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# Duality, Opposition and Typology in the Qur'an: The Apocalyptic Substrate

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*Man creates what he calls history as a screen to conceal the workings of the Apocalypse from himself ... the apocalypse is the way the world looks after the ego has disappeared* (Northrop Frye)

The word apocalypse means 'revelation' in its original Greek, revelation as in 'uncovering' and most literally 'lifting of the veil'. Since the Qur'an and indeed Islam are both largely defined by their deeply engaged and prolonged celebration of revelation, it is perhaps somewhat mysterious that the study of Islam and the Qur'an has only recently taken seriously (again) the concepts and categories of apocalypse/apocalypsis, apocalyptic and apocalypticism as a factor in its early history, social formation and doctrinal élan.<sup>1</sup> Of these three modes, only the historical aspect has really captured the imagination of scholars of Islam over the last few years. Thus, a recent detailed study of the question focuses on early Arabic literature in which various battles and skirmishes are related in apocalyptic terms.<sup>2</sup> Such a study sheds much valuable light on the nature and development of early Islamic history and captures, no doubt, the frustrations and aspirations of the people in whose midst such chronicles were composed. Here, however, we will examine the problem of Islam and apocalypse from a purely literary perspective, concentrating on a theoretical or virtual entity known as a 'pre-canonical'<sup>3</sup> or perhaps more to the purposes of this exploration, a 'pre-exegetical' Qur'an. Under this rubric, it is possible to read the Qur'anic text as being formed by and containing several of the standard features of a genre of literature widely recognised as apocalyptic. These include various categories of themes, motifs and other features that Biblical scholarship and studies of the Ancient Near East especially (but certainly not exclusively), Iranian studies and indeed anthropology have identified.

Before proceeding directly to the main focus of this article, it will be helpful to note the current understanding of apocalypse that informs much of this contemporary research. The *ipsissima verba* of an early attempt by one of the leading names in this research, John Collins, runs as follows:<sup>4</sup>

'Apocalypse' is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being

to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial, insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.

Clearly, such a definition describes the Qur'an quite accurately, if incompletely. But the definition would continue to evolve; the most recent iteration is that given by the same scholar in the revised *Encyclopedia of Religion* (2005):<sup>5</sup>

Apocalypse, as the name of a literary genre, is derived from the Apocalypse of John, or Book of Revelation, in the New Testament. The word itself means 'revelation,' but it is reserved for revelations of a particular kind: mysterious revelations that are mediated or explained by a supernatural figure, usually an angel. They disclose a transcendent world of supernatural powers and an eschatological scenario, or view of the last things, that includes the judgment of the dead. Apocalyptic revelations are not exclusively concerned with the future. They may also be concerned with cosmology, including the geography of the heavens and the nether regions, as well as history, primordial times, and the end times. The judgment of the dead, however, is a constant and pivotal feature, since all the revelations have human destiny as their ultimate focus.

Despite these two very suggestive, if not revelatory definitions there seems to be a curious and persistent disinclination to read the Qur'an as an apocalypse. Recent consideration of this problem by Collins himself elicited this cautious and judicious, if categorical, statement: 'the Qur'an is not an apocalypse, even though it contains many apocalyptic elements'.<sup>6</sup> It is hoped that the following discussion will help to nuance such conclusions as they may be applied to a distinctive Islamic social, historical and religious context. It may be that part of the problem resides in the assumption that if we consider the Qur'an an apocalypse, then we cannot consider it anything else. There is some sense in which it is felt that an apocalypse represents the vestiges or literary tidal residue of a vanished community or sociological movement. Clearly, Islam is here. Thus we may be in the presence of an interesting and distinctive instance of literary apocalypse: an enduring apocalyptic community whose structure, nomothetic and religious horizons are determined and fixed by reference to a true apocalypse. This should surely be of some interest to scholars of religion.

The other part of the problem is the sad fact that very little work has focused directly on the apocalyptic nature of the Qur'anic text itself. If we examine the recent *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, the space devoted to the Qur'an in this three-volume work amounts to no more than four pages (out of 1,500) where the discussion is limited to the 'end of the world' dimension of the genre.<sup>7</sup> Thus there seems to be some

kind of *sotto voce* – if not completely secret – debate on whether or not the Qur'an is an apocalypse. But, the elephant is in the room, or at least its shadow is present.

The recent excellent and thorough study of extra-Qur'anic Islamic texts by David Cook (referred to above) has shed much light on apocalypticism as a social movement and even a genre of Arabic literature within the early period of Islam. Here there is a clear realisation of the importance of the genre for a discussion of the Qur'an, but there is also a clearly stated certitude that the Qur'an is 'probably' not an apocalypse even though it contains many features of standard apocalyptic discourse, indicated by several 'key words'.<sup>8</sup> There is scant acknowledgment that Islamic studies may have something very important to gain from Biblical studies on the problem, rather a single quotation, of a similar verdict by a fellow Islamicist is all the evidence we are given: 'the apocalyptic sense ... is not strong in the Qur'an'.<sup>9</sup> Thus there is no engagement with the rather sophisticated and well-developed methodologies within precisely the very scholarly tradition that identified, defined and nuanced the problematic of 'apocalypse' to begin with. The matter is rendered even more interesting and perhaps compelling in the context of Cook's negative assessment. To be fair, Cook's chosen subject was not the Qur'an. But his comments, along with other more positive ones from other scholars, encourage a further critical examination of the question.<sup>10</sup>

The reasons for an allergy to Biblical scholarship are perhaps not hard to find, but we will forbear here from further discussion or speculation except to say that it may be also the result of a much too narrow understanding of apocalypse. As the quotation from Collins above makes clear, apocalyptic revelations are not exclusively concerned with the future, though this is frequently a component. As such, apocalypse is not defined only by its interest in and description of the end of the world or great and violent cataclysms of the immediate future. What has emerged from the scholarship is an appreciation of the fact that the apocalyptic imagination expresses itself in a number of ways. By broadening the definition of apocalypse, recent work has made it possible to focus on the way in which the genre communicates intensity of experience through revelation. Indeed, within the context of such an evolved understanding of the category, references to the end of time or the end of the world may be seen as a means whereby the apocalyptic mood of the original revelatory experience is communicated through something we might provisionally term a 'trope of intensity'.<sup>11</sup> The purpose here is not to focus the debate on whether or not the Qur'an is a bona fide apocalypse according to the findings of literary, Biblical and religious studies. It is rather to explore *how* the Qur'an may be seen as a unique example of literary apocalypsis through using these same sources.

In studying the Qur'an as an example of the genre of apocalypse we must also be prepared to accept that not all aspects of apocalypse (as currently understood) will necessarily be found in it, or at least, not all features will be present in exactly the

same way they are in the apocalypses that have thus far merited the attention of those who study the genre. According to traditional studies, apocalypse is a subgenre of revelation, and there is a close relationship between the words of the prophets of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and the imaginative landscape of the apocalypses. In this connection, and to state the obvious, it may be that in a Qur'anic apocalypse we should not be surprised if the emphasis on the Hebrew Bible is much less than in other apocalypses. What may be expected to take its place is precisely the pre-Qur'anic Arabic religious culture as this is preserved and retailed in the Qur'an itself (see below the example of *Thamūd*). Thus we are interested in discussing what may eventually be seen as a *sui generis* example of apocalypsis in the Qur'an. The value of this is that it helps us to refine our expectations of the text. That there can be no understanding without genre, a view formulated most famously by the literary critic E.D. Hirsch Jr., would seem a fairly sensible observation.<sup>12</sup> Heretofore it has been common to think of the problem of genre with regard to the Qur'an in the light (or shadow) of the tautology 'the Qur'an is an example of a genre of literature that has only one example', which, at the very least, may be thought unhelpful with regard to the literary study of the Qur'an. Another more optimistic approach has been to define the Qur'an as a repository of a number of genres and literary forms.<sup>13</sup> The pursuit of the Qur'anic apocalypse undertaken here is in the spirit of attempting to articulate something meaningful and helpful that may be thought to connect these subgenres in a satisfactory and illuminating way and show how the Qur'an may be viewed as an example of a more widely recognised genre of religious literature.

If the genre 'apocalypse' is useful for looking at the Qur'an as a whole (and is not restricted to the so-called early apocalyptic/'hymnic' *ayas*), then it may help address some of the more imposing complexities of the text, whether from within or without the Islamic tradition. Amongst other general developments in the world of scholarship on the apocalyptic since Casanova's ill-starred venture,<sup>14</sup> and doubtless the most important one, is the advance in the study of apocalyptic as a genre associated with the names of Biblical scholars such as Gunkel, Koch, Smith, Hanson, von Rad, Collins, J.Z. Smith and many others. As a result of their collective endeavours, the genre has been 'defined' to a highly evolved degree by the employment of a grid that indicates numerous *topoi*, figures and motifs thought to be constitutive of apocalypse.<sup>15</sup> There is not space here to discuss all of these elements, but I will attempt to demonstrate how a selected cluster of them is present in the Qur'an: duality (distinct from – but not excluding – 'dualism'), opposition, symmetry and its evocation, and, perhaps most interestingly, typological figuration. These are seen as providing the foundational thematic and formal substrate for much of what is characteristic of the Qur'anic theophanic discourse and provide the conceptual and figurative basis for such other important elements and markers of apocalypsis present throughout the Qur'an as: history and its periodisation, judgment of the living and the dead, glory and its

articulation, description and evocation, the detailed description other worlds and realms (e.g. paradise and hell), to name but only the most prominent. Obviously, anyone familiar with the Qur'an, and especially professional Islamic scholars, will not be impressed by the 'news' that paradise and history are major Qur'anic preoccupations. Nor will they be surprised to hear about the pervasive instance of duality and the glory motif. However, it is hoped that this article succeeds in demonstrating that in fact these apparently old and familiar subjects or problems are stimulated to new life by considering them as defining, interlocking structural elements of the Islamic apocalypse.

