they write employing quite the same unveiled language that they used in their private female circles.[51] They did, however, use a language that was unembellished, and if their subject of description was not related to the royals, fairly unveiled. In most cases it seems that the author is expecting a relatively narrow readership, of mostly like-minded women, although there are obvious cases of writing that seems to anticipate that male companions and either the Shah himself or people close to him (such as his wives) will read the travelogue.

The one writer—Aliyeh—who has the lowest social class among the group in Table 2, and who does not seem to anticipate the Shah or his wives reading her journals, employs the most colloquial style and funniest passages. Her wit is probably a contributing factor to her popularity among Naser al-Din Shah's wives and other high-status families. Her writing mixes humorous language with simple prose in a way that mundane happenstances appear as comic episodes. For instance, she is not happy with Vali Khan's sigheh wife, Fatemeh, who has been pregnant during the trip and described by Aliyeh as being a burden, lazy, and ungrateful. She

[51] Najmabadi argues that three general concepts lay at the heart of the discourse of modernity and played an important part in these writings: science, nation, and homeland. But the premodern Iranian female voice was mainly oral, assumed an all female audience, and was rather openly sexual.

seems to view Fatemeh as a lower status woman she's stuck with. At one point Aliyeh says of Fatemeh, "I have never seen such a useless person…she is not considerate enough to realize that one does not sleep so much during a trip…and she is such a glutton…" (Shirazi 97). After being frustrated by her throughout the trip, Aliyeh's description of her last interaction with Fatemeh is entertaining. She has left her in the company of a family in Tehran who have taken care of Fatemeh for the last ten days, and she is about to send her off to Kerman and part ways with her:

> "Today Monday the nineteenth, I sent Fatemeh off to Kerman. When she came to say goodbye she really did a number on me. She said if you hadn't brought me, someone else would have. Now that you brought me, two Tomans is not enough for me, give me more. I said I swear to God I don't have more, I'm struggling with my own expenses. She really got bitter with me for this. Today marks ten days that she is in the house of Agha Mirza Hadi. The poor souls have taken care of her every need. Dinner, lunch, bath, everything. Apparently last night she's told them: "whoever is from Tehran, I shit on their father's grave!" They didn't tell me about this incident last night. Today after she was gone, they asked me: "what wrong did we do to her that she wants to shit on our father's graves?!" I swear to God I died of shame and went under ground. This is my luck. (Shirazi 114)

> امروز که روز شنبه نوزدهم است، فاطمه را روانه کرمان کردم. وقتی که آمد خداحافظی کند، خوب حق مرا داد. گفت اگر تو مرا نیاورده بودي، کسی دیگر می‌آورد. حالا که تو آوردي، من دو تومن کمم است، بیشتر بده. گفتم و الله بالله ندارم، الان براي خرجی معطّلم. خیلی از این جهت اوقاتشان تلخ شد. امروز ده روز است که در خانه آقا میرزا هادي هست. بیچاره‌ها زحمت کشیدند، شام، نهار، حمام، از همه چیز او متوجه شدند. دیشب نشسته بوده، گفته گور پدر هر چه طهرانی هست، ریدم! دیشب که به من نگفتند. امروز که او رفت، به من گفتند که نمی‌دانی چه کم خدمتی به فاطمه کردیم که گور پدر ما ریده! و الله از خجالت مردم، زیر زمین رفتم. این هم از بخت [و] طالع من است.

The quote above illustrates that these women often want to intentionally make their audience laugh. Humour is also an excellent tool of resistance and encroachment that will be discussed further below. It can be employed in emotional work (making everyone feel better), coping and self-healing, claims to judgment (criticism), claims to intelligence (wit), and claim to social value (likeability).

The Woman's Vantage Point

But given the aforementioned factors in the shaping of women's subjectivities, the question remains: what is the vantage point of these women that renders their standpoints epistemically fruitful. For our purposes, much of the epistemic value in the writings of these Qajar women come from their vantage point as women. Their gender provides them with both access to social circles and experiences not readily available to men, and the perspective to notice and note aspects about their experiences not typically noticed or noted by men. For example, the manner in which Bibi describes a popular music and dance group that has been hired to entertain the crowd at a wedding ceremony illustrates her female perspective:

> They had brought a group of entertainers known as the Lady Monavvar Band. They are the talk of the town, very famous in Tehran, and they charge fifty Tomans for a full day and night. The lady herself isn't that pretty, but she entertains very well. She wears a variety of different and beautiful outfits. Her earrings have huge diamonds, her bracelets are diamond, she has diamond rings on all her fingers, it's quite a sight. Her mother plays the Santoor in the band, and another eight people form a circle of goblet drummers. (Shadlou 202)

> یک دسته مطرب که دسته خانم منّور می‌گویند- خیلی نقل دارد، در طهران معروف است، شب و روز را پنجاه تومان می‌گیرد- آورده بودند. خود خانم خوشگل نیست، امّا بسیار خوب بازي می‌کند. لباسهاي جوربه‌جور و قشنگ می‌پوشد. گوشواره الماس بسیار بزرگ، النگوي الماس، انگشتها همه انگشتر الماس، خیلی اوضاع دارد. مادرش سنتور می‌زند. هشت نفر هم دایره طونبک‌زن دارد.

The class of musician to which Monavvar, her mother and their band belong are known as *Motrebi,* and they have been nearly erased from the history of Iranian music (Shay x). What is important to understand is the "abject position these performers generally occupy, and have occupied historically, not only in Iran but also throughout the vast region" (Shay xiii). In the foreword to *Iranian Music and Popular Entertainment*, Anthony Shay writes that the "disparaging writing [about such musicians], often done by Iranian intellectuals and music

historians, has attempted to consign [motrebi musicians] to the historical trash bin, condemning their music as 'imitative, repetitive, diluted, and sensual'" (x). But in Bibi's descriptions there is no indication of contempt or disdain. Details about the way Monavvar looks, what she wears, and the quality of her jewelry are mentioned in an attempt to recreate the spectacle for the reader. Women like Bibi who talk about Monavvar are not unfamiliar with high music, in fact, they regularly hear it in private performances and some are trained in playing traditional instruments, as well as some Western instruments such as the piano. One can say, that they have a "double consciousness" when it comes to music and entertainment. They are familiar with both popular music and entertainment and the high music of the maestros who would never dirty the strings of their Sitar to play a popular tune. Yet these travel writers never write of these popular musicians and entertainers in contempt. On the contrary, when it comes to popular entertainment, they make sure to mention them with the same degree of detail that describe other things in their journals.

Another reason why these women's vantage points are important is in what they are able to observe and record because of their gender and its intersection with class. As mentioned before, the history of record is dominated by accounts written by and for men, and mostly men of power for that matter. Women, and specifically women of lower classes may view the same everyday life of a man in power and find things interesting and noteworthy that can easily be missed by those—who are in one way or another—close to power. One instance that showcases this is Aliyeh's descriptions of the Shah, his routines, and his wives during her stays in Naser al-Din Shah's palace. Aliyeh is invited to the palace by one of Naser al-Din Shah's wives of Qajar descent and her records from the "andaruni" (the private inner quarters of the palace) cannot be matched by any other source that has reached us from the time. Even Taj al-Saltaneh, the

daughter of Naser al-Din Shah who lived in the palace, does not provide us with many of the interesting details of the shah's daily routine and habits that Aliyeh records, including his interactions with his numerous wives and other women. Her first interaction with the shah is particularly intriguing:

> The shah was strolling around the court until he was near me. Navab-elliyeh the princess pronounced: "Shah, this pilgrim lady of Kerman has come from Mecca, and wants to greet the shah. Stop here so she can see you." The shah proclaimed: "For sure." He came close to me, took off his glasses, opened his neck scarf, and brought his face straight up against mine. I dropped my head out of shyness. He insisted: "look at me, check if I look good." I finally looked. Then he said: "How am I?" I uttered: "God bless, very nice and good looking." He proclaimed: "You're lying, I don't look good." And then he went off and spent an hour with the entertainers. (Shirazi 121-122)

> شاه گردش می‌کرد، تا رسید نزدیک من. نواب علیه خانم شاهزاده عرض کرد: شاه این حاجی خانم کرمانی از مکه آمده، می‌خواهد شاه را زیارت کند. صبر کنید شما را ببیند. فرمودند: به چشم. آمد نزدیک من. عینکش را برداشت، دستمال گردنش را باز کرد، سرش را آورد توي صورت من. از خجالت سر به سر انداختم. زود زود
> می‌گوید: مرا نگاه کن، ببین من مقبول هستم یا نه. آخر نگاه کردم. آنوقت گفت چطورم. من هم عرض کردم ما شاء الله خیلی خوب و مقبول. فرمود دروغ می‌گویی، من مقبولی ندارم، و رفت پیش مطربها یک ساعتی.

After this incident, Aliyeh indicates that she tries to avoid directly interacting with the shah again: "they keep trying to get me to meet the shah again, but I'm shy. When the shah comes this way, I go that way. When he gets close to me, I hide behind his wives" (Shirazi 124). One of the most noteworthy parts of Aliyeh's travel journal is where she describes the Shah's routine:

> When he goes to dinner all the women leave and go to their own quarters, they say their nightly prayers and have dinner. Then they all change their clothes. Each tries to look better than the other so that the Shah may take her to spend the night. When the Shah is eating Anis Al-Dowleh [The Shah's favorite wife from 1860 onward] must be present, but she does not eat. Agha Mohammad Khan must also be there, he is a eunuch, and is very short. He will either sit down, or stand up and talk. The kitchen

maids also do nightly shifts to bring the water, medicine or Kabob. Aziz al-Soltan [one of Shah's favorite people and his adopted son] must be there too. When the dinner is over the women all go to the upper level of the palace for three hours. Some of the maids, who are Shah's sigheh [temporary wife] will sing and play instruments. The Shah plays the piano, and Aziz al-Soltan dances. All the other women are present there, be they princesses of Qajar blood or wives of common background. Some sit and some stand. Six hours after the nightfall they are all given leave. They all return to their quarters. A boy servant will be asked to go and pick up the woman that the Shah has chosen. When the deed is done, she will return by herself, even if she is Anis al-Dowleh who is the closest to Shah. Then two of the kitchen maids—most of whom are also Shah's sigheh wives, would sit beside him and massage him until morning. In the morning the Shah wakes up an hour after the sunrise. In the summer he wakes up two hours and a half to three hours after the sunrise. As soon as he wakes up he plays the piano, and lets everybody know that he is up. A few of the women would go near his bedroom and stand by the railings. The Shah will come down and go to Amineh Aqdas' quarter. He will bathe there and come out. The first thing he'll have to eat in the morning are three apples. Then, a cup of tea or hot water. Then, he will either have bread and cheese or a skewer of chicken kabob. He will sit for an hour, look at some jewelry or look for documents and papers. Then he goes out. (125-126)

