

The State of Persian Poetry After the Revolution of 1978

EARLY YEARS OF MODERN POETRY

The traditional poetry of Iran was structured around abstract and subjective themes. With the help of pre-designated poetic tools, this poetry operated within definitive and established frameworks with no recourse to a historical temporality. Its function (due to abstractions) was always non-temporal and subjective. Traditional poetry was not a true reflection of life: It dealt primarily with subjective issues, and for that, it did not need to tap into the everyday language.

Close to a century ago, and in the process of the modernist movement in Iran – which was the upshot of the expanding trade and cultural relationship of Iran with the West – and along with social changes, poetry also evolved. It cast off its abstract platitudes and started to reflect life.

The vanguards of Iran's poetic transformation were among political activists of those years. Most of them spoke French, Russian, or Turkish. In 1907, two years after the victory of the modernist Constitutional Revolution, ABOLQASEM LAHOOTI composed the first New Poem. He was a rebellious military officer who after a failed coup escaped to the Soviet Union and later died in that land.¹

The first theorist of New Poetry was TAQI RAF'AT. He had studied in the Ottoman Empire and was one of the leaders of the Democratic Party of Azarbaijan. After the failed uprising of Azarbaijan in 1920, and the massacre of its leaders, he in turn killed himself.² He was the precursor to NIMA's New Poetry.

NIMA studied in the French-language school *Alliance* in Tehran, becoming familiar with Western literature and culture. His brother was a devout communist who later disappeared in the former Soviet Union without trace. His unfortunate demise made NIMA distrustful of politics and political life, in spite of the fact that he was influenced by his brother's philosophical system. He never entered politics in his forty years of literary activity, and found time to dedicate himself to the embellishment of his poetry, creating works that became the building blocks of the edifice of Iranian modern poetry.

The first poems of NIMA were published almost two years after the suicide of TAQI RAF'AT. It is not clear from NIMA's writings whether he knew RAF'AT or not. But the fate of his brother was enough to turn his attention away from direct confrontation with power-holders, and from early on he couched his poems in symbolisms and metaphors.

His proclivity to symbols and metaphors was accentuated when REZA SHAH PAHLAVI, after consolidating his hold on power (only a few years into the Constitutional Revolution), ordered a ban on all publications including those that defended NIMA's cause.³ With the coming to power of the *Shah*, NIMA gave up poetry for more than ten years, content to keep with his research and writing of *qasida* and *masnavi*. It was only when a few learned figures started to write in a literary-artistic magazine, run by a literature-loving military man, that he came out of his self-imposed isolation and published his first New Poems. These poems, which had been penned during the frightful years of REZA SHAH, were deeply symbolic and philosophical, to the extent that it was difficult for his handful of readers to understand them. His deep-seated mistrust of politics – which increased by the day – set him on this path until the end of his life. Imagery became the hallmark of his poems. To

understand the ensuing changes in the New Poetry of Iran it is of importance to understand what role symbolism played in this poetry.⁴

Throughout the 16-year reign of REZA SHAH, with the exception of a few poems by NIMA, and one or two meager, unimpressive books by other poets (whose writings were by and large a simple mimicry of Western poets), nothing came into print. During WWII, REZA SHAH was removed from power by the Allies and sent off to the Mauritius Island and his heir expectant, MOHAMMAD REZA, took the throne.

World War II was in full gear. The young *shah* was incapable of handling the affairs of the country. By criticizing some of the more stringent actions of his father, he struck a liberal pose. A form of democracy was slowly taking hold. Political parties and organizations flourished. Many periodicals went to the print. New Poetry also came to be acknowledged in these years.