### Duality and Opposition

Duality presupposes the mirror, and the mirror is a useful emblem of consciousness, perception and cognition. Symmetry, rhyme and meaning are all expressions of duality, or perhaps more accurately 'syzygy'. That is to say, for a notion of 'meaning' to exist, we must have two elements: (1) the thing and (2) its meaning.<sup>16</sup> In the case of rhyme, it is meaningless to think of rhyme with only one element. The rhyme obviously depends at least upon the existence of two words that sound the same. And, what is especially important for this discussion, duality automatically elicits or evokes its aniconic 'other half', *tawhīd*: (*wahda* – 'oneness'), which in the case of the Qur'an and Islam is always a transcendent (*munazzah*) oneness.<sup>17</sup> The interplay of conceptual and substantive oppositions and dualities is a prominent feature of both the form and content of the Qur'an. Opposition here may not always indicate antagonism; rather its first meaning is 'two things facing each other, or being compared with each other'. Obviously, one form of such 'spatial' positioning may include and involve enmity and antagonism. Taken together, or in 'apocalyptic harmony' with a number of other salient and distinctive features, it represents one of the more prominent single apocalyptic motifs or substrata of the Qur'an. Taken by itself, a thorough study of the interplay and prominence of duality and opposition, something far beyond the scope of the present article, would shed much light on the distinctiveness of the form and contents of Islam's holy book. This article is an expression of the importance of this topic. One conclusion offered here is that the Qur'an may be distinguished from other scriptures and holy books by the degree to which the text is suffused with and informed by a preoccupation with duality (not dualism). This follows on from the profound observation, made nearly 35 years ago in a landmark study of the Qur'an focusing on *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* (Q. 55) that the duality at play in such crescendo moments gives us immediate access to and experience of the literary power of the Qur'an.<sup>18</sup> In a more recent context, it has been pointed out that:<sup>19</sup>

A central feature of the Qur'an is contrast: between this world and the next ... between believers and disbelievers, between Paradise and

Hell ... scholars have found truly remarkable patterns of contrasts: angels and devils, life and death, secrecy and openness, and so on, occurring exactly the same number of times.

The presence in the Qur'an of some other literary attributes and features of apocalyptic establishes a context for the study of Qur'anic *enantiodromia*.<sup>20</sup> Now, whether or not this means that the Qur'an represents a 'genuine' instance of apocalypticism, it nonetheless remains that the prominence of this device, in the context of others, renders the Qur'an susceptible of a reading expressive of something called an apocalyptic imagination.<sup>21</sup>

The play and ultimate eradication (or at least taming) of opposition may in fact represent, as Eliade suggested, the 'eschatalogical syndrome, par excellence'.<sup>22</sup> Exemplified dramatically in other literatures by the child playing with the snake or the lamb lying down with the lion, such a *coincidentia oppositorum* 'is the sign that Time and History have ended'. The explicit coincidence of opposites is really only one of the modes of duality and opposition amongst many others expressed throughout the Qur'an. But it should be pointed out that wherever they are found in the Qur'an they are susceptible to coalescing in the kind of union spoken of by Eliade. Lastly, diametric oppositions and dualities may also stand for emblems of totality, even prior to the 'event' of union or eradication:<sup>23</sup> here they would represent poles of a spectrum separated by all the various related permutations and graded instances of their intervening elements and intensities. The prime example here is the frequent Qur'anic *what is in the heavens and what is in the earth and whatever lies between the two* (e.g. Q. 18:15; Q. 25:59; Q. 30:8; Q. 32:4; Q. 44:38; Q. 46:3; Q. 50:38). Here 'heavens' and 'earth' are simultaneous opposites and defining points on a grand scale of totality. The opposition ceases when time and history cease, when earth becomes heaven, a kind of (apocalyptic) inversion.<sup>24</sup> On this pattern one could, presumably, 'think with' any of the other numerous pairs of Qur'anic oppositions.

Another key expression of the motif or figure of duality is less structural or formal and more concerned with actual meaning: ambiguity and or vagueness, both in the actual text itself and in the reception of the text and its various symbols, tropes and topoi which add up to another feature of apocalyptic, namely indeterminacy. From the tension and apprehension produced by indeterminacy comes certitude, its opposite. But it should not be lost sight of that such indeterminacy is a key feature of any true apocalypse and that attempts to emasculate the apocalypse by considering it 'mistaken' or 'deceitful' or 'inconsistent' betray a lack of appreciation for the symbolic dimension of narrative.<sup>25</sup> Collins, relying on Ricoeur for ballast, offers the following very useful critique of some current apocalypse scholarship:<sup>26</sup>

The tendency of much historical scholarship has been to specify the referents of apocalyptic imagery in as unambiguous a manner as

possible. This enterprise has indeed contributed much to our understanding of passages like Daniel 11. Yet Paul Ricoeur has rightly protested against the tendency to identify apocalyptic symbols in too univocal a way. This tendency misses the element of mystery and indeterminacy which constitutes much of the 'atmosphere' of apocalyptic literature. In short, Ricoeur suggests that we should sometimes 'allow several concurrent identifications *play*' and that the text may on occasion achieve its effect precisely through the element of uncertainty.

Or, perhaps, aniconism? That *tawhīd* is the defining and primary religious message, attitude and duty of Islam is undisputed. We wish to demonstrate that opposition and duality is the *sine qua non* of *tawhīd* (lit. 'making one'), its 'other half' as it were. And in mentioning the idea of this 'other half' we are reminded of the original meaning of the word symbol itself, from the Greek *symbolon*:<sup>27</sup>

... that broken object, the two halves of which bear witness, for those holding them, to old bonds between themselves or their families; but it also signifies *sign, contract, a signification* that is undecipherable without its counterpart ... of the other, its complement and support, its bestower of meaning.

Paradoxically, this message of duality further enhances and emphasises the message of oneness that is the focus and task of *tawhīd*. This, in itself, is another example of duality and opposition. Such opposition, and the even more important automatic tension pointing to its resolution, is a key element in the magical hold the Qur'an has upon those who experience it. Furthermore, this topos or figure – this *enantiodromia* – is distributed, or perhaps more accurately, circulates throughout the Qur'an so that it figures in narratives, prayers and laws; it covers the spectrum from abstraction to the concrete, from divine attributes to elements of the natural world. It is an element of the Qur'an's 'text grammar'<sup>28</sup> and it describes a spectrum of relative intensities, from the more or less quotidian: up ≠ down, north ≠ south, night ≠ day, hot ≠ cold, to the downright Wagnerian eschatological emblems of the Beginning and the End, hell and heaven, including those anonymous and mysterious groups, the Party of God (*ḥizb Allāh*), the Party of Satan (*ḥizb al-Shayṭān*), the People of the Right Hand, the People of the Left Hand, and so on, which it would become the task of exegesis to identify (*aṣḥāb al-yamīn/al-maymana, aṣḥāb al-mash'ama* and cf. *al-sābiqūn*, a third category identified by the Qur'an as those brought near (*al-muqarrabūn*), Q. 56:11–4).<sup>29</sup>

Thus, part of the experience of the Qur'an entails a heightened suspense based upon the evocation of opposition and duality and whatever tension (< intensity) may be created, expressed or alluded to thereby. If the basic structure of human consciousness is indeed binary, then we know and order our experience by virtue of a comparison of

theoretical (if not perceived) polarities: hot ≠ cold; up ≠ down; good ≠ evil. With regard to the Qur'an, we see the same basic assertion attested to repeatedly. Such a preoccupation has affected all subsequent, Qur'an-derived or -influenced Islamicate discourse. To give a prime example, a preoccupation with duality, opposition and reversal achieves a zenith, if not apotheosis, in the work of Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), the emblem of the confluence and synthesis of classical and early medieval Islamic intellectual culture.<sup>30</sup> This, in turn, continues to pulse through the work of his vast audience, whether followers or detractors. The robust verve of such *enantiodromia* is formed and fueled by the basic Qur'anic material, but it eventually blossoms and flowers in Islamicate literary culture, for example in the quite productive and distinctive hermeneutic syzygy *ẓāhir/bāṭin* (exoteric/esoteric) and other, more pernicious, mutually exclusionary religio-social categories such as 'the commonality and the elite' (*al-ʿawāmm/al-khawāṣṣ*).