وقتی میرود سر شام، همه زنها مرخص می‌شوند، می‌روند منزل‌هاشان، نماز می‌کنند و شام می‌خورند. آن
وقت باز تغییر لباس می‌کنند. هرکدام سعی می‌کنند که بهتر از دیگري بشوند، شاید شاه امشب آن را ببرد. در سر شام شاه، انیس‌الدوله بایست بنشیند، ولی نمی‌خورد. آقا محمد خان خواجه‌اي هم هست، خیلی کوتاه، آن هم بایست سر شام باشد. یا می‌نشیند یا می‌ایستد، صحبت می‌کند. کنیزهاي قهوه خانه هم هرکدام که کشیکشان باشد، حاضرند براي آب و کباب و دوا. عزیز السلطان هم بایست باشد. سه ساعتی که شام برداشته می‌شود، زنها می‌روند بالا توي قصر. چند نفر از این خدمتکارهاي خانم‌ها که شاه صیغه کرده، آواز دارند، ساز هم می‌زنند. شاه خودش پیانو می‌زند. عزیز السلطان رقاصی می‌کند، آن صیغه‌ها هم ساز میزنند. زن‌هاي دیگر از شاهزاده و غیره همه حاضرند. بعضی‌ها می‌نشینند، بعضی‌ها می‌ایستند. تا شش از شب رفته آنها را مرخص می‌کنند که بروید، بروید. همه می‌روند سر منزل‌هاشان. هرکدام که شاه خواست، بعد غلام‌بچه می‌آید که شاه شما را خواسته. آن شخص می‌رود. عمل که گذشت، خود برمی‌گردد، اگر چه انیس الدوله مقرّب باشد. آن وقت دو نفر از عمله‌جات قهوه‌خانه که بیشتر آنها هم زن شاه هستند، می‌نشینند تا صبح شاه را می‌مالند. صبح هم یک ساعت از روز رفته از خواب بیدار می‌شود. تابستانها دو [و] نیم، سه ساعت از روز گذشته بیدار می‌شود. اول که بیدار می‌شود، پیانو می‌زند. همه می‌فهمند که شاه بیدار شده. چند نفري از زنها می‌روند دم در خوابگاه، پهلوي نرده‌ها می‌ایستند. شاه می‌آید پایین، می‌رود خانه امین اقدس، می‌رود حمام، می‌آید بیرون. هر صبح اوّل سه دانه سیب می‌خورد. بعد یک فنجان چاي یا آب گرم می‌خورد. بعد نان پنیر یا یک جوجه کباب می‌آورند، می‌خورد. یک ساعتی می‌نشیند. یا جواهر تماشا می‌کند یا کاغذي می‌خواهد، پیدا می‌کند. آن وقت می‌رود بیرون.

These detailed descriptions are not just significant for historians in what they provide in terms of the Shah's daily life, but also important because they tell us that Aliyeh found all of this strange enough to note them down in such detailed manner for her limited intended audience. Naser al-Din Shah's life and his many wives have been the source of a lot of imagination and orientalist writing about "the harems of the East." What Aliyeh's account tells us through the mere act of writing and recording these details, is that to her and perhaps to any commoner or lower class Iranian, the Shah's life was just as strange and unique as it was to Western observers albeit for different reasons. Given that she is not writing for historical record and indeed has a limited number of intended audiences, she is also passing judgment on the Shah's extravagant life through detailed description.

Aliyeh also describes other instances of the Shah's interactions with women, and particularly the Shah's promiscuities, such as his constant flirting with, and screening of new women as potential new wives. In describing Naser al-Din Shah's behaviour at his daughter Taj's wedding, Aliyeh writes:

> The guests arrived in the morning. The Shah's wives came from Niavaran palace. Then the Shah himself arrived. When everyone gathered, he came to this court [the women's court]. He watched everybody's wives. Whichever women were younger and prettier, he would talk to them and touch them. We were doing the bride's make-up. He came to our room, asking to see the little bride. All the wives were running after him like Za'far the Jin. He expressed admiration for the bride and said "God bless, she's very beautiful." Some people didn't like it. (165)

صبحی مهمان‌ها آمدند. زن‌هاي شاه از نياوران آمدند. شاه خودش آمد. وقتی که همه جمع شدند، شاه آمد اين حياط. تمام زنه‌اي مردم را تماشا كرد. با هركدام كه جوان بودند و خوشگل، يک انگشتی رساند و صحبتی كرد. ما هم عروس را بزك می‌كرديم. آمد اطاق ما، كه عروس كوچولو كجا است. زن‌ها همه دنبال سرش مثل زعفر جنّی. تعريف عروس را كرد كه ماشاء الله خانم خيلی خوشگل است. بعضی‌ها بدشان آمد.

There is veiled mockery in describing men's promiscuous acts, and other travel journals have also recorded instances of men's lewdness. For example, in a wedding ceremony, Bibi describes an instance where some family tension occurs when the mother of the groom observes her husband fooling around with a dancer (Lady Monavvar) and is infuriated—likely more because of how his lewdness made the family look in front of the new daughter-in-law and other guests, than out of jealousy (Shadlou 203). Similarly, Vaqar notes that at one point when their ship had docked at the port of Beirut, some of the men in the caravan had gone to the city and fooled around, causing the caravan leader to ban anyone from leaving the ship at the next stop (87). The veiled mockery in these descriptions of men's promiscuity is in fact a form of resistance to male power. Naser al-Din Shah is mocked and his power and legitimacy as the head of the state is questioned for he is self-doubting as conveyed through Aliyeh's first interaction with him, and Aliyeh's records of his pursuit of women which follow her first interaction seem to suggest his promiscuity is there to make up for what he lacks in leadership. Bibi's description of the groom's father's flirtation with Monavvar the dancer mocks the man who is a minister and questions his authority as the head of the family for he can barely control his behaviour in the presence of his wife and in front of his new daughter-in-law. The same is true in Vaqar's mention of the pilgrim men in Beirut; these men are going on a spiritual journey to cleanse themselves of sins, yet they cannot act as good Muslims when the first chance for "naughtiness" arises along the way. It is women's vantage point that gives us access to these aspects of life, and as I have illustrated their mockery of men is one of the ways women undermine men's power. I continue this theme of pushback against power in the following sections, applying the frameworks of everyday resistance and quiet encroachment to the Qajar women's travel journals.

Everyday Resistance in the Qajar Women's Travel Journals

Recalling the discussion in Chapter 2, feminist standpoint theory emphasizes the importance of everyday life and the loci of resistance therein as epistemically fruitful sites of inquiry. Furthermore, recall that in Asef Bayat's extension of everyday resistance theory, certain strategies of everyday resistance are considered more defensive, self-healing and coping in nature, whereas others—which he refers to as "quiet encroachment"—involve active infringing and claim-making. Bayat's distinction provides a useful organizing framework for the analysis that follows. In this section I focus on identifying the more defensive and coping-style forms of everyday resistance in the travel journals of the Qajar women. The next section will focus on identifiable examples of claim-making and encroachment in these writings.

As Aptheker points out, the everyday resistance of women "is informed by values of nurturance, beauty, connection, community, family and endurance" (174). It involves coping, often in an active rather than passive sense, as for example in storytelling among female friends. It involves emotional work, such as consoling the broken heart of another, or acknowledging their pain. The very act of writing these travel journals for the main audience of female friends, sharing the hardships, informing them about the amenities and the costs of a Hajj pilgrimage, and the festivities, disagreements and dramas of the wedding trips is a case of the coping form of everyday resistance.

In mapping out the coping forms of everyday resistance, I am not concerned with identifying concrete and confrontational forms of resistance, but with finding and explaining the subtle everyday acts that counter upper level power in a system of power relations, and help the resistors cope with the predicaments of their own lower position. I am building on the premise of everyday resistance theory that considers resistance with "survival" as its end to be as significant

as resistance with "change" as its goal. In her germinal article "The Romance of Resistance: tracing transformations of power through Bedouin woman," Lila Abu-Loghud suggests an inversion of Foucault's famous sentence "where there is power, there is resistance" (96). She argues that revising the sentence into "where there is resistance, there is power" helps us "to move away from abstract theories of power toward methodological strategies for the study of power in particular situations" (42). In other words, for Abu-Loghud, understanding resistance—not necessarily aiming to overthrow power and not necessarily present as a sign "of the ineffectiveness of systems of power," (42) helps us better comprehend the workings of different forms of power. While my focus in this section on everyday resistance of Qajar women does not necessarily produce a comprehensive understanding of relations of power in which upper-class Qajar women are caught up, the aim is to provide a better understanding of how they coped with their lower positions in order to move forward in life and get as much out of it as they could with the least amount of confrontation and conflict.

Navigating the Everyday Life: Coping as Resistance

As Abu-Loghud notes in her study of a tribe of Bedouin women in Egypt "gender power seems to be one of the most difficult forms of power to analyze" (43), perhaps due to how relatively little women's power has been studied. In the "Romance of Resistance," Abu-Loghud identifies four types of everyday resistance among the Bedouin women of Awlad Ali tribe in Egypt: the first one is the gender segregated women's spaces where women enact various forms of minor acts of defiance to the restrictions men in the community have enforced on them. Abu-Loghud maintains that "These forms of resistance indicate that one way power is exercised in relation to women is through a range of prohibitions and restrictions which they both embrace, in their support for the system of sexual segregation, and resist, as suggested by the fact that they

fiercely protect the inviolability of their separate sphere, that sphere where the defiances take place" (43). In this form of resistance, we can see how the protection and maintenance of these sexually segregated spaces perpetuates the status quo. But it is for the sake of survival that women support them. In these spaces, women are free to act and live outside norms and regulations imposed on them by men.

One of the major reasons the writers of the travel journals need these spaces is that it is in these spaces where they freely engage in various forms of solidarity and sympathy with other women or woman-kind. They express their appreciation of the companionship of other women on multiple occasions, especially in bathhouses which were women-only spaces and safe spaces for female fraternization. When Aliyeh's main female companion dies early on in their trip, she writes "I'm afraid to cry, they say it's not good for pilgrims to cry. I cried with whispers all through the night. God help my poor battered soul…I'm devastated, I'm lonely, I'm estranged. God help me" (71). On multiple occasions after that she again writes about her loneliness: "After the passing of the late lady, it is very hard for me, no companion, no friend, no one, alone, by myself…" (76). As mentioned earlier Aliyeh travels with Vali Khan and shares a howdah with him most of the time, but she expresses discomfort and loneliness and is only comfortable in the companionship of other women for they are her "*ham zaban"* i.e. speak the same language as her, share her understanding of the world:

> Even though being with them meant I had to spend more, it was fine because I was not lonely… Haji Kalantar's wife was always with me. She was with me for tea, hookah, dinner and lunch. She would even stay in my room for the night. Sometimes they would bring food but only for her. It was good because I had a *ham zaban.* (Shirazi 107)

> اگرچه با بودن آنها خرج من زیادتر بود، ولی تنها نبودم. در راهها یا در کربلا، کاظمین هر کجا که بودیم، یک اطاق من میگرفتم و یکی آنها. زن حاجی کلانتر متصل منزل من بود. چاي، قلیان، شام،

نهار پیش من بود. خوابیدن هم منزل من بود. بعضی اوقات هم شام [و] نهار براي یک نفر او می‌آوردند. اینقدر بود همزبانی داشتم.

Aliyeh, who is short on finances, is willing to stretch herself financially in order to maintain the women-only spaces that she creates around herself.