But, the New Poetry of intellectuals was not the poetry of NIMA. There was a neo-traditional, half-baked poetry, composed under the influence of FEREDOON TAVALLALI – who was one of NIMA's earlier followers. The neo-traditional poetry, which was deeply influenced by French romanticism and symbolism, became the dominant poetry of intellectual publications of the 40's and 50's, and after a hiatus of 20 years, attracted the largest readership in post-Constitutional Revolution period. The Neo-traditionalists found the age of traditionalism in poetry to have passed, but they didn't believe in the unorthodox and symbolic poems of NIMA either. In their belief, the excessive use of imagery, and the envelopment of meaning as such, rendered the poem trivial.

NIMA had broken the traditional paradigm of Persian poetry. He believed that, once versified, any theme could find its own poetic form. He felt the number of paradigms to be unlimited. Neo-traditionalist, however, maintained that rhythms and sounds were so numerous that there was no need to break the meter. Considering poetic expression to be testifying for the times, NIMA believed that details of life must be looked upon with precision, and that words and imagery must be allowed to enter the poem with ease. No word was, according to him, beautiful or uncomely. It is the way they are placed in the poem, and their particular relationship to each other, that signifies their aesthetic value. But Neo-traditionalists saw words divided into ugly and beautiful. In their view, poetry must flow with euphonic, tender, robust, simple, and sentimental words to express emotional states.⁵ In the 40's only this type of poetry was considered New Poetry. In actuality, the dominant poetry in these years was still traditional poetry.

In the late 40's two events took place in the realm of intellectual poetry which, although they did not immediately take effect, in the following decade changed New Poetry forever. First, some young followers of NIMA gave up rhythm altogether and wrote in prose. The authoritative figure among them was the journalist and translator AHMAD SHAMLOO.⁶ The second event was the return of HOOSHANG IRANI from France and the publication of surrealist poems in a magazine called 'Khorous Jangi' ('The Fighting Cock'). Having been exposed to Dadaism and Surrealism in France as a student, IRANI rebelled against the symbolism of NIMA and Neo-traditional poetry, writing critiques and labeling all contemporary poems reactionary. He was an advocate of *Stream of Consciousness* writing and opposed to any poetic commitment. He believed in no pre-established rule. He abandoned rhythm, rhyme, the reflection of social concerns, and paid no attention to the structure of poetry, word, or grammar. His poems came to be known as *Jigh-e Banafsh* (Purple Shriek), after one of his own constructs.⁷

Even though *Jigh-e Banafsh*, as a poetic style, surfaced under different names and forms since that time (occupying a popular place among New Poetry-reading intellectuals) upon publication it was attacked on all fronts by traditionalist and (NIMA-style or Neo-traditionalists) modernist poets. It wasn't for another decade that it could regain its composure.

In 1953 a coup was mounted against the national government of MOHAMMAD MOSSADEQ. The coup, which succeeded to topple the government in a few hours despite the active presence of *Hezb-e Toodeh* (Party of Masses) of Iran, shocked the intellectuals. They soon realized that the accomplishment of political goals was not as easy as they imagined it to be. A coup, though such a treacherous event, is an eye-opener for the intellectuals.

Western, especially French, poets heavily influenced national poetry before the coup. But with the sense of defeat, poets turned inward and became preoccupied with their self. The 50's were marked by confusion, rebelliousness, decadence, drug addiction, hopelessness, and muffled voices of revolution. The New Poetry in such an atmosphere became ethnic, acquiring an Iranian identity. NIMA-style poetry in the 50's was studded with innuendos and allusions to the injustice brought about by the coup.

The great interpreter of this era was MEHDI AKHAVAN SALES. With his tremendous mastery of the classic literature, AKHAVAN, who was foremost a poet of *ghuzal* and *ghusida*, threads the space that separates Neo-traditional from NIMA-style poetry. He was an intellectual, with ties to the *Toodeh*, who brought his meticulous and prodigious writing to Nima's Poetry, pulling it out of its thirty-year isolation.⁸