In the case of the Qur'an itself, the basic Islamic desideratum of *tawḥīd* may be thought to be emphasised and acquire meaning in the context of the binary nature of consciousness ceaselessly and, one might say, musically invoked throughout that work.<sup>31</sup> Linguistically, the lexical parallel opposite of *tawḥīd* or unity is *tashrīk*, but it was another verbal form that would come to stand for the notional opposite: *shirk*, 'assigning partners to God/violation of *tawḥīd*'. It seems clear, in the context of the message of the Qur'an, that the numerous references to *shirk* are meant as a foil to the all-important message of unity, and not the other way around, in the same way that references to divine wrath are meant as a foil for divine mercy.<sup>32</sup> Thus the otherwise purely theological topic of *tawḥīd* may be brought into direct relation with the omnipresent *obligato*-type motif of duality and opposition that is heard and read "through" the Qur'an.

Night ≠ day; heaven ≠ earth; private ≠ public; hidden ≠ seen; moon ≠ stars; sun ≠ moon; fire ≠ water; air ≠ earth; male ≠ female; mountain ≠ plain; road ≠ wilderness; shade ≠ sun are frequently invoked features of the natural world found mentioned throughout the Qur'an. They appear to have something in common with similar pairs of opposites, near-opposites and other pairs of ethical moral religious values and qualities invoked in and found also throughout the Qur'an: guidance/salvation ≠ perdition; faith ≠ unbelief; good ≠ evil; obedience ≠ rebelliousness; lying ≠ truth-talking; violence ≠ peace; patience ≠ impatience; kindness ≠ brutality; frivolity ≠ seriousness; knowledge ≠ ignorance; civility ≠ barbarism. These in turn have something in common with the oppositions that designate the last things such as: heaven ≠ hell; reward ≠ punishment; delight ≠ suffering; peace ≠ torment. Finally, these oppositions and dualities resonate with those thought special because they designate names of God Himself: the Manifest ≠ the Hidden; the First ≠ the Last;<sup>33</sup> the Merciful ≠ the Wrathful; the Rewarding ≠ the Punishing; the Angry ≠ the Clement.<sup>34</sup>

The late Norman O. Brown made the important remark that it does not matter where you open the Qur'an, one can start reading it anywhere and find that one is 'in the right place'<sup>35</sup> as it were:<sup>36</sup>

It does not matter in what order you read the Koran; it is all there all the time; and it is supposed to be there all the time in your mind or at the back of your mind, memorised and available for appropriate quotation and collage into your conversation or your writing or your action.

The theme and/or 'device' – surely it is with this figure that structure and content are most perfectly melded – of opposites and duality in the Qur'an helps account for the truth of Brown's observation. In short, it is at least partly due to duality and opposition that the Qur'an can be read as 'making sense' despite its notoriously fragmented, almost adamantly anti-narrative structure and content (these two are oppositions as well: narrative/anti-narrative). To repeat: duality and opposition is a prominent element of the Qur'an's text grammar.<sup>37</sup> Duality and opposition compensate, to some extent, for the lack of (apparent or explicit) linear narrative continuity, unity or cohesion in the Qur'an (the Qur'an is a Book unlike other books). As structural and semantic constants they lend coherence to the text: the interplay of oppositions and dualities is a thread that runs through the text. Duality and opposition, in fact, may be thought to provide something of a narrative spine or stream connecting uninterrupted throughout the Qur'an from the 'beginning' to the 'end'.

So prominent a feature of the Qur'anic landscape is, it would seem, worthy of the kind of treatment Van Duzer has given the Homeric epics.<sup>38</sup> This study has identified the structure of duality as being particularly operative in what the author has called 'saving devices'.<sup>39</sup> Insofar as the epic genre has been given definition, at least in the Western imagination, by Homer's great poems, this duality can thus be seen as a key element of that genre. Here are obvious implications for the study of the Qur'an as epic, something that has not really attracted the attention of contemporary scholarship.<sup>40</sup> This is so, certainly, because the Qur'an is profoundly concerned with salvation through an epic struggle. In terms of culture, such a struggle is described by the journey from ignorance to knowledge. At the individual level, in the person of the prophet or messenger, the struggle is against such ignorance in the form of opposition and persecution.

The dualities, oppositions, pairs and symmetries in the Qur'an appear in at least two ways: (1) explicit; (2) implicit. Explicit dualities such as heaven and hell or the heavens and the earth occur throughout the Qur'an in numerous passages. As such, they may be thought categorical, given. In their elements there is no room for changing the terms of the symmetries or dualities thus announced. Dualities also appear implicitly, as when the word 'heaven' may appear without its mate (cf. *zawj*) and the mind is drawn to complete a conceptual syzygy or duality through its own

'fluent logic' of the imagination. In such an instance there may be one or several mental responses to the original code word 'heaven'. This could be 'hell' it could be 'earth'. Or it could be only partly conceptualised, as when the mind is not immediately forced to contemplate or otherwise engage with some 'concrete' and explicit pair of dualities or oppositions, by virtue of the occurrence of only one element of a duality or opposition at whose mention its mate is immediately brought to mind.<sup>41</sup> Other terms such as 'belief' simply cannot occur to the 'Qur'anised' consciousness without summoning the opposite value of 'unbelief'. When the task of completing the duality is left to the reader then the dynamic may be thought more purely 'literary' than doctrinal and as a result more profound and pervasive: the reader, in a way, becomes the conduit of the revelation in a decidedly direct manner by virtue of this autonomous and nearly automatic participation.<sup>42</sup> In such a relationship the distance between subject and object is obscured and confused: the reader, now the object, is actually read by the Qur'an, now the subject.<sup>43</sup> Thus we have another apocalyptic reversal of dualities and oppositions and one which must surely help account for the passion and intensity of the 'Qur'anic experience'. In addition, it may also help us understand such epithets of personification as 'the wise Qur'an' in addition to such 'supra-rational' references in the tradition to the Qur'an as 'the brother' of the Prophet.<sup>44</sup>

Years ago Izutsu, building on the edifice of structuralism, drew our attention to the semantic and semiotic importance of what he termed 'key Qur'anic terms', defined as terms which have as a mate a polar opposite: *ẓann* ≠ *yaqīn*; *kufr* ≠ *īmān*; *jahl* ≠ *islām*, and so on.<sup>45</sup> Izutsu was intrigued by the historical period bridging the Islamic Age and the *jāhili* Age of Ignorance or Barbarism; 'the period ... illustrates the semantic phenomenon in which the key terms forming a system are disintegrated, transformed in their connotative structure, modified in their combinations, and, with the addition of a number of new key terms, finally integrated into an entirely different system'.<sup>46</sup> So, apart from their function as an index of apocalyptic, the dualities and oppositions also generate positive, discursive 'logocentric' 'theological' meaning (another pair of opposites: *logos* ≠ *eros*). It is precisely at this nexus or literary feature that the power (*i'jāz*) of the Qur'an may be explained or at least hinted at in articulable terms as the site where primitive/pagan meets its opposite, civilised/monotheist. This is a function of opposition or duality as simultaneously a 'natural' noetic site where magic, poetry, religion, philosophy and mysticism perform their various respective tasks. Here both synaesthesia and synthesis (*jam*<sup>c</sup>) feature as effects of 'reading the Qur'an'. And, perhaps most interestingly, in this way *islām*, as the polar opposite of *jahl* comes to be understood precisely as 'enlightenment' rather than mere submission. Such oppositions provide limits – and therefore psychic relief – to an otherwise insupportably vast and overwhelming spectrum of consciousness.<sup>47</sup> Thus the reading of the Qur'anic text gives wings to the soul at the same time as it anchors it, another coincidence of oppositions.<sup>48</sup>

It is surely interesting to observe in this context that an astonishing number of literary, poetic and rhetorical figures depend for their efficacy upon dualism/opposition/ 'twoness'. This points us in the direction of what might be termed the 'master duality' of the Qur'an, at least in terms of religious ideas. The Qur'an's main 'theological' teaching is divine oneness (the mystical tradition in Islam will insist that the adjective here is redundant – all oneness is divine), and one of the reasons the faithful reader of the Qur'an never tires of affirming this oneness is because it has been read and experienced throughout the text in an almost infinite number of literary contexts through explicit mention or more frequently as an unstated (aniconic) presence opposite the various contrarities, dualities and pairs that *are* explicitly mentioned in the text.<sup>49</sup> These appear in a potentially infinite array of different gradations of intensity, light and shadow, colour and tonality, by virtue of all the multifarious dualities that this same text also enshrines and valourises. Outside the enchanted circle of this reading of a virtually infinite field of interlocking and mutually reinforcing dualities and oppositions, such enthusiasm for the doctrine of oneness is not understood. If we add to the juxtaposition of the idea of divine oneness against and with the many examples of its first immediate opposite (i.e. twoness, and then by extension opposition and duality themselves) the variety of the music upon which is carried this sacred idea (or sacred silence),<sup>50</sup> we can perhaps learn to appreciate something seriously important about the living Qur'an and the way it is read. Then we may begin to grasp how the verb 'to read' becomes a synonym for the verb 'to believe' or 'to serve' in the key of 'bearing witness'.