Vaqar's main audience in her Hajj journal are a group of other former wives of Naser al-Din Shah, with whom she seems to have a strong bond, and shares the common pain of having lost the Shah and the luxurious lifestyle of living in the Shah's court. Her Hajj journal itself becomes a women-only space where she shares experiences and laments with her former co-wives. She praises their collective endurance in dealing with this loss, at one point writing "truly, how ill-fated yet strong we were that we are still alive" (42). She makes her audience clear in one passage that directly addresses them, when describing some pleasant scenery on her path:

> I wish you friends had all been there. The path today was so scenic, I want to say more scenic and full of flowers than the road that goes from Doab to Shahrestanak. The ladies were so missed, I can't even tell you. I prayed so much. For all those who regularly roamed over the mountains and deserts every year, but are now stuck staying at home due to life's misfortunes, I asked God to let them come to these pages to relieve their pain and sorrow. As I was saying this prayer, tears were falling from my eyes like rain…. (63)

جای همه دوستان خالی بود. به قدری راه امروز باصفا بود، می‌خواهم بگویم از راه دوآب که به طرف شهرستانک می‌رود، خیلی پرگل‌تر و باصفاتر بود. به قدری جای خانم‌ها خالی بود که نهایت نداشت. آن‌قدر دعا کردم. عرض پروردگار کردم آن کسان که همه ساله صحرا و کوه و بیابان‌ها زیر سم مرکبشان و حالا روزگار خانه‌نشینشان کرده، پس حالا قسمت بکن به این صفحات بیایند و رفع غم و اندوهشان بشود. این دعا را که کردم، دیدم اشک مثل باران از چشمم سرازیر شده...

Maintaining these women-only spaces takes an interesting turn in these women's rhetoric when they express sympathy with female religious figures in their prayers, and preferences for holy shrines to visit. One particularly unusual case is that both Aliyeh and Vaqar pray multiple times to "the wife of Imam Hussein" who is not even a well-known religious figure, rather than Imam Hussein himself, who is one of the best-known figures in Shiite Islam (the prophet's grandson).

Other mentions of female religious figures such as Fatemeh (the prophet's daughter) and Zeynab (Imam Hussein's sister) are as one would expect, and particularly emphasized by the women writers.

A form of everyday resistance whose aim is survival, and is closely related to the maintenance of women-only spaces, but is not categorized by Abu-Lughod is the emotional work that women do for one another. In the Qajar society, emotional work often involves praying and ceremonial rituals. For example, when the bride they are entrusted with taking on the wedding trip is ill with a fever, Vaqar mentions how others are sending money and sacrificial lambs for *sadagheh* [Islamic notion of charity, often considered to be conducive to the giver's health and well being]. She goes on to say "I wrapped seven coins around her arm, and recited all the prayers I knew were good for fevers. I hope they are answered by God" (51). The seven coins ritual is not a religious one but a traditional superstition.

Emotional work often involves mourning, grief, and crying, and men are mentioned to have been very uncomfortable with women's wailing and limiting of women's mourning rituals. So, women crying in their own spaces and mentioning it in their writing are acts of defiance to the limitations put on them by men. Aliyeh, for instance, is not hesitant to write about her weeping when she hears news of the cholera outbreak: "I heard that in Tehran, Isfahan, Hamedan, everywhere there are cholera outbreaks. By God I've lost all my spirit. My own pains aside, this sorrow is something. I prayed to Amir-al-Mo'menin as I was crying" (Shirazi 86).

Her fears about cholera are not misplaced. Later in her journal when she is staying in the inner quarters of the shah's court, she records several deaths of those around her from cholera, and the weeping of their mothers. Mourning and crying especially takes on the form of resistance when it makes others, especially more powerful others, uncomfortable. This is vividly illustrated

in Aliyeh's account of when one of Naser al-Din Shah's daughters dies of cholera, and the Shah does not want to allow mourning or to make a big deal out of it in the midst of other festivities that are going on:

> One of the Shah's daughters, Fakhr-o-Dowleh, had been ill for a while. The wife of Majd-o-Dowleh, she had typhoid fever, and passed away last night. In the morning, Anis-o-Dowleh, Taj-o-Dowleh, and a group of other wives of the Shah went out, but they didn't tell the Shah what was going on. They said they're going for a stroll in the garden. But the Shah had known, and was pretending not to know. They had announced it in the outer quarters yesterday evening. He came to the inner quarters, circled the courtyard for a while. With a grumpy mood he went to the quarters of Amin Aghdas [one of his favourite wives]. He noticed that everyone is wearing black. He reprimanded everyone and said: "go change out of these black clothes." Everyone went and changed their clothes, except for the Shah's daughters who put on purple and brown. At night they went to the Shah again, and did the regular music and singing. But they halted the fireworks tonight. [The next day] the Shah reprimanded the girls again, and said: "go change out of these clothes." Tonight again we went to watch the fireworks and lights at the gate of Almasiyeh. (Shirazi 162-163)

> یکی از دخترهاي شاه، فخر الدوله، مدتی بود ناخوش بود. زن مجد الدوله تب لازم داشت، دیشب فوت کرده بود. صبحی انیس الدوله، تاج الدوله، جمعی از زنهاي شاه رفتند، ولی به شاه بروز ندادند. گفتند می‌رویم باغ گردش کنیم. اما شاه هم فهمیده بود، به روي خودش نمی‌آورد. عصري بیرون در دیوان خانه گفته بودند. آمد اندران، یک قدري توي حیاط گردش کرد. کج‌خلق رفت حیاط امین اقدس. دید همه رخت سیاه پوشیدند. با همه دعوا کرد، گفت بروید [رخت‌هاي سیاه را] بیرون بیاورید. همه آمدند بیرون آوردند مگر دخترهاي شاه که بنفش و قهوه‌اي پوشیدند. شب باز رفتند پیش شاه، باز همان ساز [و] آوازه‌خوانی. امشب آتش‌بازي را موقوف کردند. امروز که پنجشنبه بیست و دوم است، باز با دخترها دعوا کرد. گفت بروید این رخت‌ها را بیرون بیاورید. امشب هم در سر در الماسیه آتش‌بازي و چراغان بود.

The Shah does not want the mourning to go beyond a one-time cancellation of the fireworks, but the deceased princess's sisters who cannot disobey the Shah circumvent his attempt at suppressing their mourning ritual and ordering them to change their black clothes (color worn by Shiite Muslims in times of mourning) by changing into dark brown and dark purple. In this way they defy him for not acknowledging their pain.

A second form of resistance that Abu-Lughod identifies is the resistance to marriage (43-45). A very obvious example that I am using as a point of reference here is an incident that Taj al-Saltaneh, Naser al-Din Shah's daughter, mentions in her memoirs. Naser al-Din Shah chooses to betroth her to Aziz al-Soltan in the presence of his wives and all the people in the inner quarters, but Taj's mother who was herself of Qajar decent does not see the groom who is of peasant background as a good fit for her daughter and objects to the marriage right away:

> My mother who was present shouted, "Oh, I would sooner poison my daughter and end her life than consent to such a son-in-law. Isn't it a pity to give my darling, sweet girl to this child whose parentage is well known and whose appearance is so repulsive?" It needs no telling what effect these harsh words about Aziz had on my father. He raised his voice like a roar of thunder and bellowed, "What did you say? Do you wish to die? Is it in your power to choose for my daughter?" Pandemonium broke loose. With great difficulty they took my mother out of his sight, while I stood still on the spot…. (100)

Nonetheless, Naser al-Din Shah does not marry Taj to Aziz due to Taj's mother's objection. In another instance Taj is set off to be engaged to the chief custodian of Khorasan to which both her parents agree but Taj herself rejected the suitor:

> My father and mother had almost come to the point of agreement, and it was not long before I was to be married off and sent to Khorasan. When I learned of this, I began to cry and refused to be separated from my kindred, my father and mother, and begged not to be given to this suitor. My wish was granted and the suitor went away rejected. (102)

She goes on to mention several other instances where she or her mother rejects a suitor for various reasons. And given that she was the Shah's favorite daughter and that her mother was herself a princess, Naser al-Din Shah does not force his decisions on them despite his initial anger. The suitors themselves cannot coerce the bride's family into this marriage as they are

obviously no more powerful than the Shah himself.

But rejecting a powerful suitor is not as easy for other women, especially if that suitor is Naser al-Din Shah himself. So the women and their families have to be more creative in rejecting the offer. One day when Aliyeh goes to the bazaar to buy some clothing items from a shop owner named Haji Hadi, she is asked indirectly through an apprentice if she can arrange for Haji Hadi to take one of the daughters of the prince whose house Aliyeh is staying in as a wife. She replies: "I doubt they would give you their daughter, but I will ask about it" (149). When she comes back home and brings up the inquiry, she finds the prince to be surprisingly open to the idea. Apparently, the Shah has an eye for the younger daughter of the prince. According to Shiite jurisprudence a man may not marry two or more sisters at the same time. Given that the older daughter of the host is married to the Shah, the Shah cannot marry the younger one unless he divorces the older sister. The Shah keeps pressing Aliyeh's host but he finds a way not to give him an answer. The prince tells Aliyeh that "since it is not appropriate for two sisters to be in the same house, I will give this daughter's hand [to Haji Hadi]." The prince wants to relieve the pressure put on him by the Shah: "If he insists to give him this one too, what can I do? He really wants her. He always tells the lady princess [his daughter and the Shah's wife] to arrange for her sister' marriage to him. Especially these days he's been very adamant." Still, the prince does not want to come across as having too easily given up his daughter to a merchant. So he tells Aliyeh: "tell him they didn't want to give you their daughter, but I convinced them." Aliyeh relays the news to Haji Hadi, but does not finalize the arrangement before talking to the bride herself: "she didn't agree. She said I will not marry a merchant. I told her this is because of the Shah, to get him off you and your father's back. Then she was convinced and agreed to the marriage" (Shirazi 149-150). In Taj's case the opposition to marriage is by her and her mother, and in the

second case the family is indirectly standing up to Shah and the younger daughter agrees to another marriage to protect the older daughter. None of these oppositions to marriage bring sudden change to the patriarchal institution that gives the father the right over his daughter's will, nor do they suddenly change the Shah's ways. But they do change the fate of the women who were the subject of the arrangements and because of that, they are examples of resistance with the aim of personal survival.

There are two more forms of everyday resistance that Abu-Lughod identifies among the women of Awlad Ali Bedouins in Egypt, which are "sexually irreverent discourse," and a tradition of "oral lyric poetry" called "ghinnawas" sang by women and young men (Abu-Lughod 45-46). The former refers to how women make jokes about men in general and how they adopt irreverent language towards "the mark of masculinity and the privileges this automatically grants" (45), and the latter are songs in which the reciters express sentiments that they would most likely not express in their ordinary conversations, sentiments such as vulnerability and love (46). As I have elaborated earlier in the section titled "Humour and Colloquial Style of Writing," the overt sexually marked language of the oral tradition of women is not present in the travel journals since the travel journals are distanced from the oral tradition. And for the same reason that the journals are written and not oral, the everyday resistance that Abu-Loghud identifies in the ghinnawas does not apply to them. However, there are two other forms of everyday resistance that are closely related to ones mentioned, and which is practiced by the journal writers: "exposing the everyday of powerful men" and "the act of writing." However, these two forms of everyday resistance can be categorized as more infringing and claim-making rather than defensive and coping. In other words, although survival is an important goal in everyday forms of resistance they are not limited to it, and when the opportunity arises they often enter the realm

of breaching onto the realm of power.

Quiet Encroachment in the Qajar Women's Travel Journals

Although proponents of everyday resistance theory note the subtle, often invisible nature of these forms of resistance, Bayat argues that at times they are so defensive, passive, subtle and invisible that they can hardly be called resistance at all, and sometimes only serve to support and perpetuate existing power relations. Although Bayat's argument does not invalidate the epistemic fruitfulness of everyday resistance as a focus of inquiry, it does raise the possibility that the study of claim-making efforts of a more infringing nature can bear its own unique epistemic fruit beyond what can be learned from the study of defensive and coping-oriented resistance. In the next section, I address this issue by attempting to identify specific forms of active claim-making in the Qajar women's travelogues, or what Bayat refers to as 'quiet encroachment.' Notwithstanding, I maintain that the lines between the coping form of everyday resistance and the encroachment form are not clear-cut, and depending on the situation an act that is identified as survival can be come an act of encroachment to power, or vice versa and act of encroachment can under different circumstances be an act of survival.