The 50's were also the decade of the dominance of Neo-traditional poetry over the cultural atmosphere of Iran, and a decade of rediscovery of NIMA-style poetry. But the rise and fall of NIMA-style poetry didn't last more than a few years. Toward the end of the 50's, modernism and Westernism gained momentum. In 1962, the ruling establishment laid out the general program of modernization, and the western influence soon showed its face. With the new situation, poetry enthusiasts were gradually divided into committed and non-committed groups: one saw the modernism of *shab* as only a quasi modernism designed to misguide the public and maintained that poetry must be used as a weapon to combat such a tendency; the other group – without formal ties to the establishment – thought that poetry must be freed from the onus of commitment, dejection, symbolism, and mawkish political or romantic influence. The latter group sought to turn poetry into a modern, complete, pure, and full-bloom art form. Starting in mid-sixties, the first group – who were among followers of NIMA-style political poetry – repeated the old imageries and reduced the poetry's creative impact, turning to more daring statements, so much so that at times their poetry approached rhythmic political manifestos. The second group – comprised mostly of young novices – composed surrealist poems similar to *Jighe Banafsh*, at times bordering on diffused gibberish. This time, however, not only the surrealist poems did not draw the criticism that they earlier had, but they were widely embraced by the periodicals, as this was a time of fascination with modernism in all aspects of social life.⁹ Their poetry came to be dubbed New Wave and its founder was AHMADREZA AHMADI. He was personally under the influence of the poetry of HOUSHANG IRANI and the translation of European works.¹⁰

The conflict between committed and non-committed poetry dominated the late 60's. Meanwhile, the moderate and sentimental Neo-traditionalist poetry was consigned to oblivion as a comic memory. There was also no serious discussion of traditional poetry. Of the NIMA-style poetry only an appearance remained, mainly because of repetitive symbolic overuse. Established poets like SHAMLOO, AKHAVAN, and SEPEHRI seldom published their works during this period. The New Wave poetry gained ground and extended its reach; and the general current of New Poetry continued its existence, albeit without its former depth.

In the 70's, with the armed insurrections mounted by leftist guerrillas in cities and provinces, the establishment clamped down on opposition. Periodicals and organizations deemed subversive were shut down. Heavy censorship was put in place. Books were banned under such pretexts as using the name "Golesorkhi" (the leftist, revolutionary figure who was put on trial and later executed), *Jangal*

(after a failed insurrection in a Northern town), or “barbed wire”.¹¹ The number of published poetry books, which in 1970 reached the seventy-volume mark, was reduced to ten in 1974, only moving up to twelve in 1977. Not a single title was put out by renowned poets AHMAD SHAMLOO, MEHDI AKHAVAN SALES, and SOHRAB SEPEHRI. Censorship and political suppression stifled the revolutionary poet and the mystic versifier alike. In this decade, no notable figure, in no branch of New Poetry, made an entry into the scene. All poems that were murmured in these days belonged to the previous decades (with the exception of AHMAD SHAMLOO, who wrote in scant occasions). The Revolution came about in the wake of this atmosphere.

PERSIAN POETRY 1978-1999

None of the different types of poetry (NIMA-style, New Wave, Neo-traditional, etc.) had the power to keep up with the speed of the Revolution. The non-committed New Wave poet never claimed revolutionary sensitivity to be able to cope with *this* Wave. Politically oriented poetry had nothing new to offer which hadn't already made its appearance in the marketplace of revolutionary ideas. The thrust of events was much more radical than what the symbolic and metaphorical political poet asked for, especially since the value of NIMA-style poetry was in the symbolism that it took as its point of departure. Symbols that in previous decades represented the poet's courage and strength now became superficial and bleak. Stripping poetry of its symbolism left only an outer form, perhaps a lyrical proviso. Neo-traditional poetry, which was excluded from New Poetry in the previous decade, did not even make a show. Such was the state of New Poetry during the Revolution.