Despite and because of the incessant invocation of opposition and duality, then, the central notion of oneness shines forth certainly as a theological principle; but from the literary point of view, if this were all there were to be said, the richness of the message of the Qur'an would be poorly served. The challenge of the text – the experience that awaits the reader from just beyond the borders of discourse is the one indicated in the celebrated statement attributed to Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāz (d. 286/899 or 277?/890); 'I know God by means of the bringing together of opposites'.<sup>51</sup>

So the pattern established in the mind of the 'children of the Qur'an' is indeed, to use Nwyia's apt characterisation a 'Qur'anisation' of consciousness – what has perhaps come to be referred to more recently in religious studies as 'soul formation' – heavily dependent upon the always-tending-towards a somewhat Manichean apocalyptic drama of opposition and duality. Things are black or white, *dīn* or *dunyā*, at one level of this consciousness and black *and* white, *dīn and dunyā*, at another level. For Ibn al-ʿArabī 'the world is He/not He'.<sup>52</sup> Eliade's apperception that the coincidence of opposites represents the apocalyptic motif par excellence is suggestive for the way the Qur'an has been read in the upper floors of the library. We have already mentioned Abū Sa'īd – a hero and source for Ibn al-ʿArabī who, in turn, must have had a role in the education of Cusanus (d. 1453) who, unlike many of his European

contemporaries, found a congenial vision of God in the Qur'an. So congenial, it seems, that he translated much of it, an activity that may have had a role in his own elaboration of his famous doctrine of *coincidentia oppositorum*.<sup>53</sup>

The leitmotif of duality and opposition also helps us read those dual usages which we are 'Qur'anically' conditioned to read as yet another miraculous meaning event involving twoness as the polar opposite of sacred oneness. The enigmatic 'two gardens' (Q. 55:46 and Q. 55:62), the 'two Easts and the two Wests' have elicited much commentary.<sup>54</sup> However, before commentary can begin there must be an assent to the dignity of the text. That is, it must be deemed 'worth the effort'. It may be that these otherwise mysterious and enigmatic dualities are seen as 'worth the effort' precisely because of the continuous occurrence throughout the rest of the Qur'an of multifarious dualities and oppositions. So, the grammatical dual figure here is taken quite readily to the bosom of the exegetical exercise, if not by every single *mufasssir*, as another divine meaning event, even if it is perhaps a bit more opaque than others.<sup>55</sup>

For Ibn al-<sup>c</sup>Arabī 'one' is not a number: God is certainly single (*fard*), but this is a singleness beyond numeration. According to Ibn al-<sup>c</sup>Arabī the first single (odd) number is three, not one. 'One' is the source of numeration, whence all numbers from two upwards are derived. Creation depends upon knowledge and therefore involves *tathlīth*, or conceptual 'triangulation': there is the thing, it's opposite, and the space between that allows one to see the difference between the two.<sup>56</sup> This syzygy of two and one wrought and uttered in such an epical key is responsible for our experience of the Qur'an as a deeply religious and simultaneously ungothic or antigothic Book because the basic initiatory vehicle of the operative revelatory duality is precisely the natural world on the horizontal, *afāqī* plane. To say this is not to imply that the Qur'an is uninterested in 'heaven' or the unseen realm. On the contrary, belief in the Unseen (*al-ghayb*) is a requirement the Qur'an itself stipulates for its reader (Q. 2:3). Rather, to say such a thing is more to emphasise what Fazlur Rahman referred to as the non-dualistic nature of the Qur'an for which the characteristically Qur'anic theme of 'signs' is the logical coordinate. This is not necessarily 'nature mysticism' but rather a revelation of the true status and meaning of nature, in line with the much quoted aya Q. 41:53, *In time We shall make them understand our signs in nature, and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth*.<sup>57</sup>

The universe, the cosmos, and everything in it are natural phenomena. The life of the human soul, and, of course, the Qur'anic revelation itself, are, according to the Qur'an, signs that point beyond themselves to their true source and meaning: the transcendent oneness of God. Thus the paradox of monotheism<sup>58</sup> finds its Qur'anic expression in the fact that a thing is both itself and something ultimately and unimaginably greater than itself: He/not He.<sup>59</sup>

To sum up the discussion of duality and opposition:

- 1) Duality and opposition are, by virtue of their strong presence, one of the distinguishing features of the Qur'an. Here it should be added that because of their elemental and universal nature, they are easily translated into other languages and cultures;
- 2) Duality and opposition present a (as distinct from *the*) conceptual 'stream' or 'spine' in the Qur'an in the absence of a strong unbroken narrative line from 'beginning' to 'end'. Thus this interplay of an apparently infinite number of interlocking pairs and oppositions is an element in what has aptly been referred to as the 'Qur'anisation of consciousness' amongst the believers/readers of the text;
- 3) Such pairs and oppositions evoke the existence of an overall, master opposition, in line with the theological perspective of the Qur'an. The virtually ceaseless invocation of 'twoness' (whether positive, negative or mixed) evokes its opposite, namely oneness. Thus duality and opposition are a mode of the aniconic *tawhīd* so characteristic of the Qur'anic theophany and Islamic thought in general;
- 4) Duality, thus accordingly a feature of the text grammar of the Qur'an, may also be at work in the numerous instances of another literary device trailing clouds of apocalyptic glory: typological figuration. It is to this subject we now turn.

### **Typological Figuration and the Apocalypse of Reunion**

The Qur'an, as is well known, is not without a centre of narrative gravity despite its notoriously challenging narrative flow. This becomes apparent especially when we are being told about the experience of a particular prophet or messenger with their proper community. History, and the rise and fall of civilisations and cultures are, according to the Qur'an, punctuated by the appearance of these special envoys.<sup>60</sup> Thus their epic struggle in the divinely inspired effort to guide humans, in whatever community they have existed (prophets have been sent to all of them according to Q. 16:36) from ignorance to enlightenment and from savagery to civilisation. However, such narrative continuity is frequently difficult to detect 'on the page'. In these instances, as has been said repeatedly above, certain characteristic Qur'anic literary features maintain the integrity and coherence of the whole in the absence of such explicit and continuous, unbroken narrative dramatic movement. We have suggested that, in addition to other specific tasks or meanings they may have, duality and opposition do this. However, there are many other apocalyptic literary features and devices at play in the text of the Qur'an. A discussion of a particularly powerful one, one that seems to be formally and thematically related to duality in a distinctive and profound way, typological figuration, will conclude this essay.

The only sura of the Qur'an universally recognised to have a 'proper' beginning, middle and end is, of course, *Sūrat Yūsuf* (Q. 12).<sup>61</sup> For our purposes here, we would only point out that the conclusion of this sura emphasises the happy reunion of Joseph with his people and most significantly with his father, Jacob. The relevance of this to our theme is that here in *Sūrat Yūsuf* it is emphasised that the major function of apoclypse is to reveal: there is no 'End of the World'. In the course of telling the story of Joseph and so evoking the relationship between himself and Joseph to his audience, Muḥammad is seen, by virtue of such a typologically generated – or if you prefer, 'spiritual' kinship with all of the prophets and messengers, as being reunited with his true family who, in the very event of such reunion are given a new measure of divine guidance, another revelation, another apocalypse.<sup>62</sup> Here it is useful to recall Michael Zwettler's article 'Mantic Manifesto' for the formal and stylistic identity it suggests between history's movement (type/antitype) and the pervasive motif of 'pairing' (*zawj/tazawwuj*) he so persuasively sketches there.<sup>63</sup> Zwettler's work strongly suggests that frequent deployment of typological figuration (or 'exegesis') found in the Qur'an (and by extension, Islamic thought as such) deserves a much more elaborate and thorough treatment than it has heretofore enjoyed. While it has long been recognised as an important and persuasive literary feature of the Bible, typology in the Qur'an has not yet been subject to the same kind of thorough examination we find, for example, in Goppelt's classic study.<sup>64</sup> There it was demonstrated beyond any possible doubt that the authors of the New Testament saw in the life and teachings of Jesus a typological repetition (*cum* fulfilment) of a variety of distinctive themes and motifs of the Old Testament. Thus, the New Testament becomes a kind of *tafsīr* of the Hebrew Bible and the mission of Jesus is perfectly and seamlessly identified (at least for the authors and their readers) with what has come before. As a result, there is no doubt about the identity of such Old Testament types as 'the Lamb of God' or 'the Suffering Servant'. Even the experience of Jonah in the belly of the whale is seen as a prefigurement of the mission and role of Jesus, especially his period in the tomb before the resurrection.<sup>65</sup>

Through the typological identification of the Prophet Muḥammad with all previous prophets (both those known and unknown) the Qur'an may be thought to decode the great puzzling nightmare of history, its chaos of religions – and point a way out. In short, it reveals or perhaps more accurately lifts the veil (Ar. *kashf* = Grk *apocālypsis*) covering the true nature of the relationship between historical reality, spiritual reality and social reality. Most importantly, of course, it makes clear the relationship between God and the world through prophethood and messengership without which there would be no understanding. The Qur'an is, in short, an apoclypse. And inasmuch as the heart of this revelation or apocalypse is articulated in the 'return' of the prophetic reality to his people (as, for example, the antitype of the

reunion of Joseph with his tribe), then it may be thought an apocalypse of union or reunion.