Recalling from Chapter 2, Asef Bayat's theory of quiet encroachment and social nonmovements attempts to identify something in between purely defensive coping strategies typically labelled as "everyday resistance," and the more confrontational social movements, outright activism, and acts of protest that he labels "contentious politics." Although quiet encroachment also stems from the practices of everyday life, its key characteristic for Bayat is that it involves claim making: infringing actions rather than just defensive ones. The claims have to be small and incremental enough to avoid suppression, but infringing in some way on "power, property, and public" (Bayat, *Life as Politics* 21). They take advantage of whatever relative

freedoms are afforded due to imperfections in the control of prevailing powers. Although not intentionally coordinated, when practiced by large numbers, quiet encroachment evolves into a nonmovement, "that is, dispersed collective endeavors embodied in the mundane practices of everyday life, but ones that would lead to progressive effects beyond their immediate intent" (Bayat, *Life as Politics* 101).

Key elements in Bayat's theory are mechanisms that engender social interactions, whereby the subaltern have encounters with more powerful groups in society, becoming more visible and salient to them. One such mechanism he labels 'everyday cosmopolitanism' whereby public spaces provide a conduit for different groups "to mix, mingle, undertake everyday encounters, and experience trust with one another" (Bayat, *Life as Politics* 14). Also emphasized by Bayat along similar lines is the "art of presence."

In many ways, both the act of traveling that the Qajar women engage in, as well as the act of writing about it, are forms of practicing the art of presence. The women take advantage of religious obligations[52] or ceremonial duties to engage in some of the longest and farthest journeys of their life, exposing them to many new experiences. This is an example of Bayat's notion of taking advantage of relative freedoms opened up from the imperfections of control. Even within the pilgrimage, Aliyeh and Vaqar both use the objective of visiting a shrine for religious virtue as a cause worthy of attempting to circumvent the authority of male companions who would not grant them permission to visit those shrines. All the women persist and endure through the many hardships and difficult conditions they are faced with on these trips. They

[52] While in Sunni hadith books, a statement ascribed to Prophet Muhammad prohibits women from travelling even for one day, without being accompanied by a close male relative, Shiite clergy rejected this notion and insisted that Hajj is as important for Muslim women as it is for men. They encouraged women to go on the pilgrimage as long as their safety and security was assured. See Laleh Bakhtiar, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Law.*

amplify their voice and presence in the minds of others by expressing their newly gained knowledge and experience in written form, which can help expose it to a broader audience.

But what content can be identified in the presence being exercised and the voice being amplified by the Qajar women that has an infringing claim-making aspect to it? I can identify several categories of incremental claim-making in line with Bayat's theory of quiet encroachment in the Qajar women's travel journals. These include claims to faith, religious righteousness and morality, claims to knowledge, skill, and resourcefulness, claims to social and economic value, and claims to judgment and interpretation.

The women's writing includes many signs of their commitment to their religious faith, Islamic rituals such as the Hajj pilgrimage and the daily prayers, and adherence to the proper cleanliness and covered-ness considered to be required by their faith. They also indicate an affinity with God through personal conversational prayers to God that they depict in their writing. As stated earlier, religious virtue and social status went hand in hand in Qajar society. This is especially evident in Vaqar's wedding journal, where she flatters Mozaffar al-Din Shah in her writing by placing him at the level of religious figures that need to be prayed to in the daily prayer routine. Through claiming faithfulness, they validate themselves as not only virtuous but also truthful and trustworthy which further reinforces their narratives and observations in the journals.

By detailing costs and expenses, hardships, gifts, and other details of their travels, the Qajar women gain an authority as a knowledge reference for others. The aim is to share their knowledge and inform other women so that they may be encouraged to take on the journey as well. Especially in the Hajj pilgrimage journey, which is a very long and perilous one, the

women are able to see and learn things unimaginable by their peers back at home. In addressing the women she anticipates to be the readers of her Hajj journal, Vaqar writes:

> Truly, I have seen things on this journey that I had never seen in all my life. What I saw, I doubt any of the ladies have ever seen. It's impossible to describe. You have to come and see for yourself. But that is hard to do. I personally had not seen such things, I don't know about others. (127)

> حقیقت، چیزهای که عرض عمر خود ندیده بودم، در این سفر دیدم. چیزی که من دیدم، مشکل است هیچ کدام از خانمها دیده باشند. اگر بخواهم که تعریف کنم، ممکن نیست. مگر کسی بیاید و خودش ببیند. آن هم مشکل، من که ندیده بودم، دیگران را نمی‌دانم.

What such descriptions—which are not scarce—try to do is to fill the readers with curiosity, and show them that while they are pious and go on this religious pilgrimage, they can also be independent and experience and observe new things.

The writers further demonstrate their knowledge through references that indicate how well-read or well-informed they are. Bibi's resourcefulness and character that spared her from old-age isolation, were accompanied with a degree of education that was unavailable to most Iranian women of the time. According to one of her great nephews, whom she raised, reading and discussing the books she read with others was one of her pastimes (Zaferanlou 20). Bibi, who was most likely educated by a tutor, had access to her brother's large library (Zaferanlou 20). She leverages this education as a resource and sometimes shows off her knowledge in her writing. For instance, Bibi compares the landscape of Ivan-e Kaif in Khorasan province to Château d'If, from Alexandre Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo* (Shadlou 191). Or when they visit a beautiful Mosque with artful design and architecture, she points out the artist responsible for the work by name "Maestro Habibollah" (Shadlou 187).

In terms of skills and resourcefulness, Aliyeh stands out among the group. Having only one servant, she mentions having to do much of the chores of daily life herself. There are

indications that in addition to her wit, her skills and resourcefulness contribute to her popularity among the Shah's wives and other elite families. She writes about events that indicate her skills in cooking, baking, make-up, accounting, caring for others, helping with the organization of ceremonies, and is of course capable of writing and traveling as the leader of her own small group. While these skills are certainly useful to Aliyeh's personal survival, the fact that she writes about them is an act of claim-making to her audience regarding her knowledge, skill, and value to society.

For one of the wedding ceremonies she helps organize while staying in the Shah's inner quarters, Aliyeh is tasked with preparing the wedding dress, baking sweets, writing the invitation letters, and the bride's hair and make-up. She writes: "this morning I did the bride's make-up. It's really fun, I've become the make-up artist for Tehran's brides. Whenever I tell them I'm old-fashioned, they say no we prefer your make-up style" (Shirazi 139). A few days later, she recounts that Taj the princess insistently asks her to make her a Western-style dress for a party she plans on attending the next day. She gathers one or two other women who help her prepare the dress in this short time. The fact that Taj came to her with this request demonstrates that her skill level is probably among the best to which the princess has access. She also writes about actively learning new skills, such as the skill of felting (wool knitting) that she picks up in Bombay, or how she tries to learn to work with sewing machines, is frustrated when others can not or will not teach her properly, and ends up having to self-train by tinkering with the machine. She is able to learn well enough to teach others.

One of the important skills emphasized by the women is managing the accounts, which is traditionally the responsibility of the patriarch. When Aliyeh is staying with a prince and his family in Tehran, the prince asks Aliyeh if she can help with the accounting involving some

transactions with three male merchants. Since the accounting work requires extensive interactions with these three merchants, Aliyeh jokingly tells the prince that he would need to temporarily marry her off to them for her to be able to get this work done. Nevertheless, she does the accounting work, which takes a couple of days to finish, but in the end Aliyeh boasts that she was able to find an error and save thirty Tomans for the prince. Aliyeh's resourcefulness enables her to find employment and support herself through this journey when she parts ways with the Khan. It is the most important factor in leaving the Khan whose behaviour annoys and limits Aliyeh. Her skills give her the opportunity to go beyond what is normally permissible by the patriarchal rules of the day. Through using her skills and sharing the experience of her journey and simply through her being and doing in the world the validity of those rules and limitations are threatened.

Vaqar also writes about her accounting skills in one or two places, but her main method of showing off her skills is through her writing, at times writing a few lines in poetry, and at times attempting to beautify her writing through creatively poetic prose. An example of her efforts at creative writing is the following passage:

> As we travelled through the field, we approached two mountains. The mountains were so close to each other, it was like they were whispering in each other's ears. The pilgrims were being nosy, traveling in between them, not letting them finish their conversation. We too had to be nosy and travel between them, but I heard that one was saying to the other, "the field behind me is better," and the other was replying "no, the field behind *me* is better." When we crossed over to the other side, I saw that that the second one was indeed better. (44)

> این صحرا کم کم که آمدیم دو تا کوه چنان نزدیک هم شده بودند می‌خواستند به گوش همدیگر حرف بزنند. این زوارها فضولی کرده از میان دو کوه رد می‌شدند، نمی‌گذاشتند که حرف این‌ها تمام بشود. ما هم مثل همه فضولی کرده، از میان دو کوه رد شده، اما شنیدم که با هم می‌گفتند صحرای پشت من بهتر است. او می‌گفت: صحرای پشت من خوب‌تر است. وقتی آمدیم این طرف کوه دیدم، این طرف، این دویمی خوب‌تر بود.

Through writing creatively Vaqar is not just showing off creative skills and inspiring other women but is also establishing her social value. This becomes more obvious when we compare her writing in the Hajj journal to her writing in the wedding journal written five years later. Interestingly, Vaqar does not show anything close to this level of creativity and emotionality in her second journal. She is more reserved in her writing because she anticipates the new Shah to be a reader of her journal and so the main goal of that journal is not to establish social value and encourage other women to travel, but to report the events to the Shah and the powerful people to whom the journey concern. This is in line with Bayat's notion that the subaltern often need to calibrate their level of resistance to minimize costs and ensure survival.

One way in which the women sometimes advance claims about their intelligence, is to recount instances where they engage in problem solving, figure things out or see past other people's lies or misjudgements, and outsmart others. Vaqar for example recalls the following incident when they approach a lagoon along their path:

> My brother told the servant to go fetch water [from the lagoon]. He replied: this is probably saltwater. I told my brother: order him to fetch water, because water that looks this clear, should not be bitter and salty. After the servant brought water, we saw that indeed it was excellent fresh water. Of course when it looks so good, it must taste well and pleasant too. (67)

> داداشم به آبدار گفت: برو تنگ‌ها را آب کن. گفت: این آب شور باید باشد. من به داداشم گفتم: حکما بگویید برود آب بیاورد. چون‌که آب به این روشنی و مقبولی، تلخ و شور نمی‌باشد. آبدار رفته آب آورده، دیدم چه آب گوارای خوبی است. معلوم است شکلش که مقبول است بامزه و شیرین هم هست.

The women write about instances where their knowledge, skills, resourcefulness or intelligence is useful to others in social and economic ways. This could be as simple as helping to save money with their accounting skills, but is often much more sophisticated. Often they navigate complex inter-personal and inter-family politics, and play the role of a negotiator or social

lubricant who eases tensions, de-escalates conflict, and finds ways to solve problems. One of the reasons that all the women are careful to document the gifts and level of hospitality they receive from particular families that they stay with is likely that they need to match future expectations of reciprocity to avoid social tensions. Similar social dynamics existed around weddings. Marriages between influential families were arranged to reinforce their influence, power and riches, but they were also an occasion for showing off those characteristics. What the bride brought with her to her new husband's home was an indication of what the groom was supposed to maintain for her and even exceed. As a result, any negligence in fulfilling the traditions or rising to expectations could result in a lasting bitterness between the newlyweds and their families. The women had to navigate these complexities with caution. This is something Bibi is well aware of while her brother may not have been, so he neglects Bibi's request for more funds. In response, Bibi writes in the journal: "I will explain everything more fully in person. For now, I will just say that Master Saham al-Dowleh acted on animosity and not friendship. I sat there [with Tarkan] and cried" (Shadlou 205). The eventual breakdown of the marriage due to the tension between the bride and the groom's family is what Bibi predicts in her journal and warns her brother about.