But traditional poets, who had been marginalized during the Constitutional Revolution, found a new venue in this period. They tried with all their might to use poetry, among other tools, to establish their authority. They soon became aware, however, of the existing contradiction between reality and their preferred poetic form. Every system of thought creates its own aesthetic order. In the aesthetic order of the traditional poet, authentic poetry is the traditional form of poetry, and traditional poetry is characteristically not connected with everyday reality. The mainspring of traditional poetry is not real life but ancient scripts. To its follower, the essence, vitality, or sanctity of traditional poetry was this very peculiarity.

With the Revolution, traditionalists tried to bring poetry to the service of the revolution, but the peculiarity of this form of poetry did not allow them this service. They soon discovered that referring concrete events to age-old imagery and mentality not only did not work but that it transfigures reality. And this is a truth that NIMA had previously pointed out, analyzed, and given examples of. NIMA had made poetry the symbolic reflection of reality while the traditionalist poetry was the brainchild of poets of a different generation. In NIMA's poetry every word or image was permissible, while in the work of the traditionalist poet only a limited range of words was poetically allowed.

The traditionalist poet would himself turn into a different individual when composing his work. He became separated from himself and his reality. He used words that no one would employ in everyday language. In an age where he would drive a car, he spoke of a coach, which he did not ride, but that perhaps his parents used. A car in his aesthetic universe was not poetic – it debases his order.

In early revolutionary poems many such hackneyed imagery can be found. For example the uprising of the Iranian people would be treated as if it were a slave uprising happening hundreds of years ago. Poems could be found attacking Pharaohs and speaking of the ‘treasure trove’ when they meant the American President and the Wall Street. The Iran/Iraq war killed thousands of innocent people with machine-guns and land mines, while in poetry books spears and arrows were responsible for their deaths. This was nothing but a bookish understanding of an aesthetic form that has lost its expressive punch. A poem by HAMID SABZEVARI can illustrate the case in point:

*Time to bridle our armament on mighty horses
 set our hearts on overcoming brushwood and granite.
 The land is teeming with Pharaohs and Copts.
 Moses is on the lead and Nile is ahead.
 At every footstep, Tikerities have spread thousands of snares
 only the well traveled can thread these roads.
 Satan has barred the sky as well as the sea,
 not to worry, he will suffer on both fronts.
 Order came down: take these terrains away from the enemy,
 Take the throne and the gem away from Satan.¹²*

Some of the poets of those years were NASSER MARDANI, SEPIDEH KASHANI, HAMID SABZEVARI, MOSHFEQ KASHANI, SOHEIL MAHMOODI, SAED BAQERI, ALIREZA QAZVEH, and MEHRDAD AVESTA. The collection of each of these poets is a good example of traditional, revolutionary-period poetry.

After years of being made aware of the internal contradictions marring their poems, the first thing that could naturally happen was for the poet to import everyday words in the place of symbolic expressions and images and incorporate them into poetry. The poet discovered that revolutionary events surrounding him were more violent, more formidable and more striking than his poems could keep up with. Real life slowly seeped through old molds. Attention to details increased. *Ghazals*, *masnavis*, and *ghasidas* were injected with new words. Traditional poetry came full circle: the first Neo-traditionalists had also experienced the incongruity of new words and old forms. Modern life was impossible with old paradigms. In the poetry of a prominent Constitutional poet, we see how a car enters the domain of aesthetics, and eventually is turned into a mule – after coursing through words and images that surround it. The presence of words like automobile, financial institution, armored vehicle, police, telephone... did nothing to transform poetry. These words could only become poetic under a different order.

But what was the solution for the traditionalist poets who were against NIMA-style iconoclasm? Preoccupied with using traditional poetry as an everyday-life instrument, the traditionalist poet directed his attention to two poetic currents from two different eras: The Indian-style poetry, which was the dominant poetic form of the Safavid dynasty, and the Neo-traditional poetry, which was the prevalent form in the 1950's and 60's. On the one hand, the traditionalist poet tried to compensate for the awkwardness of using everyday words in the traditional poetic context by using unexpected or surreal images. On the other hand, he dealt with the disorderly characteristics of Indian-style poetry by borrowing Neo-traditional expressions.