In 'Mantic Manifesto', Zwettler concentrated not on *Sūrat Yūsuf*, but on *Sūrat al-Shu'arā'* (Q. 26) to make his point. He demonstrates that it actually functions as a catalogue of prophetic types (*zawj*) and their opposites (in this case precisely *not* antagonists, but rather antitypes or reflections of the original type) in order to demonstrate how Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh is one of their number. To be sure, he does address the problem of the antagonist or 'enemy' of the prophet. It is not Iblīs or Shayṭān or even the Quraysh, at least not on the literary level. Rather it is the poet. And here is where Zwettler brings home another important insight. The Qur'an is not poetry. But this is not because it is not 'poetic' or aesthetically compelling. It is because the Prophet Muḥammad was not a poet. The social function of the poet was utterly different and in many ways antithetical to the social function of the prophet. The poet was the champion of the status quo at best, as we are familiar with his pre-Islamic avatar. The prophet was the champion of change. The poet's talents were for hire, he was not expected to enunciate a moral or ethical code, much less exemplify one,<sup>66</sup> and most importantly, the source of his inspiration was not God through an angel, rather it was any one of a number of lesser pneumatic beings, jinn or gods, the acceptance of which entailed the unforgivable sin identified by the Qur'an as *shirk*. By ranging the whole history of monotheistic prophecy against the concerns of the institution of Arabic poetic culture, the Qur'an identifies the experience of Muḥammad with the experience of earlier prophets from Abraham to Jesus. As is well known, so congenial was such a typological argument that later Islamic tradition posited the existence of 124,000 prophets to account for the whole sweep and progress of earthly human history, even if the history of humanity, according to the Qur'an, has its beginning in a much more mysterious realm.<sup>67</sup>

A perfect, concise and persuasive example of the centrality of typological figuration may be seen in the comparison and ultimate identification of Muḥammad's mission with that of the prophet Ṣāliḥ. The journey from history to myth to apocalypse and the return to history is charted in the typological relationship established between Ṣāliḥ and Thamūd and the Prophet Muḥammad and his community. Jaroslav Stetkevych has illuminated the way in which Islam sees Muḥammad's mission as a simultaneous identification with and fulfilment of Ṣāliḥ's mission in his discovery of the golden bough which was buried in the apoclyptic ruins of Thamūd.<sup>68</sup> The great apocalyptic scream (*al-ṣayḥa*) here represents the totality of the drama of prophecy and its rejection in one near-synaesthetic gesture. Al-Tha'labī's version of the cataclysm is instructive:<sup>69</sup>

There came upon them a *scream* from heaven, in which there was the sound of every thunderbolt and the voice of every thing on earth that

has a voice, and it cut through their hearts and breasts, and they all perished, young and old.

Such a dramatic image seems to transcend, by virtue of its power and intensity, the usual 'common sense' boundaries of time and space. The action and event of this scream is such that it may have had a beginning, but it certainly has not ended. It offers a clear example of a 'law of perception' articulated in one of the more formative and powerful explorations of apocalypse published over 60 years ago:<sup>70</sup>

It would perhaps be difficult to prove completely the axiom that objects do not cease to exist when we have stopped looking at them. Yet it is hard to see how we could maintain a consistent sense of reality without assuming it, and everyone does so assume it in practice and would even assert it as the first article of common sense. For some reason it is more difficult to understand that events do not necessarily cease to exist when we have stopped experiencing them, and those who would assert, as an equally obvious fact, that all things do not dissolve in time any more than they do in space are very rare.

Typology requires symmetry. Symmetry requires duality. Duality is a *sine qua non* of typological figuration. By virtue of compelling symmetry and therefore sacred meaning, the scream, which according to the logic of narrative occurred in the past, continues to be heard behind the music of every Qur'anic aya through the transformative power of the apocalyptic imagination. It is this looming divine presence-*cum*-intervention which conditions the experience of the Qur'an.

Another literary scholar, this time one from beyond the borders of Islamic studies, Northrop Frye, has offered the very helpful observation, with regard to typological figuration, that it is more powerful than logical argumentation precisely because its rhetorical verve is felt to derive from some supra-logical region. There is a similarity between 'causality' and 'typology'. Both are rhetorically effective. The main difference is that causality is dependent upon ratiocination, investigation of phenomena, and the 'scientific' method. As such, it is concerned mainly with the past 'on the principle that the past is all we genuinely or systematically know.' Typology does relate to the future, and the faculties by which it is enlivened are 'faith, hope and vision'. Logical, causal thinking functions in one 'tense' whereas typological thinking assumes a future, and can even transcend time itself. Though I am not aware of Frye's actually saying this, typological figuration deploys, exploits and ultimately unites such vulgar 'illusions' as past, present and future. To the apocalyptic imagination, time is that which keeps everything from happening all at once. Typological thinking bespeaks a desire to awaken from the 'nightmare of history' and is 'essentially a revolutionary form of thought and rhetoric'.<sup>71</sup> This inspiring and lucid reading of the Biblical code provides a largely unused key for

unlocking the secret of the celebrated, so-called 'licit magic' (*sihr ḥalāl*) of the Qur'an and a means of elevating the reading dynamic above the plane of politics and history with the hope of revealing something distinctive, instructive and at the same time universal about the text and its ways.

In the 'logic' (which transcends logic) of typology, Augustus can be both Aeneas and Romulus redivivus. Since Goppelt's groundbreaking work on the power and prevalence of typological figuration at work in the New Testament, we have grown accustomed to recognising this figure and its persuasive rhetorical poetic efficacy in various settings. It has been pointed out that our own confidence in the process of history is probably derived, whether wittingly or unwittingly, from the compelling meaning which typological figuration proffers.<sup>72</sup>

The old world has ended, a new one is about to be born, those who perceive this shift and are sympathetic to it will be persecuted and ostracised for merely understanding. Therefore, this new and numerically insignificant community depends upon the revelation for encouragement, solace and promise that it will all work out despite the serious hardships and obstacles it will undoubtedly be their fate to encounter and suffer. Paradise, for example, is described in the Qur'an whenever the Hour or the End is mentioned, and at no other time.<sup>73</sup> Typology is a figure which unites time: 'the type exists in the past and the antitype in the present'. This reflects a basic attitude towards the world and one's place in it with regard to history. History now assumes heretofore unwitting importance: its secret is revealed. It now represents a process through which 'meaning' may be identified with human experience: even if all of the details of that meaning are not completely clear now, they will be made clear in due course. When this happens, the present magically becomes the antitype or repetition of previous history but with the added luminosity of the truth revealed, the code cracked.<sup>74</sup> We now understand. We are enlightened. Such understanding may also acquire the features of revolution, as when the past is simply obliterated and rendered no longer pertinent. Frye uses the image of waking from sleep:<sup>75</sup>

When we wake up from sleep, one world is simply abolished and replaced by another. This suggests a clue to the origin of typology: it is essentially a revolutionary form of thought and rhetoric. We have revolutionary thought whenever the feeling 'life is a dream' becomes geared to an impulse to waken from it.

The prominence of typology in the Qur'an and, for that matter, in *tafsīr* as a hermeneutic strategy, suggests an association of this literary conceit with what Collins so aptly describes as the 'apocalyptic imagination'. In this context, what is important to observe is that not only does typology move through time and transcend time (Frye's words) but in fact, as is argued here, typology frequently erases or collapses

time. It is the obliteration of time – analogous perhaps to the splitting of the atom – that would seem to summon up the powerful ‘literary’ energies and concerns of *bona fide* apocalyptic.

So, to (temporarily) conclude this exploratory meditation on the apocalyptic nature of the Qur'an, it seems clear that while duality and opposition provide a skeleton, typological figuration puts the flesh on that skeleton, and that when this happens the apocalyptic or revelatory reality is truly born. The apocalypse enters history once again with the experience and preaching of Muḥammad, who is both the symbol and exemplar of all previous prophetic types. This constant recurrence of the pervasive figure of typology, not just in *Sūrat al-Shu'arā'*<sup>76</sup> but throughout the Qur'an, provides a dramatic counterpart to the narrative stream or spine supplied and mirrored by continuous and mutifarious *enantiodromia*. But note that typological figuration applies to both the prophets and their communities. In hearing the Qur'an, the first Muslims heard their situation compared to, and in some sense identified with and explained by, the ordeals experienced by the Children of Israel. To quote from a leading scholar of Jewish apocalyptic:<sup>76</sup>

In the pressing need to define spiritual identity in the face of challenge, and to sustain hope, a basic perspective is nevertheless identifiable around which apocalyptic systems grow: it is the perspective of apocalyptic eschatology which furnishes a way of viewing reality which denies the apparent superior position of opposing groups of any validity vis-à-vis divine purpose.

The narrative resonance enhances and intensifies the interplay of dualities and oppositions with the personification or ‘embodiment’ of this in the typological iteration or rendering of Muḥammad’s prophethood. As such, two modes of *enantiodromia* are joined together, both pointing to the erasure of time and history – or perhaps even time and space<sup>77</sup> – in a persuasive and compelling gesture of the apocalyptic imagination. The apocalyptic secret is revealed. The chaos of mutually exclusive, historical religions is now transformed into a harmony of periodic divine revelation, the reading of which is made possible by the newly revealed but simultaneously ancient alphabet of prophets and divine messengers who are now shown to be profoundly related and of one purpose. This new alphabet of reality forms the language for the proper reading of history.