Another sense in which these women place themselves in a position of authority through their writing is by passing judgment, providing opinion, commenting on conditions, and attributing blame and responsibility to others for those conditions. Portraying oneself as being in the position to judge or evaluate someone or something is to imbue oneself with some legitimacy and authority. Poor conditions are not always described with an intention to blame anyone, because often the goal is just to let future travelers know what to expect. But in many cases the

targets of blame are explicitly mentioned, and include companions, current governors and kings, previous rulers, or religious figures.

One way that these travel writers show resistance to patriarchy while also claim authority is through what I earlier referred to as "exposing the everyday of powerful men." The men to whom some of the travel writers are related or with whom they travel, usually stand higher in hierarchy of power in compared to the writers. Consequently, one way for the writers to undermine the men's power is to expose the men's everyday in a way that the reader is led to make certain judgments. This does not include a simple and scarce description about one powerful man, but when certain descriptions are repeated enough times to create a pattern. For instance, Aliyeh who is bothered by the main male authority and companion on her trip, Vali Khan, but does not dare to criticize him directly resorts to describing his ordinary actions and through that exposes his character to the reader:

> As I was dismounting the mule, I fell down … God don't bring loneliness to anyone. I fainted. After two hours of smoking hookah, apparently his highness [Vali Khan] realized that I had fainted. They sprinkled water on my face. With God's grace I regained consciousness. But the desert being so hot with sunlight, I'm just resting in a corner all day to evening like a dead person. (Shirazi 67)

> از قاطر که آمدم پایین، افتادم... خداوند بی‌کسی را نصیب احدي نکند. غش کردم. بعد از دو ساعت که سرکار خان قلیان کشیدند، گویا ملتفت شدند که من غش کردم. قدري آب زدند به سر [و] صورت من. خداوند خودش وسیله ساخت، من قدري به حال آمدم. اما بیابان مالامال آفتاب، در سوراخی افتاده‌ام مثل مرده تا عصر.

She also makes sure to recount embarrassing incidents to indirectly ridicule his vain masculinity:

> Today, the honourable Khan had a lot of watermelon. At night when he was sleeping, he got very gassy. Like children, his arms and legs twisted and his eye popped out. Many strange noises were heard. (Shirazi 63).

> امروز که وارد شدیم، سرکار خان هندوانه زیادي خوردند. شب خوابیده بودند که در خواب بادشان گرفت. مثل بچه‌ها دست [و] پا کج شد، چشم‌ها از حدقه بیرون آمد، صداهاي غریب.

When Aliyeh goes to the Shah's palace she does exactly the same thing in her descriptions of the Shah. I have mentioned some of Aliyeh's description of the Shah and his life in the palace under the section titled "Women's vantage point." On reading the journal as a whole, one can see how the description of his daily routine and his extravagant lifestyle is in contrast to Aliyeh's description of the rural peasant's lives:

> On this Tuesday, we stopped at Dehsard. Due to the oppression and tyranny of Abolfath Khan, the people of this village mostly fled last year, and left the village unattended. Their gardens have been left without care. Last year they had a grasshopper infestation, and this year as well there are lots of grasshoppers in the gardens. God protect them. There is no bread, nor hay, nor grain to be found. (Shirazi 41)

> امروز که سه‌شنبه است، به این واسطه در دهسرد لنگ کردیم. اهل این ده به واسطه ظلم و تعدّي ابو الفتح خان پارسال فرار کردند، ده را لم یزرع گذارده‌اند. باغ‌هاي ایشان بی‌صاحب مانده. پارسال ملخ خورده بود، امسال هم ملخ زیادي در باغستان آنها ریخته. خداوند محافظت فرماید. نه‌نان پیدا میشود، نه کاه و نه جو.

Note that Aliyeh is not directly criticizing the Shah. If she does, and her journal falls to the hands of the wrong person, she could face various hardships including physical punishment. Thus, she passes her criticism in a very indirect and rather passive-aggressive manner.

As shown earlier in some examples from Aliyeh's journal, she also records various descriptions of Naser al-Din Shah's licentious behaviour with women. During her stay in the Shah's court, she notes observations of the Shah's behavior, and lets the readers make their own judgments. One particular incident in the bazaar stands out:

> The Shah came [to Sepahsalar[53]] for an excursion in the shops. He spent twenty-two thousand Tomans on various things. Then he threw as much as a hundred rolls of samite and gauze among the women [who were shopping in Sepahsalar]. The women jumped on one another, their chadors falling off their heads, their headscarves stolen

[53] A shopping district in Tehran

[in the rummage], they stood with their heads bear [and their hair uncovered] among men! All the shah laughs. (Shirazi 136)

شاه آمد آنجا، در دکانها گردش کرد. بیست [و] دو هزار تومان از هرچیزي خرید. به قدر صد توپ مش‌مش و مش‌مش زري و کارس ریختند میان زنها. آنها هم می‌ریختند روي هم دیگر، چادرها از سرشان می‌بردند، چارقدهاشان را می‌بردند، سر برهنه میان مردها! هی شاه خنده می‌کند.

For her Hajj journey Aliyeh was very unhappy about having to take the sea route by ship rather than the ground route for the Hajj pilgrimage. Vaqar also has to do this, and since she is closer to power, she does not take Vaqar's precautions and explicitly blames a powerful religious cleric, Grand Ayatollah Fazel Sharbiani, for having made a decree calling on all pilgrims to avoid the safer route: "all these troubles are thanks to Fazel Sharbiani, who banned the route from Jabal. And if we end up drowning in the sea, what is it to Fazel Sharbiani? He won't feel a pinch" (65).

The indirect criticisms of Vali Khan and the Shah, as well as Vaqar's direct criticism of Fazel Sharbiani are infringing acts of resistance. Through the writing of their opinions and experiences, these Qajar women advance claims to interpretation. This is a very powerful effect of their writing. They are aware of the audience that is likely to read their writing, and actively work to shape the perceived reality and interpretations of that audience. Before parting with Vali Khan, Aliyeh does not feel the need to justify her decision of traveling alone, since she has shown through her description that a man selfish enough not to notice her fainting, and weak enough not be able to control his glut cannot be a better leader for this journey than herself. Her descriptions of Naser al-Din Shah leads the reader to question the capability and leadership of a man who is referred to as the "pivot of the universe" but whose universe and whose life pivots around many things before the well-being of the people of the country he claims to lead. Vaqar's criticism of Fazel Sharbiani questions the religious leadership of a man who does not realize the calamity he is putting his followers under changing the usual Hajj route. In all of these cases, the journal writers are encroaching on these men's authority through their narratives. Interestingly

all men have their position due to their gender. At the time, men were culturally and religiously seen as leaders in whatever capacity their social class allowed them, and the women are undermining the patriarchal assumptions through questioning the men's leadership.

Women's claim to interpretation becomes especially important in specific and socially complex situations where differing interpretations of how events transpired could easily arise, and the writer has an opportunity to "set the record straight" or promote a version of the story that works in their favor. This form of interpretive claim-making is perhaps the most powerful form of encroachment in the long term, as it aims to inject the writer's voice into the narrative of history that prevails. It is an epistemic form of quiet encroachment not explicitly formulated by Bayat.

This type of writing is especially notable in Vaqar's wedding journal, written five years after her Hajj journal, at a time when the new Shah (Mozaffar al-Din Shah) has consolidated power after his father's assassination, and likes to be treated and addressed with ingratiation and flattery. Vaqar seems to anticipate that either Mozaffar al-Din Shah himself or his wives or people otherwise very close to him will be reading her journal. Her writing is much more reserved than in the Hajj journal, and includes many interesting instances where she seems to be aiming to shape Mozaffar al-Din Shah's view on something. For example, knowing that her current husband's position and affinity with the Shah are important, Vaqar takes pre-emptive measure to defend her husband in case any of their companions in this journey makes any complaints about him to the royal family:

> I engage in falletery, but God knows that this humble and honest servant is not one to lie or falter, and whatever I say is the truth. This man is honest servant. A betrayer he is not and has never been … He is sometimes bad-tempered. But an honest man is sometimes irritable, because he is sure of his own honesty. (*Wedding Journal* 109)

> این تعریف‌ها را هم نوشته‌ام، اما خدا می‌داند که تملق و دروغ‌گوئی در وجود این مخلصه حقیره پیدا نمی‌شود و هرچه بگویم، از روی حقیقت است. این مرد، خیلی درستکار و خدمتکار است. خیانتکار او نبوده و نیست...این قدری تندخویی می‌کند. قرار آدم درستکار تندخویی دارد، چون به درستکاری خودش خاطرجمع است.

Vaqar is clearly using her writing to shape the image of her husband, most likely in the Shah's mind.

An interesting socially and politically complex situation that Vaqar navigates arises in their second time stopping in the city of Isfahan, on the way back from Shiraz to Tehran. This time, Vaqar sends for her mother's cousins who live in Isfahan to visit her. Through them, she finds out that when they had stopped in Isfahan the first time with the royal bride, the governor had ordered a palace to be decorated to house the bride and her companions, and for the preparation of an elaborate feast. But the governor's treasurer impeded these plans, and ordered for the convoy to be housed in tents. Unaware that his own treasurer had prevented the women from attending the celebration, the governor, who assumes the bride has disrespected his invitation, refuses to send her any wedding gifts. Vaqar figures out the misunderstanding, and shares this information with her husband, who verifies it, expresses that he objected to treasurer's decision, and fears that the episode will cause discord between the two princes.[54] Vaqar further writes that her nephew who is accompanying her and her husband on this journey, visited the palace and saw all the preparations. She also notes that she had not seen her husband nor her nephew from the day they first left Tehran until after they left Shiraz, otherwise she would have known the story and made sure to tell the groom (88-90). Through telling this story in her journal, she not only sets the record straight, if in fact the treasurer was entirely at fault, but also makes sure to record her husband's objection to the treasurer, thereby subtly stressing her point

[54] The two princes being Zell-e Soltan, the governor of Isafahan; and Sho'a al-Saltaneh, the governor of Shiraz who is the groom.

regarding his dedication to the royals and his competence as an envoy. This way, Vaqar is playing a political role in securing her husband's reputation and quite possibly his employment.

Utilizing the power of writing to influence the prominent and accepted version of events, these women are often able to make someone look good or look bad as they wish. Another case that illustrates this power is when Bibi recounts the instance when a vizir (minister) who knows her brother comes to see her with some request. Bibi is dismissive of his request, on the grounds that it is not in her brother's best interest. The way Bibi tells the story makes the vizir seem like he was trying to get away with something but Bibi noticed and shut him down. Bibi is anticipating that her brother who is providing the expenses for her trip will be reading her journal and she is influencing his interpretations and perceptions of the "facts" through her writing. Bibi also paints the visiting vizir as somewhat of a pervert, because he insists on Bibi breaking with protocol and meeting him face to face rather than sending his message through others or at least talking from behind a curtain:

> He said: "no this is not right, it's like I'm coming to see my sister. Me and his highness your brother are basically the same. I'm sure he would not be happy for you to cover from me. You must come to this room so we can speak to each other" … at last after he insisted a thousand times I went up to the curtain. (Shadlou 196)

> بعد گفتند نمی‌شود، من به دیدن خانم بزرگ همشیره خودم آمده‌ام. من و حضرت سردار تفاوت نداریم. یقین می‌دانم که حضرت سردار رضا نیستند که شما از من رو می‌گیرید. حکما باید بیائید این اطاق با هم صحبت کنیم...آخر با هزار اصرار تا پشت پرده آمدم.