Indian- (or Esfahan-) style poetry was born about three hundred years ago, at the time of the formation of urban lifestyle, among people of the streets and bazaars, and was filled with words and expressions of the daily activities and wishes of ordinary people. Poets of this style, unlike their predecessors who were noble court poets or otherworldly mystic poets, were among traders and artisans. Their poetic dive was the traditional coffee house. They were the ones able to alleviate the shortcomings of traditional poetry by using creative and surreal imagery and form. This style of poetry was for many years the dominant style of Iranian poetry, until the demise of the Safavid dynasty, and the rise of court poetry of Zandids and Qajars (at which time it was pushed out of the realm of literature altogether).

In the seventy years that has elapsed since the Constitutional Revolution, Indian-style was never taken seriously. Seldom was it discussed. The failure of Fundamentalist poets vis-à-vis the reality of the moment, and their subsequent attempt to find a new poetic expression, made them aware of

Indian-style, mainly because it was the only style of poetry (modern or traditional) that had allowed everyday words into poems.

Similar to NIMA-style poetry, in Indian-style all the words have an equal right of presence, with this exception that in NIMA's poetry there is an organic relationship between words and the poetic form, while in Indian-style this relationship is reduced to poetic muscle flexing between the theme and the imagery. An example of Indian-style would be a poem by Ahmad Azizi:

*I am the flower on sigh's rolling locks.
the soaking fever of oration in vision.
All the brush needles are arrows of Yazidis
All these tulips are martyrs
Come nightingale, describe the poppy
invite me to the feast of fire tonight
Sing, nightingale, we are all bruise-voiced
the parch-lipped soldiers of Neynava
Greeting to you, the beautiful blood, the flowing blood
greeting to you, the red tulip of the Spring¹³.*

The aim of fundamentalist poetry after the Revolution was to tap into a living and dynamic language but only to aid it with the establishment of a preferred form of government. The poet didn't want to get entangled in the play of individual verses. The desire for better communication had swayed him toward (mediocre) New Poetry or Indian-style poems. As such, "the message" became the cement that held the poet's verses together. With the aid of Neo-traditional techniques of expression, the fundamentalist poet was able to avoid nonsensical versification. In this way, fundamentalist poetry separated itself from traditional poetry after the Revolution.

Whether for or against the Revolution, the official traditional poetry (especially *ghazal* and *masnavi*) was born out of an instrumental regard for poetry, under the pressure of difficult post-revolutionary reality, the active presence of New Poetry, and the influence of Indian-style poetry. Today, in spite of the fact that traditional poetry, imbued with worn-out imagery, is still to be found in publications and readings, the Neo-traditional poetry has the upper hand.

Two points need to be stressed here: first, the question of the evolution of *masnavi* and *ghazal* was framed within the limited traditionalist worldview, and using the stereotypical poetic tools. As such, it is pointless to expect that these poetic forms be entirely free of worn-out imagery and expressions. Second, the evolution of poetry had taken place sporadically in the 1950's and 60's with some modernist poets like NADER NADERPOUR and FOROUQ FAROKHZAD. NADERPOUR, for example, writes:

*My desire for existence is to see you anew
the undulation of your crib is the tranquility of my heart.
You, the bud of my desirous moments,
Stay, for the light of my eyes is the sight of your face.
Your pure presence was my sun-filled morning
Now my evening light is your stellar eyes.
A simple wish from you will give me wings to fly
the wild bird of my heart is your subdued servant.
Do not rend the pages of every book;
My heart is your ripped and scattered book.*

*Not a night befell without tears
the clear tears of the father is the glow of you pendant¹⁴*

And FOROUC FAROKHZAD had written:

*You are listening to my voice,
like a stone that forgets without ever hearing.
You disturb the early-spring thunder,
and the dream of an opening, with pangs of temptation.
You imit my hands, which are the green stems
of gentle caress, with dead leave.
You are more wicked than the spirit of wine,
You set my eyes to fire and make me swoon.
You are the golden fish of the swamp of my blood,
may your drunkenness be welcomed, you, that caress me so.
You are the gloaming valley that extinguishes the day
by clasping it tightly.
She lost all color next to your gleaming presence,
why would you want to dress her in dark colors with your shadow¹⁵?*

But the importance of this new development was in its prevalence in and its coincidence with the “fundamentalist aesthetic realm”. The fundamentalist aesthetics, which the Constitutional Revolution had not touched, and which ignored seventy years of New Poetry as intoxication with Western values, was transformed by historical necessity.

This transformation can also be observed in the poetry of those writers (among them HOSSEIN MONZAVI, MOHAMMADALI BAHMANI, SIMIN BEHBAHANI, KARIM RAJABZADH) whose poems were not necessarily in the service of the Revolution. The odes (*ghazal*) of SIMIN BEHBAHANI, in particular, saw a fundamental reworking. She went as far as devising new meters that at times were more relevant to the contemporary theme, imagery and concept of the *ghazal*.

*He has a well-ironed trouser the man who hasn't a leg
He is a ball of fire and his fixed gaze tells you that there is nothing to see
I turn my stare away from him but he has found a place in my eyes.
So young he can't be more than twenty.
May he not turn my age, forty more years of suffering,
Though existence is suffering, without Mays or May Nots.
Did you see how difficult it was for my agile legs to go the distance
That he ran without an agile leg.
His walking stick stamps the ground with thump
Though the registration of his presence needs no signature.
My gentle smile turned into a dagger, a thorn in his eyes
This man of rugged temperament beseeches not gentleness¹⁶...*

KARIM RAJABZADEH writes in another ode:

*Hello sir, good to our mettlesome morning,
Good to our morning-deprived daybreak.*

*Our sleeping fortune denies us the color of lenity,
Good to our tenebrous unfinished night.
Yes, we are yet to see a pleasant Good,
Good to the bello of our encounter.
Even the Spring passed our garden breathlessly,
May good come out of this worn-out destiny¹⁷.*

Among the many poets who wrote in this style, in addition to those mentioned, we can also name QEISAR AMINPOUR, KAZEM KAZEMI, SHIVAN FOUMANI, AHMAD AZIZI, SEPIDEH SAMANI, and PEZHAK SAFARI. The poems of these poets are (especially) marked by a delightful combination of Indian-style surrealist imagery and Neo-traditional expressions and admixtures.

However, important development in poetry after the Revolution did not take place in the domain of *ghazal* and *qasida*, but in the works of young modernist poets. Perhaps if the Revolution hadn't taken place, they would have been naturally subdued in the atmosphere of suppression and censorship, or would have given up on poetry altogether. But the Revolution put them in a special position. They could not have remained indifferent toward the event that took place before their eyes with such tremendous force. Their material and moral existence depended on these events. They had nothing but the models of SHAMLOO, SEPEHRI and FOROUQ FARROKHZAD. SHAMLOO's poetry was an accretion of fifty years of poetic experience, but the events that were taking place were faster, and the reality starker than the symbolic, erudite, and fluid language of SHAMLOO, the rational refrains of FOROUQ FARROKHZAD, and the calming mysticism of SEPEHRI could represent.

A short time after the Revolution, the Iran/Iraq war broke out and life transformed. The Reign of Terror ensued. Exodus, escape, dejection, chaos, cruelty, perjury, hunger and unemployment cast everything in a state of suspension and darkness.

Statesmen and rulers blamed the United States for chaos, and opposition figures disparaged the ability of rulers in running the country. These two diverging movements became the theme of many young New Poets in early revolutionary period.