Based on comparison and contrast between two principles, the typological figuration – ultimately dependent upon symmetry and duality – so clearly and unambiguously at work in the Qur'an may be thought to articulate in a special and discrete way the characteristic apocalyptic élan of the Qur'an by standing for the great secret which the Prophet Muḥammad and the Qur'an unveiled to the chaos of religions that confronted him and that he himself confronted on behalf of God. That secret is none other than

the historical and spiritual (for lack of a better word) interconnectedness and kinship of all prophetic messages, their Prophets and their followers.

Another key characteristic of typological figuration is that, like duality itself, it is generative. Once the general pattern is introduced, it becomes a matter of the natural and unstoppable 'logic of the imagination'<sup>78</sup> to apply it to a number of different contexts and subjects. Thus we see typological iterations of the Prophet Muḥammad in the characterisations of those later figures of religious authority such as the first four caliphs (and, in a sense, all subsequent caliphs), the Imāms of the Shī'ā, the great imāms of the legal tradition (cf. al-Shāfi'ī's *Risāla* for the distinctive image of the Prophet Muḥammad that inhabits that work), and last but certainly not least, the Ṣūfī shaykh, who may be considered by his disciples something of a holographic reiteration of prophetic authority. Thus typological figuration together with duality and opposition, as key elements of the Qur'an's distinctive textual grammar, are clearly communicated to a vast readership and audience far beyond Arabic linguistic boundaries.<sup>79</sup>

## Conclusion

With the foregoing we have tried to stress the value and importance of looking at the Qur'an as a distinctive, powerful and effective instance of imaginative communication. That is to say, a bridge between the known and the unknown, presented as a linguistic performance in a particular time and place. The power and efficacy of this performance are such that the universality of its message and the universality of the techniques by means of which this message is communicated indicate that it is the proper literary heritage of humanity in general and Islam in particular. We have attempted to look at the Qur'an quite detached from theological or doctrinal preoccupations and suppositions to examine the more purely figurative and poetic elements of the text. All of this has been in aid of a single primary question: how does the Qur'an continue to live such an extraordinarily robust life as a source of moral values, religious commitments, aesthetic orientations and information? The answer we have arrived at is, we think, quite clear. Such an answer helps us also to understand one of the more interesting, if not potentially puzzling, functions of prophethood as acknowledged by the Islamic tradition: the prophet as translator (*mutarjim*) of the workings of the sacred imagination.

## NOTES

I would like to thank Professor Issa Boullata who many years ago expressed to me his warm encouragement and interest in the subject as part of his *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'an*, (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000). For a number of reasons, such an article had to wait until now to see the light of day.

1 For a useful differentiation of these terms as they are used in the study of the problem outside scholarship on Islam, see David Hellholm, 'Introduction', in David Hellholm (ed.), *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism, Uppsala, August 12–17, 1979* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1983), pp. 1–5. See also Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: the Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979). Throughout the present article we will be using such terms according to their understanding in contemporary Biblical and literary scholarship: 1) apocalypse is the thing itself (as is sometimes apocalyptic in its nominal intention); 2) apocalypticism is the activity either social, intellectual/literary or a combination of both; 3) apocalyptic is the adjective that may refer to either or both of the first two. (See below for the working definition of apocalypse as a literary genre.) A more recent usage, also adopted here, that indicates all three modes is the anglicised form of the original Greek: *apocālypsis* < apocalypse.

2 David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton, New Jersey: The Darwin Press, 2002). In this particular instance the noteworthy observation is made that among the early Islamicate apocalyptic works (e.g. Nu'aym ibn Hammād al-Marwazī's (d. 228/844) *Kitāb al-ftan*) very little of the Qur'an is found either referred to or quoted. There is another type of historical study of interest, that examines the way in which the Muslim community and Islam was viewed 'from the outside' as a sign of the apocalypse expected by other groups. See for example Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1997).

3 A most suggestive and useful methodological tool fashioned by Angelika Neuwirth, in one of the earlier numbers of this journal: 'Negotiating Justice: A Pre-canonical Reading of the Qur'anic Creation Accounts', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 2:1 (2000) pp. 25–41 and 2:2 (2000), pp. 1–18; also Neuwirth, 'Referentiality and Textuality in *Surat al-Hijr*: Some Observations on the Qur'anic "Canonical Process" and the Emergence of a Community' in Issa J. Boullata (ed.), *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'ān* (London: Curzon, 2000), pp. 143–72. Finally, the term is used by Neuwirth again in the more recent pages of this journal: 'Orientalism in Oriental Studies? Qur'anic Studies as a Case in Point', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 9:2 (2007), pp. 115–27.

4 John J. Collins (ed.), *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, Semeia, 14 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), p. 9.

5 This quotation is also from John J. Collins, this time from his article 'Apocalypse: An Overview' in Lindsay Jones (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd edn (USA: MacMillan Reference, 2005). 'This definition has attained wide consensus' (Jonathan Z. Smith, 'Cross-Cultural Reflections on Apocalypticism' in Adela Yarbro Collins (ed.), *Ancient and Modern Perspectives on the Bible and Culture* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), pp. 281–5). See also Jonathan Z. Smith, 'Wisdom and Apocalyptic' in Birger A. Pearson (ed.), *Religious Syncretism in Antiquity: Essays in Conversation with Geo Widengren* (Missoula: Scholars Press, for the American Academy of Religion and the Institute of Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1975), pp. 131–56.

6 John J. Collins, 'Response' in the 'Islamicate Apocalypsis: Methodological Considerations' American Academy of Religion Panel, San Diego, November 2007.

7 Bernard McGinn, John J. Collins and Stephen J. Stein (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* (New York: Continuum, 1999) which consists of three volumes: Collins (ed.), *Volume 1: The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*; McGinn (ed.), *Volume 2: Apocalypticism in Western History and Culture*; Stein (ed.), *Volume 3: Apocalypticism in the Modern and the Contemporary Age*. While *Volume 1* contains an index of ancient sources (Hebrew Bible, New Testament, Dead Sea Scrolls, pseudepigrapha, Rabbinic texts, Classical

authors, Christian authors, Persian texts and so on), there seems to be no room for anything to do with the Qur'an, even by way of comparison. As such the Qur'an appears to represent a perhaps unconscious terminus *ad quem* for *Volume 1*. Thus we hope for a fuller treatment in *Volume 2*, but nothing approaching an adequate preliminary discussion is to be found. The author, a prominent sociologist of Islam, spends all of four pages (*Vol. 2*, pp. 239–44) on the Qur'an within a larger chapter entitled 'Islamic Apocalypticism in the Classical Period'. Here the main focus is on religio/political conflicts (*fitan/malāḥim*) and although the author promises to pay full attention to the place of apocalypticism in this article, the result is woefully inadequate as there seems to be no interest in the advances made in the study of the genre over the last several years. It is symptomatic of the mysterious problem that not even the editors of the publication, many of whom are responsible for these advances, felt it necessary to correct this or intervene. At the very least, we are now in a position to begin a discussion on whether or not the Qur'an belongs in such a volume. The question is skirted here. The name Muḥammad (the Prophet) does not even occur in the index. In the final volume there is, of course, due attention to movements within Islamic history. But once again, the *sui generis* imaginative expression that may be seen as the literary or imaginative ground (*l'imaginaire*) for all of these movements, i.e. the Qur'an itself, is neglected. Indeed, the Qur'an is conspicuously absent in the apparatus criticus appended at the end in the 'Index of Biblical [!] References' (pp. 507–10).

8 David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 2002), pp. 270–4. These are identified in order: *al-sā'ā* (the Hour [of Judgement]), *amr*, *fitna*, *ajal* and *yawm*.

9 Cook, *Studies*, p. 301, quoting Andrew Rippin, in Stefan Wild (ed.), *The Qur'an as Text* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 125–36 (quotation from p. 125). Cook also refers to an unpublished study by Fred Donner.

10 See the more positive comments by Fred Leemhuis, art. 'Apocalypse' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*: 'as a prophetic, revealed message, the Qur'ān is to a large extent apocalyptic yet there are parts of it that carry this theme in a more intense manner'.

11 One is reminded here of the sagacious observation: 'the story of scholarly error is largely one of questions wrongly put because their presuppositions were wrong; correspondingly, the story of scholarly achievement can almost be summed up in successive refinements of terminology' (Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (3 vols. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1974), vol. 1, p. 46).

12 E.D. Hirsch Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), esp. pp. 68–102. This assumption is also heavily relied upon in Collins, *Apocalyptic*; see p. 6.

13 Some of these are: 'history', 'prophecy', 'law', 'fable', 'prayer', 'psalm', 'oaths' and so on. See, for example, A.T. Welch, art. 'al-Ḳur'ān' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn. Mohammed Arkoun has criticised Welch's approach in his *Lectures du Coran* (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1982) where he commends the study of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī's *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān* as a starting point for an appreciation of the complexities and, if you like, divine artistry, of the Qur'an.

14 Paul Casanova, *Mohammed et la Fin du Monde: Étude critique sur l'Islam primitive* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1911–24).