We do not know the extent to which the vizir was truly a sleazy character, but we know that Bibi is exercising her capability to portray him as she deems appropriate. As argued above, this type of claim-making which one could label as 'claim to interpretation' could be labelled as a form of 'epistemic encroachment' thereby extending Asef Bayat's theory of quiet encroachment into the epistemic realm. I elaborate on this theoretical extension below.

Contributions to Theory

While I have used a synthetic approach employing a feminist standpoint framework in relation to everyday resistance and quiet encroachment as formulated by Asef Bayat in my study of Qajar women travel journals, it is now essential to take stock and reflect on what this study is able to contribute back to the body of theory that informs it. In this section, based on the preceding analysis, I articulate the argument that writing, and particularly life writing, plays two important roles in quiet encroachment that are currently underappreciated in Bayat's formulation, and I suggest ways in which this theoretical extension can be developed further. First, whereas Bayat emphasizes the role of cities and public streets in creating the space for social interactions that allow encroachment, I argue that the written word also provides an important and powerful space for such interactions. Second, I argue that Bayat's notion of quiet encroachment can be augmented with the notion of 'epistemic encroachment' to include the battle for meaning as an important part of the fight for justice, rights and freedom.

Although Bayat emphasizes the role of cities and public spaces as enablers of cosmopolitan interactions and the power of presence, it is clear that writing, especially life writing, can play a similar role. The important mechanism here is for some form of interaction and communication to broaden the impact of individual action uncoordinated with others, beyond those individuals themselves. Bayat writes:

> even though these subjects act individually and separately, the effects of their actions do not of necessity fade away in seclusion. They can join up, generating a more powerful dynamic than their individual sum total. Whereas each act, like single drops of rain, singularly makes only *individual* impact, such acts produce larger spaces of alternative practices and norms when they transpire in big numbers— just as the individual wetting effects of billions of raindrops join up to generate creeks, rivers, and even floods and waves … Thus, what ultimately defines the power of

> nonmovements relates to the (intended and unintended) *consequences* of the similar practices that a "big number" of subjects simultaneously perform. (*Life as Politics* 21-22)

To elaborate on the mechanisms that amplify individual actions beyond the level of the individual, we can augment Bayat's theory with the work of others. In particular, José Medina's ideas around the notions of "chained action" and "echoing" complement Bayat's theory by providing us with plausible mechanisms through which spontaneous and scattered acts of everyday resistance can be aggregated through a form of unorganized, non-deliberate coordination. Furthermore, Medina argues that this coordination can become increasingly self-aware and organized through the increased uptake of echoing and lengthening of the performative chain of resistance, and communication among members of the resistance network and the explicit-making of their problems, interests, and goals. Medina and James C. Scott share the premise that there exists a process whereby spontaneous uncoordinated acts of individual resistance can aggregate into powerful cumulative impact, sometimes to the extent of transforming into organized social movements. Scott points out that "folk culture" can act as a symbolic coordinative mechanism creating a "climate of opinion" that legitimizes and celebrates everyday forms of resistance, and also notes that in some cases successful public declaration of hidden transcripts (the notion of 'explicit-making') can trigger the process of transforming everyday resistance into something with more tangible impact on social change. Although Scott provides a partial picture what this process looks like, Medina provides a more elaborate process model at the center of which lie the notions of "chained action" and "echoing". Medina describes this process as follows:

> When acts of resistance are not simply isolated instances … these acts of resistance become *echoable*, that is, they acquire a repeatable significance and, therefore, they

> are memorable, imitable, and have the potential to lead to social change … chained acts of resistance can consist simply in the spontaneous actions of a small cluster of individuals which, after repetition, coalesce in such a way that they become a traceable performative chain, with each action in the chain having traceable effects in the subsequent actions of others. (225)

While the echoing effect can in some cases be so strong, self-conscious and large-scale that chained action morphs directly into social movements, Medina emphasizes that this need not be the case, and that chained action provides a middle-ground hybrid form of agency somewhere between individual action and collective action. This is further indication of the complementarity of Medina's theory with Bayat's who envisions quiet encroachment as somewhere between everyday acts of coping and social movement. Medina points out that even when they do not stand a chance of achieving the impact of collective action, individual acts of resistance are not in vain because they break down complicity and have the potential to be chained. They showcase "a performative move in a different direction, which has the potential to open up new possibilities of action. Perhaps in the long run, and after these gestures are continued in long performative chains, the resistant actions may have made a contribution toward justice after all" (228).

Medina uses the term "social network" to describe the social entity that results from the unorganized chaining of acts of resistance, and that is not as explicit and organized as a social movement:

> When actions become chained, the agents who produce them automatically become members of a social network, even if they are unaware of that membership, that is, even if they are unaware that their action contributes to a particular performative chain through which they become linked to others. In this sense, there is an important distinction between a social network and an organized social group or movement: the

> former can be implicit, unconscious, spontaneous; but the latter has to be at least minimally explicit, self-conscious, and deliberate. (226)

Medina's concept of a social network here is similar to Bayat's notion of a social nonmovement: a movement by consequence rather than by intention. Both notions aim to identify something in between individual action and deliberate social movements or collective action.

If mechanisms of communication and echoing amplify the cumulative effects of quiet encroachment, then writing and especially life writing is an important tool for such amplification to the extent that it is a tool of communication that exposes broader audiences to one's experiences, especially actions of resistance, explicit-making and claim-making. This is perhaps more clear in our current times, where social media is acknowledged by many as an important conduit for resistance and social movements.[55] In the absence of such technologies in the Qajar era, travel journals are for the Qajar women equivalent to today's blogs, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Indeed, recognizing the written word as an arena for quiet encroachment is a prerequisite for recognizing the virtual world as such a stage.

Other than the role of writing in the transfer of information, there is also a deeper, more complex, and perhaps more powerful role for writing in its epistemic and hermeneutic function: that is, the ability of the writer to spread and impose their own interpretation and shape the way in which reality and history are perceived by their readers. This is an element currently missing from Bayat's theory of quiet encroachment and social nonmovements. But my study of the travel journals of the Qajar women clearly illustrates that they utilize the power of writing to influence interpretations and meanings. This kind of encroachment could be labeled "epistemic encroachment" or "hermeneutical encroachment," corresponding to Miranda Fricker's notion of

[55] See for instance, *Social Media in Iran: Politics and Society after 2009* Edited by David M. Faris and Babak Rahimi.

"epistemic injustice" (and its subcategory of hermeneutical injustice) and José Medina's notion of "epistemic resistance."

One could also use the label "epistemic quiet encroachment" to emphasize that even in the epistemic realm, the encroacher has to be mindful of constraints that need to be navigated and ways to calibrate the encroachment in order to minimize penalty and allow survival, such as by injecting an amount of sycophancy into one's writing where necessary, while still promoting one's preferred interpretation of events. By recognizing the important role of writing and other forms of media in enabling the claim-making processes of quiet encroachment, Bayat's theory could be augmented to include the epistemic and hermeneutic aspect of resistance and social struggle, the processes of infringing and claim-making in the fight for meaning and interpretation.

Given the circumstances under which they wrote and the fact that they wrote daily and as they were travelling on the road, the everyday perseverance of the women travel writers was a constant resistance against the exclusion of their voice and their experiences. In her book *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* Miranda Fricker elaborates on the concept of epistemic injustice which is injustice done against someone in their "capacity as a knower" (1). Fricker argues that in addition to social and political injustice, women (and other minority groups) face epistemic injustice which occurs in two forms: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. She explains: "Testimonial injustice occurs when prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word; hermeneutical injustice occurs at a prior stage, when a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences" (1). Through the act of writing, and without letting themselves be intimidated by what the practices of "good writing"

were at the time. These Qajar women have not only resisted and challenged the testimonial injustice faced by women travelers at the time, but have inevitably left us their experiences in writing and to some extend challenged the hermeneutical injustice of the history of record when it comes to Iranian women in general and Qajar women specifically.

To give another tangible example of epistemic encroachment outside the context of Qajar women's travel writing but within the context of feminism, one can point to women's resistance through epistemic and hermeneutic claim-making in the movements around Islamic Feminism and the struggles to re-interpret Islam and the teachings of the Quran from a female perspective. Asma Barlas captures the essence of the motivation for this struggle:

> To accept the authority of any group and then to resign oneself to its misreadings of Islam not only makes one complicit in the continued abuse of Islam and the abuse of women in the name of Islam, but it also means losing the battle over meaning without even fighting it. (xi)

In some Islamic countries where traditional interpretations of the Quran are used as the basis for the legitimisation of social, economic, political and cultural activities, women have attempted, often successfully, to win more rights using these hermeneutic claim-making strategies[56]. For instance, in "Bargaining with Fundamentalism: Women and the Politics of Population Control in Iran," Homa Hoodfar has demonstrated how Islamist women activists, despite their support for the Islamic regime in Iran, have challenged the regime's vision of women's role. By presenting a women-centered interpretation of the Quran and Islamic texts, these women have lobbied for their own vision of women's role and managed to gain some reforms. In another article "Women, Religion and the 'Afghan Education Movement' in Iran," Hoodfar argues that a

[56] For more on this see *Feminism and Islam, Legal and Literary Perspectives*, edited by Mai Yamani.

different vision of Islam and what it means to be Muslim has helped empower the Afghan refugee women in Iran, and led them to create an educational movement for both children and adults in the Afghan refugee community without any institutional or external financial support.

Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have studied the ordinary lives of Qajar-era Iranian women by taking advantage of the relatively recent availability of a number of travel journals written in Persian by the women of that era. Building on the theoretical foundations discussed in Chapter 2, I have employed a feminist standpoint epistemological lens to try to shed light on the situated hidden knowledge of Qajar era women, consciously focusing on the everyday and the ordinary, and looking for forms of everyday resistance and quiet encroachment. In doing this, I have been conscious of the ways in which the women writers are situated in some advantaged and some disadvantaged positions, and the ways in which the broader narratives and discourses of their society has constituted their experience and their interpretations of it. The resulting picture provided by this Chapter as a whole can hopefully provide insight into the conditions of Iranian society in the Qajar era, and the role of women therein. The forms of quiet encroachment identified in the Qajar women's travelogues interestingly echo forms of quiet encroachment identified by Asef Bayat in his analysis of Iranian women's feminist "nonmovements" in the post-1979 Revolution era (see Chapter 2).

Asef Bayat's theory of quiet encroachment provides us with advances in the theory of resistance, and it seems like a logical next step for this theory to be applied to the epistemic realm. Epistemic resistance in pursuit of epistemic justice has gained the attention of many scholars, especially feminist scholars in recent years. As Harding has recently stated, "there is no social justice without epistemic justice (and vice versa)" ("A Philosophy of Science for us

Today?" 1835). I hope that the concept of epistemic quiet encroachment that has arisen from the analysis in this dissertation can offer a path toward this next step and be further developed and theorized in future work.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

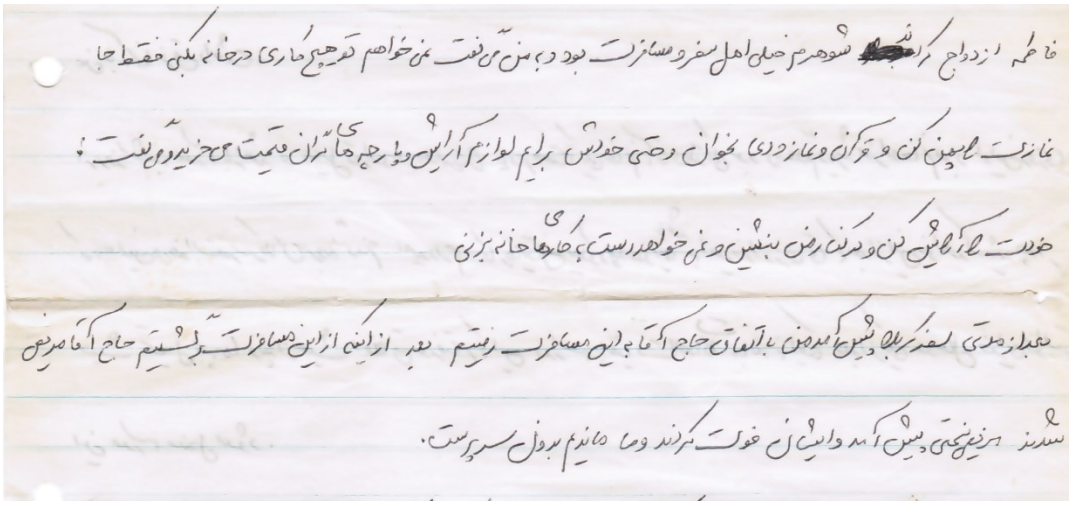
I have seen things on this journey that I had never seen in all my life.

--Sakineh Soltan Vaqar al-Dowleh Esfahani Khouchak (1900)

A Personal Reflection

In Chapter 3 I mentioned and quoted a memoir written by my great grandmother who lived from 1899 to 1995. I mentioned her passion for teaching and how that was cut short by both state patriarchy that demanded a teacher to be unveiled, and domestic patriarchy in which her husband would not allow her to unveil even if that was something she was willing to do. In another passage that follows the one about her career as a school teacher, she clarifies that it was not that her husband wanted to be hard on her or expected her to do house work:

> My husband liked to travel a lot and always told me: "I do not expect you to do any housework, you can just spread your prayer rug, say your prayers and read the Quran all day." He would buy me make-up, and expensive textiles and say: "Just care for yourself, put on your make-up, and sit next to me. You don't need to bother with the housework." After a while we went on a pilgrimage to Karbala together. After we returned he got very sick. It was a hard illness. He passed away and we were left with no one to take care of us.



In writing this she clarifies what was expected of an upper-class woman: to be pious and to be beautiful. This is in line with Aliyeh's description of Naser al-Din Shah's women: "all made up" and yet "all believers and holy" (Shirazi 119, 84). But knowing her and knowing the influence

that she has had on all her children, grandchildren, and even on myself (her great grand-daughter) I know that while socio-cultural expectations meant she had to give up her teaching job, she was not passive and used every opportunity to make things better for her family. Of her children's education she says: "Haj Agha [her husband] did not approve of educating the children, especially the girls, but I taught them at home," and when those children married and had their own children, my great grandmother would help her grandchildren with school assignments. Every time I went to visit her, she would ask about school, my grades and what subjects I was interested in.

There are two images of her that have been imprinted in my memory. She lived in the same house as my eldest uncle but had her own quarters. Once, when we were at my uncle's place, I sneaked into her quarters and saw her sitting on a pad on the floor with a book in her hand and a bowl filled with small pieces of dried bread next to her. She was munching on the bread while reading. I was amazed, as I had never seen other old women in the family read anything but the Quran. I had never seen other old women reading anything purely for pleasure. The second image in my mind is of when we were leaving her place after a visit. She was walking us out and she was wearing a long cotton dress and no headscarf, as we sat in the car she came out of the house waving her hand. I looked at her bare head in amazement, as we drove away. I had never seen a woman from my family appear in public without proper hijab. She influenced me not just through her love for books, her history as a teacher, and the fact that she was the only woman from my family that did not seem to care that much for hijab in her older age, but through the memoir she left us. Her memoir got me interested in women's life writing. Khanoum Jan made my life possible, not just literally, but also literarily and metaphorically.

Khanoum Jan was also a friend of Bibi Jan—my paternal grandmother, another woman whose life deeply influenced mine. Engaged at 9, married at 12, widowed at 32, left to raise 6 children, she could barely read and could not write. She was highly respected by all relatives and would always tell us to "study well", and that "marriage can wait." When I was in high school, she stayed with us for a couple of weeks. I talked to my father about an extra math class. A few days after going back to her house she called to follow up and asked if I was going to that class I was taking about. These women had suffered immensely as a result of patriarchy, yet they were far from passive victims. They were strong role models and committed enablers for the women around them. They did what they could to move things forward as peacefully as they could. They would have been offended at being portrayed as victims.

I do acknowledge, however, that many women in Iran have been and *are* the victims of certain cultural, socio-political and legal conditions. Nonetheless, the general stereotype of Iranian woman, and Muslim woman by extension, as a passive recipient of injustice and in need of saving is not only wrong, but also dangerous. It has often been used and abused as an excuse for warmongers and neo-colonial powers to continue their adventures in the Muslim world at extreme cost to Muslim peoples in general and Muslim women in particular. Initially in my research, I tried to find the roots of this stereotyping. Strong, informative and great scholarly work has been done on the history of Western encounter with Iranian and Middle Eastern women. Nima Naghibi's *Rethinking Global Sisterhood: Western Feminism and Iran* which I have mentioned earlier is a case in point. Another example is Homa Hoodfar's work such as "The Veil in their Minds and on Our Heads: Veiling Practices and Muslim Women"—in which she talks about the changing meaning of veiling in Muslim societies despite its static representation in Western cultures. But as my initial research progressed, I became increasingly

aware of both the distorted image of Iranian women in political and institutional history, and the ignorance (both as gaps in knowledge, and ignorance that is consciously and unconsciously perpetuated) in political and institutional history. As Edmund Burke and David Yaghoubian have noted:

> we see the Middle East over the shoulders of diplomats, military officers, entrepreneurs and bureaucrats. This essentially elite perspective has focused on the "big story": the coming to modernity of Middle Eastern states and societies, and the operation of large-scale historical forces… These views, despite their often contradictory explanations of the mainsprings of change, have portrayed Middle Easterners as marionettes in a historical drama not of their devising, rather than as flesh-and-blood individuals with some capacity to affect their own life chances. Deprived of agency, they have become what Eric Wolf calls "people without history." (1)

Such accounts often shape and govern the way we think about the Muslim world and its peoples and are often reproduced through various cultural mediums including the media. By privileging the elite individuals and specific social groups' perspectives, these mainstream accounts fail to acknowledge the complexities of the historical process, and the cultural and structural forms that constitute the context in which the historical process takes place and in which individuals live, resist, cope, and survive.

Summary of Insights

Most scholarly work on Iranian women's history dates women's public participation to the Constitutional Revolution. I have used the opportunity that has risen with the recent discovery of five travel journals by Qajar women, written just before the Constitutional Revolution, to study the everyday lives of these women, and uncover their situated hidden knowledge. I use the feminist standpoint lens outlined in Chapter 2 and utilize theories of

everyday resistance and quiet encroachment as an organizing logic. From the perspective gained from these theories I work with the premise that we cannot fully understand the complex workings of power, resistance and change in a society by only looking at extraordinary events and exceptional individuals. The informal nature of these travel journals, and their focus on the everyday makes them ideal for a study of the points of resistance and encroachment in the ordinary life of Qajar women.

Given that these women came from privileged backgrounds, the question arises regarding the significance of their perspective as a marginalized group. In explaining the categorization of elite women under "ordinary people," Edmund Burke and David Yaghoubian write:

> By "ordinary people" we mean the "peoples without history"—which includes non-elite men and most women (for example, tribal elite women), namely those whose experiences have generally been left out of the history books. This is not to say that the individuals whose lives are chronicled here are ordinary. The very fact that enough information exists about them to make possible a brief biography makes them, by definition, extraordinary. (2)

When it comes to the four women authors of the five travel journals that I have studied here, it is their gender rather than their socio-economic status that makes their perspective valuable from a feminist standpoint lens. Their socio-economic status is an enabling, if not necessary factor, for the recording and preservation of their experience in the form of writing.

Various insights are gained about the experience of women in the Qajar era on reading these five travel journals. First, from their writing we learn how Qajar society is seen from the vantage point of women. The following points have been made and exemplified regarding this insight: a) although all four women have some authority based on their social status, economic position, seniority and matriarchal position, they all complain at one point or another about their lack of authority in relation to men; b), there are indications of "internalized oppression" in the

women's writing, however, the women also present sentiments that are indicative of an intellectually transitional phase. While there are examples of women subscribing to the cultural positioning of women as inferior and as lacking in intellect, there are also examples of them being frustrated with, and feeling limited by these stereotypes; c) what the employment of colloquial style of writing and use of humor reveals to us is not just the conversational language of the time, but also the nature of social relationships. The travel journals do not use the unveiled language that Najmabadi ascribes to Qajar women spaces prior to the publication of their work in the constitutionalist journals ("Veiled Discoources-Unveiled Bodies"), but they are far from the formal writing practiced at the time—which was marked by its heavy use of descriptive nouns and adjectives and Arabic words; and d) humour is often employed in these women's writing as a tool for various forms of resistance. It is used in emotional work, coping and self-healing, claims to judgment and intelligence, and claims to social value.

The second set of insights gained from the analysis of these travel journals pertains to the forms of everyday resistance in these women's lives. Drawing on Asef Bayat and Bettina Aptheker's work, I have categorized Qajar women's everyday resistance into two groups: coping (defensive resistance) and encroachment (infringing resistance). Defensive and self-healing tactics are not necessarily passive; in fact, they are often an active form of coping. For example, in most of these travel journals the companionship of other women during the journey is desired and appreciated, and the narrators see such relationships as good ways to cope with feeling homesick and sharing their feelings about the difficulties of travelling as women. But, the most striking example of such an act of coping in the travel journals is the act of writing and narrating the experiences of travel itself, especially given that the journals were written mostly with female audiences in mind.

The second kind of soft resistance involves active infringing and claim-making or what Bayat calls "quiet encroachment." This is the kind of everyday resistance in which claims are incremental enough to avoid suppression, yet infringe on power in one form or another. Both the act of travelling and the act of writing about travelling are encroachment on power, as they both give visibility to women in the public space; with the street/road/cities/country sides being the public space in the former, and the writing/literature realm being the public space in the latter. The women take advantage of a religious obligation (Hajj), and ceremonial procedures (weddings) to engage in long journeys that they would otherwise not be able to go on. The examples of incremental claim-making in accordance with Bayat's theory of quiet encroachment also include claims to faith, morality and religious righteousness, claims to knowledge, skill and resourcefulness, claims to social and economic value as well as claims to interpretation and judgment.