15 An early version of such a grid appears in John J. Collins (ed.), *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre, Semeia*, 14 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), p. 28.

16 Cf. the classic *Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism*, first published in 1923 by C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards, and transformed over the years with revisions and additions, published in more or less final form (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949) (and continuously reprinted since).

17 Cf. the remark in Henry Corbin, *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études: Section des sciences religieuses, 1969–70* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1970), pp. 236–7, 'this closed circuit [of oppositions] is its own justification, because by its very existence, its opposite, that is absolute transcendence, is indicated' (my translation). It may be that this statement is informed by Corbin's earlier study of al-Sijistānī, *Kashf al-mahjūb*.

18 Angelika Neuwirth, 'Symmetrie und paarbildung in der Koranischen Eschatologie. Philologisch-Stilistisches zu Surat ar-Rahman', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 50:1 (1984), pp. 443–75. This article should be read by every student of Islam and the Qur'an. The author acknowledges a debt to the earlier groundbreaking exploration of the afterlife in which pertinent and lucid observations on the role of duality in the Qur'anic *Weltanschauung* were offered, possibly for the first time in modern scholarship: Subhi Saleh's [Subḥī al-Ṣāliḥ], *La Vie future selon le Coran* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1971); this is the author's doctoral dissertation written in 1954 under the guidance of Louis Massignon, however, the topic is left comparatively undeveloped. See now the more recent article by M.A.S Abdel Haleem on *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* in which many, but not all, of Neuwirth's conclusions are validated: 'Context and Internal Relationships: Keys to Qur'anic Exegesis – A Study of *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* (Qur'ān Chapter 55)' in G.R. Hawting and Abel-Kader A. Shareef, *Approaches to the Qur'an* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 71–98. See now also the excellent discussion by Sabine Schmidtke, art. 'Pairs and Pairing' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*.

19 M.A.S Abdel Haleem, 'Introduction' in *The Qur'an: A New Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. ix–xx. The author continues in a vein which is in harmony with the general thesis of this article: 'This sense of balance in the text is continued in passages where the Prophet is instructed to say, "Now the truth has come from your Lord: let those who wish to believe in it do so, and let those who wish to reject it do so" (Q. 18:29) and "There is no compulsion in religion: true guidance has become distinct from error" (Q. 2:56) (one of the names the Qur'an gives for itself is *al-Furqān* – "the book that distinguishes [right from wrong]" 25:1)'. Here the author refers to a work by A. Nawfal, *al-I'jāz al-'adad li'l-Qur'ān al-karīm* (Cairo: n.p., 1976). Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate it. In addition to the articles by Neuwirth and Abdel Haleem mentioned in note 18 above, see also Schmidtke, 'Pairs and Pairing'.

20 This patristic word should be taken here in the sense which comes in from the Greek *enantiodromein* 'something running in the opposite direction', meaning in this context the 'play of opposites'. This meaning should be contrasted with the perhaps more familiar Jungian usage adapted to the concerns of individuation in which the oppositions inherent in the undifferentiated *massa confusa* tend to become each other. See the comments in Cyril O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse: Jacob Boehme's Haunted Narrative* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002) p. 40, p. 247. Obviously, this interplay of opposition ceaselessly expressed throughout the Qur'an would have serious implications for the form and contents of all Islamicate mystical discourse, and in some of these subsequent contexts one may perceive something of a more purely Jungian *enantiodromia*. Here we are concerned solely with the Qur'an.

21 This is a reference to the groundbreaking book by John Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1989; rev. edn Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988).

22 Mircea Eliade, 'La Coincidentia oppositorum et le mystère de la totalité', *Eranos-Jahrbücher* 27 (1958), pp. 195–236, p. 234.

23 A 'weak' example of such eradication may be seen in the philological opinion that the two gardens of Q. 55 should be understood as a figure for one vast garden (Neuwirth, 'Symmetry', pp. 460–1 [pp. 18–19]). A 'strong' example would be the conceptual joining (*ijtimā'*) referred to in Abū Sa'īd's remark (see below). In either case, what Neuwirth so perfectly characterises as

the 'deeply connected logic of the imagination' (*fortlaufender Logik der Imagination*) (p. 454 [p. 12]) is obviously in operation in either instance.

24 In what may be referred to as the 'mystical perspective', time and history cease when they are perceived as illusory.

25 Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, p. 12.

26 Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, p. 13, citing Paul Ricoeur, 'Preface' to A. Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979), pp. xxii–xxiii.

27 Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, tr. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 70.

28 On this term, see Teun van Dijk, *Some Aspects of Text Grammars* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972).

29 Schmidtke, art. 'Pairs and Pairing'.

30 For a fine introduction to the role of 'enantiodromia' (though I think the word is never used by her) in Ibn al-<sup>c</sup>Arabī, see Sachiko Murata's *The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992).

31 'Work' may conjure, through the accident of etymology, the idea of *Opera* and raises the very interesting question about the operatic aspects of the Qur'an, its recitation (performance) and audition (reception), its power to hold, transport and explain or at least contextualise the great mysteries and deep sufferings of life. A suggestive study that would certainly be of use in such an exploration is the recent *Opera and the Art of Dying* (Cambridge, MA and London, UK: Harvard University Press, 2004) by Linda and Michael Hutcheon. The guiding insight is that audiences of opera are 'participating in a ritual of grieving or experiencing their own mortality by proxy ... they can feel both identification and distance as they – safely – rehearse their own (or a loved one's) demise ... death is made to feel logical or somehow right' (pp. 10–11).

32 Todd Lawson, 'Divine Wrath and Divine Mercy in Islam: Their Reflection in the Qur'an and Quranic Images of Water' in Reinhard Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann (eds), *Divine Wrath and Divine Mercy in the World of Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 248–267.

33 One might add the structurally analogous instance of God as the fourth of three conspirators (Q. 58:7).

34 It is interesting to observe here the type of attributes that are never used to designate God, e.g. happy, gay, laughing, etc. See also the interesting observation in Schmidtke, art. 'Pairs and Pairing', pp. 5–6, on those pairs of divine names that are in fact not opposites, what she refers to as 'double divine epithets'.

35 This may be thought the literary equivalent or analogue of one of Nicholas of Cusa's favorite philosophical and theological maxims: 'God is a sphere whose center is everywhere' (Jasper Hopkins, *Nicholas of Cusa On Learned Ignorance: A Translation and Appraisal of De Docta Ignorantia* (Minneapolis: Arthur J. Banning Press, 1985), p. 59 (see also p. 33)). We know, though, that Nicholas of Cusa (d. 1464) got this image from his reading of Meister Eckhart (d. 1328). On the history of this metaphor see Karsten Harries, 'The Infinite Sphere: Comments on the History of a Metaphor', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 13:1 (1975), pp. 5–15.

36 The passage continues: 'hence the beautiful inconsequentiality of the arrangement of the Suras: from the longest to the shortest. In this respect the Koran is more avant-garde than *Finnegans Wake*, in which the over-all organization is entangled in both linear and cyclical patterns which it is trying to transcend' (Norman O. Brown, 'The Apocalypse of Islam', *Social Text* 8 (Winter, 1983–4), pp. 155–71, p. 166).

37 Brown goes on to say: 'the rejection of linearity involves a rejection of narrative. There is only one decent narrative in the Koran: sura 12, "Joseph", acclaimed by condescending Western Orientalists: for once Muhammad overcame his temperamental incoherence and managed to do it right. The strict sect of the Kharidjis, on this point and on others the voice of strict Islamic consistency, condemned sura 12 on the ground that narrative has no place in revelation. The Koran breaks decisively with that alliance between the prophetic tradition and materialistic historicism – "what actually happened" – which set in with the materialistically historical triumph of Christianity. Hence the strangely abortive and incoherent character of the pseudonarratives in sura 18. Something happened, but this strange revelation manages not to reveal what or why' (Brown, 'The Apocalypse of Islam', p. 166).

38 Chet A. Van Duzer, *Duality and Structure in the Iliad and Odyssey* (New York: P. Lang, 1996).

39 The prime example offered (Van Duzer, *Duality and Structure*, pp. 6–7) is that of the moly, given by Hermes to Odysseus to protect or save him from the wiles of Circe. The moly has a black root and a milk-white flower. Hermes is, as it happens, the god of interpretation (cf. hermeneutic), so it is likely that the giver is as important as the gift. In any case, the moly represents the joining together of two absolute and otherwise diametrically opposed elements (black ≠ white); this is analogous to the way in which dualities seem to function in the Qur'an. Van Duzer goes on to chart the occurrence of numerous other *coincidentia oppositorum* throughout Homer. The moly represents such a *coincidentia* not just from the opposition of colours. It shows that upper and lower (flower and root), mortal and divine, and ease and difficulty, are all combined in the symbol. The classic study of the conjunction of oppositions is of course C.G Jung, *Mysterium Conjunctionis*, tr. R.F.C Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), first published in German in 1956. It was the author's last booklength work.

40 I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mahnaz Batt, who, in 1991 or thereabouts, wrote, while my undergraduate student at the University of Toronto, a most stimulating enquiry entitled 'The Quran as Epic' in one of my courses and thus started me thinking about the question.