In addition to the key insights noted above, I would like to highlight several key contributions of this dissertation to theory. Chapter 2 provides a review of existing theory on feminist epistemology and particularly feminist standpoint epistemology, culminating in a series of guidelines on how to employ standpoint epistemology in research methodology. First, I suggest that feminist standpoint epistemology guides us to start our scholarship with the lived experience of women as the site for inquiry, especially in contexts where women's situated knowledge has in some way been ignored or silenced. Second, we should seek a diversity of standpoints. This means that we should look at various groups, especially those in positions where intersections of gender, race, social class, etc. can lead us to various experiences of systematic injustice. Third, although we need to recognize that the vantage points of women and other marginalized groups in also incomplete, standpoint theory suggests that a map of

knowledge from various standpoints with gaps and uncovered pieces is better than one where those perspectives are hidden and only the viewpoints of the privileged are presented. Fourth, standpoint scholars can benefit from being cognizant of the pragmatic goals of standpoint epistemology as critical theory. Even if the standpoints studied are not offering any superior access to truth, our research may still be offering ways of achieving more truthful representations of reality that are useful in countering injustice. Fifth, I suggest that identifying points of resistance and encroachment in women's lived experiences not only highlights their agency in opposition to oppressive power, but also helps us better understand the relations of ruling and relations of resistance. Lastly, I point out that standpoint scholars must be mindful of the post modernist critique, that suggests that the accounts of lived experience being studied, as well as the researcher's perspective are themselves socially constructed and shaped by context, broader discourses and grand narratives.

My suggestion that instances and forms of everyday resistance and quiet encroachment can serve as guideposts for inquiry based on feminist standpoint epistemology calls for some elaboration. The existing literature of feminist epistemology implies that the everyday and quiet encroachment can help us in identifying the structures of power. But perhaps it has not been expressed as explicitly as I have tried to make it in this research. Feminist epistemology and feminist standpoint theory in particular, have shown us the significance of the everyday in women's lives. They have also argued that women's lives have been for the most part invisible to the History of record, which is interested in major events and exceptional individuals. Because women's resistance tactics are often subtle, low-profile, informal, uncoordinated, personal, pragmatic, and all in all "everyday," they too have for the most part remained invisible to the history of record. Such forms of resistance are often unconscious, and even when they are

conscious, they are unlikely to be called “resistance” by those who engage in it, because that would defeat the point of it being hidden and affording them plausible deniability and survivability. While this makes everyday resistance more difficult to identify and study, the fruit of knowledge that can be gained from overcoming this difficulty is invaluable.

In regard to Asef Bayat’s theory of quiet encroachment, my dissertation suggests two directions in which this theory can be extended. First, Bayat emphasizes the role of physical public spaces in cities and streets in creating space for public interactions that allow encroachment. I argue that the written word-especially in the form of life writing, is also a significant and powerful ‘virtual’ space for such interactions. Life writing, and in general the virtual world of writing, is a form of public space that enables cosmopolitanism and presence. Augmenting Bayat's theory with Jose Medina’s notions of “chained action” and ‘echoing” provides us with plausible mechanisms through which uncoordinated acts of everyday resistance can have powerful cumulative effects.

Second, recognizing the written word as a site of encroachment opens us to the idea of epistemic encroachment. Corresponding to Miranda Fricker’s notion of “epistemic injustice” and Jose Medina’s notion of “epistemic resistance,” the notion of epistemic encroachment extends Bayat’s theory to the epistemic realm. I argue that resistance in the realm of meaning and interpretation is just as important, if not more important, than any other form of resistance. This is an element that is currently missing in Bayat’s theory of quiet encroachment. Writing plays a powerful role in the realm of epistemology as it enables the writer to spread and even impose their own understanding of history (or reality) is to the readers. The study of Qajar women’s travel journals illustrates the active use of writing to influence interpretation and meaning.

Future Research

One of the shortcomings of this research is the scarcity of engagement with lower-class women's narratives and narratives by racial minorities. This is because the travel journals were written at a time when literacy was for the most part not available to women of lower classes and racial minorities. Travelling to a distant land was also something that required resources, not available to everyone. For my future research I hope to be able to look at folk songs, carpet designs, oral stories, etc. by women of the Qajar era in order to be able to access the perspectives of the lower class women and more marginalized groups to my research.

When I first started my doctorate degree, I tumbled upon the five travel journals studied in this dissertation in my search for the female "I" in Iranian women's life writing. Two of these journals were found and published in the form of books by the relatives and descendants of the writers, and the rest were discovered in the archives by Rasoul Jafarian, a professor of History in the University of Tehran and were initially published in *Miqat Hajj Journal* (Iran's Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization journal). These journals had not been the subject of academic study before and were extremely valuable for understanding the life of Qajar women. The more I studied them, the more certain I became that I wanted my PhD research to focus on them. In the course of writing this concluding Chapter I learned that Aliyeh's memoir was edited by Zohreh Torabi and published as the first book in a series titled "Women's Old Travel Journals" by Atraf Publications in Tehran, Iran. Just before writing this section I learned that a second book in this series is published which is a Hajj journal by a Qajar princess whose name is unknown. This is a journal which is discovered more recently than the five journals I have studied and is edited by Nazila Nazemi. This journey started on May 25, 1886, and ended a year later. The book is

published under the title *Three Days to the End of Ocean* (2019). In the introduction Nazemi writes:

> What is the image that comes to our minds when we talk about Qajar women? Women who had very few social liberties, were not counted as the progeny in their families, were forbidden to become literate and could not travel without the company of a male relative. But more research about their lives and social participation shows that they were not as excluded from social life as we thought they were and they worked hard to have an independent identity while keeping their dignity and respect… The audacity of Qajar women, be they common or royal, is best shown when we learn that despite the customs of their time, some of them travelled long distances to far way lands without the companionship of a male relative. It was not easy for Qajar men to make peace with the fact that one of their women was going on a one year trip, leading her companions and service people without a close male relative travelling with them. These daring women, did not only go alone on this journey but also did something far more important; that is writing a journal or travelogue of that journey. (10-11)

The book was first presented in the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair (24 Apr- 4 May 2019) and the Instagram page of Atraf Publications announced that together with Aliyeh's travel journal (published under the title *We Wore Our Chadors and Went out to Look*) was their best-selling title in the course of the book fair. I am truly amazed and deeply happy at the initial attention that these women's journals are receiving. I am looking forward not only to more academic investigations of these journals, but also the effect they may have on the readers in the public, and their perception of Iranian women's history. I am also looking forward to engage with them in my own future research.

There is also a less acknowledged and out of print memoir written by Mounes al-Dowleh a maid in Naser al-Din Shah's Andaruni. She was a maid and friend to Anis al-Dowleh—one of Naser al-Din Shah's favourite wives. She wrote her memoirs in a column on Qajar women in

"Zan-e-Rouz" women's journal starting in 1966. Saeed Saadvandian edited the columns and compiled them into the book *Khaterat-e Mounes al-Dowleh Nadimeh-ye Haramsaray-e Naser al-Din Shah [The Memoirs of Anis al-Dowleh the Maid of Naser al-Din Shah's Haram]* published in 2001. This memoir had not been mentioned in any of the literature I studied and I came across its name accidentally on an Iranian website. My father was able to find a copy in a rare books store in Tehran. Saadvandian writes of the original publication of Mounes al-Dowleh's memoirs in Zan-e Rouz as such:

> In the year 1345 hijri solar (1966 C.E), the Zan-e Rouz journal published a series of Articles on Qajar women's lives in four issues. The publication of these articles prompted Ms. Mounes al-Dowleh to write her memoirs in order to share with the younger generation what she knew about the ins and outs of Qajar women's daily life. Her memoirs were published as a series in the same journal, and eventually led to the publication of some articles about the life and conditions of Iranian women in the Constitutional Era. This latter part was less new and most of it was the repetition of what had been said before. Due to the time and the context of the publication of these articles a number of lines and slogans that were indicative of the conditions of writing in the Pahlavi era were added by either the writer herself or the editors of the journal. These lines are mostly reproaching the conditions of women in pre-Pahlavi era and look like they have been attached later. In any case, even these added lines and slogans are also informative and useful as they represent the state feminism of the mid-Pahlavi era. (3-4)

This excerpt is not only in line with my argument in Chapter 3 suggesting that the history of Iranian women in the Qajar era was distorted by the state propaganda of the Pahlavi era, but is also in line with my notion of epistemic encroachment. When articles were being written about Qajar women's lives, Mounes al-Dowleh decided to actively and purposefully inject her lived experience in the narrative. Through the publication of her memoirs, her life experience was recorded, even if to make that happen she had to add lines that were echoing the Pahlavi state

feminist propaganda, lines that are discernable to even a moderately informed reader. This by itself is an act of epistemic quiet encroachment, infringing while being defensive enough to survive. Another value of this specific memoir is that it is written by a woman of lower social class. In my future research I hope to engage with this memoir as part of my effort to address the intersection of social class and to further access the standpoints of the marginalized.

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Appendix A:

چکیده

این پایان‌نامه مطالعه‌ای است پیرامون مقاومت روزمره زنان ایرانی در دوره قاجار و پیش از انقلاب مشروطه (۱۲۸۵ ش). این تحقیق با استفاده از رویکرد معرفت‌شناسی فمینیستی و به خصوص نظریه دیدگاه فمینیستی که به دنبال رونمایی از دانش نهان زنان است، به تحلیل تجربه زیسته و روایت‌های زندگی زنان قاجار در پنج روزنامه سفر پرداخته است و دانش پیشین ما درباره زندگی زنان قاجار را به چالش می‌کشد.

پنج روزنامه سفر مورد مطالعه که توسط چهار زن قاجاری بین سال‌های ۱۲۹۷ و ۱۳۲۳ هجری قمری نوشته شده و بعدها بین سال‌های ۱۳۷۴ و۱۳۸۶ هجری شمسی منتشر شده‌اند پیش از این چندان مورد توجه محققان نبوده‌اند. این روزنامه‌های سفر داستانی متفاوت از باور رایج درباره عاملیت زنان قاجاری را بر ما آشکار می‌سازند. پرسش اصلی این تحقیق عبارت است از: «با استفاده از دیدگاه مقاومت روزمره چه دانش جدیدی می‌توانیم درباره عاملیت زنان قاجار به دست آوریم؟» با توجه به مباحث اخیر در معرفت‌شناسی فمینیستی که بر اهمیت مقاومت روزمره و عدالت معرفت‌شناختی تأکید دارد، نمونه‌های مقاومت روزمره در این سفرنامه‌ها شناسایی شده و از این طریق درک بهتری از روابط قدرت در زندگی زنان آن دوره و نحوه اجرای آشکار و نهان عاملیت آنها فراهم می‌آید. در همین راستا، نظریه دیدگاه فمینیستی با نظریات بتینا اپتکر (نظریه‌پرداز فمینیست) در مورد روزمرگی‌های زنان، نظریات جیمز اسکات (مردم‌شناس) در مورد اشکال روزمره مقاومت در زندگی طبقات فرودست، و نیز نظریه «پیشروی آرام» آصف بیات (جامعه‌شناس) ترکیب و تکمیل می‌شود. در این تحقیق، نظریات گفته شده با استفاده از روش تحقیق تحلیل گفتمان به زمینه تاریخی قاجار برده شده و نتیجه گیری می‌شود که مقاومت معرفت‌شناختی روزمره یا «پیشروی معرفت‌شناختی» به عنوان شکلی از مقاومت در روایت‌های زندگی زنان قاجار قابل شناسایی است. این یافته می‌تواند تعمیمی باشد از نظریه بیات به حوزه معرفت‌شناسی.

Appendix B:

مقاومت و پیشروی در زندگی روزمره: نگاهی به روزنامه‌های سفر زنان قاجار با رویکرد معرفت‌شناسی فمنیستی

پژوهشگر

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دانشگاه آلبرتا