41 Cf. Arabic: *zawj*, 'one of a pair or the pair itself'. See below for the importance of this term in the discussion of typological figuration, largely influenced by Northrop Frye and Michael Zwettler (see below), which in this article is seen to emerge and develop from the incessant Qur'anic deployment of polarities, opposites and dualities.

42 In addition to the oft-cited notion of the 'coranization du conscience' from Paul Nwyia (*Exégèse coranique et langue mystique: Nouvel essai sur le lexique technique des mystiques musulmans* (Beirut: Dar El-Machreq, 1970), p. 178), the following succinct quotation from Cragg makes the same point in a slightly different way: 'It has also conditioned the mentality of those generations and their patterns of emotion. Ḥifẓ has effectively Quranized the instincts of mind in Islam to a degree which could not have been the case if the Scripture had been only a written court of appeal. Further, the habit of recital in strict sequence fixed the juxtaposition of Quranic incidents and phrases, endowed them with a sort of sacred logic. Adjacence became significant of meaning and sense was linked strongly with proximity. To have a literature thus scrupulously by heart is to think instinctively in its idiom and its content' (Kenneth Cragg, *The Mind of the Qur'an* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1973), p. 26).

43 For example, such an experience is described by Plotinus through the parable of the reader who forgets they are reading. See Elmer O'Brien (tr. and commentary), *The Essential Plotinus: Representative Treatises from the Enneads* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1981), p. 30.

44 As mentioned, for example, in Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn Arabi*, tr. Liadain Sherrard (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993), p. 37 and p. 71. Such personifications may be thought part of the subtext evoked

in the striking but apt title of the recent book on the Qur'an by Bruce Lawrence, *The Qur'an: A Biography* (London: Atlantic, 2006).

45 Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Koran* (Montreal: McGill, 1966). Surely it is partly due to the success of his discussion here that the Qur'an has been called a 'structuralist's dream', as in Andrew Rippin, 'The Qur'an as Literature: Perils, Pitfalls and Prospects', *Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)* 10:1 (1983), pp. 38–47, p. 38.

46 Something of a linguistic apocalypse perhaps; Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts*, p. 251. Compare this with Brown's observation about the efficacy of the hybridity of a text for creating a new world (and ending an old one) in addition to the observation that cultural hybridity is frequently a feature of apocalypses.

47 Akin, perhaps, to what Frye in another, but possibly related, context refers to as 'the tyranny the idea of unbounded space exerts on the mind' (Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969 [first published 1947]), p. 261.

48 The term opposition as used here does not automatically denote antagonism. It does denote one thing being 'placed across' or 'in front' of another. Obviously, it can also mean antagonism.

49 As may be apparent, oneness may also be considered the opposite of any expression of multiplicity. We are experimenting here with the notion of duality.

50 Bernard P. Dauenhauer, *Silence, the Phenomenon and its Ontological Significance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980).

51 'arāftu Allāh bi-jam'ihī bayn al-ḍiddayn', after which he is reported to have recited Q. 57:3, *He is the First, the Last, the Manifest, the Hidden*. See also Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, p. 77: 'Allāh ta'ālā lā yu'rifa illā bi-jam'ihī bayn al-ʿaddād fi'l-ḥukm 'alayhi bihā'; and Todd Lawson, 'The Hidden Words of Fayz Kashani' in M. Szuppe et al. (eds), *Actes du 4e Colloque de la Societas Iranologica Europaea, Paris, Septembre 1999* (Leuven: 2002), vol. 2, pp. 427–47.

52 It is not impertinent to mention the drama of the Androgynes in the Symposium. 'The audacious wish of these total beings was to scale heaven and set upon the gods; therefore they were punished, the gods cut them in two – and that division was a sexualization. Henceforth each one seeks the part of which it has been deprived, and that quest is the true impetus of action as well as love' (Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, p. 69).

53 Todd Lawson, 'Nicholas of Cusa and Islam: The Presence of Ibn Arabi', unpublished paper presented to the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion in April 2002.

54 In addition to the pioneering reading and scholarship of Neuwirth on this problem, and that of Abdel Haleem, already referred to; see also Schmidtke, art. 'Pairs and Pairing', pp. 5–6.

55 See Neuwirth, 'Symmetry', and her discussion and analysis of the pertinent classical works of Arabic philology, pp. 460–2.

56 Reynold A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, p. 151.

57 Based on the translations of Asad and Yusuf Ali.

58 This is the title of one of the more important later books of Henry Corbin.

59 William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989).

60 One thinks here of those 'agents of civilization' referred to in Frye, *Symmetry*, p. 261.

61 And this very feature was one of the reasons it was rejected as being an authentic part of the Qur'an by a faction of the Khawārij.

62 See the very suggestive comments by Northrop Frye whose study of apocalypse and epic have much relevance for the study of the Qur'an (Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, p. 196).

63 Michael Zwettler, 'Mantic Manifesto: The Sūra of the Poets and the Qur'anic Foundations of Prophetic Authority' in James L. Kugel (ed.), *Poetry and Prophecy: The Beginnings of a Literary Tradition* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 75–119 (notes pp. 205–31).

64 Leonhard Goppelt, *TYPOS: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, tr. Donald H. Madvig (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982; first published in the original German by C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1939).

65 For the 'Lamb of God', 'Suffering Servant' and Jonah as typological prefigurations of Jesus as antitype, see Goppelt, *TYPOS*, p. 189 and pp. 72–3 respectively. For a good example of how the 'typological perspective' has permeated Western art and culture, note the numerous interlocking typological pairs depicted in the Sistine Chapel, both around the walls and on the ceiling. The walls present a parallel history of the 'epic of the Hebrews' compared with the history of Jesus and his followers. The ceiling, to cite just one example, portrays Jonah with the fish beside him turned towards God, as a prefigurement of the resurrection, symbol of the New Covenant which takes the place of the Old Covenant.

66 This is certainly not to suggest that Arabic poetry – pre-Islamic or otherwise – was devoid of concern with ethics or morality. Rather, it is to point to the difference between the social role of the prophet as distinct from, and frequently opposed to, that of the poet. The chief distinction here is that no matter how concerned with morality or ethics a particular poet might have been, he was never expected to be a moral exemplar. The prophet was expected to practice what he preached. Zwettler's discussion, esp. pp. 76–84, is quite useful. The upshot of all of this is that the Qur'an is not poetry because Muḥammad was not a poet, at least not according to the social construction of that role in his own *Sitz im Leben*. But the Qur'an 'as literature' is certainly poetic from another point of view. See for example, Boullata (ed.), *Literary Structures, passim*.

67 I am referring here to the mythopoeic function of Q. 7:172, the day of the covenant or day of *alast*. The classic treatment of the motif in Sūfism is Gerhard Böwering's *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam: The Quranic Hermeneutics of the Sufi Sahl At-Tustari (d. 283/896)* (Berlin & New York: de Gruyter, 1980). On this central theme see now the recent masterful article by Wadād al-Qāḍī, 'The Primordial Covenant and Human History in the Qur'ān' in Ramzi Baalbaki (ed.), *American University of Beirut: The Margaret Weyerhaeuser Jewett Chair of Arabic Occasional Papers (2006)* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, n.d.); cf. also my recent 'The Myth of the False Qur'an and the Day of the Covenant' lecture for the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Chicago, 13 February 2009.

68 Jaroslav Stetkevych, *Muhammad and the Golden Bough: Reconstructing Arabic Myth* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996).

69 Stetkevych, *Muhammad*, translating al-Tha'labī, *Kitāb qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Kāstaliyya, 1298 AH), p. 61. For the scream, see Q. 11:67, Q. 11:94; Q. 15:73, Q. 15:83; Q. 23:41; Q. 29:40; Q. 36:29; Q. 36:49; Q. 36:53; Q. 38:15; Q. 50:42; Q. 54:31; Q. 63:4.

70 Frye, *Symmetry*, p. 247.

71 Frye, *The Great Code*, pp. 82–3.

72 Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 74–87.

73 Leah Kinbergh, art. 'Paradise' in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*; also my 'Paradise in the Qur'an: The Apocalyptic Substrate III' paper presented at the American Oriental Society meeting, Albuquerque, New Mexico in March 2009.

74 Frye, *The Great Code*, pp. 80–1.

75 Frye, *The Great Code*, pp. 82–3.

76 Hanson, *Dawn*, p. 433.

77 Blake, for example, relying on the myth of Atlantis, which during the 'flood of Tharma' was drowned and 'covered', prophesies that the 'Sea of Time and Space' will dry up completely in the apocalypse and Atlantis will once again be revealed (Frye, *Symmetry*, p. 280).

78 Neuwirth, 'Symmetrie', p. 545 [p. 12].

79 This calls to mind Umberto Eco's widely quoted comment, 'I would define the poetic effect as the capacity that a text displays for continuing to generate different readings, without ever being completely consumed' (Umberto Eco, 'Telling the Process', author's postscript in *The Name of the Rose*, tr. W. Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt, 1994), p. 508).

# مجلة الدراسات القرآنية

اقْرَأْ بِرَبِّكَ

المجلد العاشر، العدد الثاني

2008

مجلة علمية محكمة نصف سنوية  
يصدرها مركز الدراسات الإسلامية بكلية الدراسات الشرقية والإفريقية في جامعة لندن