The first serious developments in New Poetry after the Revolution started from this point in time. Before the Revolution, political poets, separated from everyday life, wrote for their utopian ideals. With the Revolution, they would write not for their ideals but in response to the politicized life, from which there was no getting away. Their poetry contained a specific political message – it was the story of an inter dissent informed by society and politics. Even when the post-revolutionary poet modeled his/her poems after New Wave (non-committed and employing the technique of *stream of consciousness*), his/her poems showed traces of politics and revolutionary influence,

*Stay in the wind, and in blood, and say no more,
cause this whirling scent speaks a thousand languages.
At times in the farthest island they take a bird to the stream.
You can hear his expiration in every object,
but you must rush to see, to know how it feels.
Standing on the counter,
And in your eyes thousands of beheaded birds are free in the dance of blood and dementia¹⁸.*

which is a combination of surrealist aesthetics of the New Wave, as well as the guerilla poems of NIMA with a touch of his symbolism.

BARAHANI, who was once professor of literature at the University of Tehran, started conducting “poetry workshops” from his house. The said essay was the fruit of his studies in and teaching philosophy and poetry at the workshop. He wrote it with the intention of shedding light on the limitations of NIMA-style poetry. Later on, followers (who were subsequently called Post-modern) took off on BARAHANI’s sketches. *Addressed to the Butterflies* is an example of post-modern poetry.

*A man always rolls me to your scent
beautiful is the season of dove in Springfield
the flatulence of word is labyrinthine
as it reaches the butt in the spinal nerve of poetry.
While the sun is rolling over my city,
not a woman.
Should you not desire me her she personally won't desire me²⁰.*

The publication of the BARAHANI’s essay (*Why Am I not a NIMA-style Poet Anymore*) concurred with other books and studies on the topic, stirring the post-modern debate among young enthusiast who had chanced upon it in other fields.

In the past few years, many essays have appeared, complete with poetic samples, which are very different from what BARAHANI had to say and offer. Each one of these poems has its young followers and defenders. This movement is just a subset of an all-encompassing discussion of the pros and cons of post-modern philosophy, which still lack proper introduction in the Iranian society. Post-modern Poetry, along with other hues of New Poetry (generally philosophical, structuralist, and surreal) is the active movement of contemporary poetry of Iran.

After May 23, 1996 (when Khatami was elected president of the Republic), the long suppression and ban of books and publications lifted. Major book that were barred from publication gained permission to go to print. Once again, we are reminded that the consequences of suppression are not limited only to books but to creativity as a whole. Constant repression distorts the natural movement of things, affecting a void along their path. Iranian poetry, after having gone through the turbulent revolutionary years, could very well have reached new vistas had it not met the blade of censorship and suppression.

Today the poetry of the masses and that of the intellectuals are two separate things. The public has tuned to the poems of previous decades. Whether the two (masses and intellectuals) will share a common aesthetic ground in the future remains to be seen.

Notes

- ¹ See *Divan-e Abolqasem-e Lahbnti*, Ahmad Bashiri ed., Tehran, 1358 A.H./1979.
- ² Ariyanpour, Yahya; *Az Saba ta Nima*, Vol. 2, PP. 430-466, Tehran, 1355 A.H./1976.
- ³ See Shams Langrudi, *Tarikh-e Tablī-ye She'r-e Now*, Vol. 1, PP. 95-140; also see Pourmamdarian, Taqi; *Khane-am Abri Ast*, Tehran, 1377 A.H./1998, and Ariyanpour, Ibid.
- ⁴ See Shams Langrudi, *op. cit.*, PP. 210-217.
- ⁵ See, for example, Tavallali, Fereydoun, *Majmu'e-ye She'r-e Raha*, Tehran, 1329 A.H./1950; Shams Langrudi, *op. cit.*, PP. 264-270.
- ⁶ See Shamloo, Ahmad; *Majmu'e-ye She'r*; *Abangha-ye Faramush Shodeh*, Tehran, 1326 A.H./1947.
- ⁷ See Shams Langrudi, *op. cit.*, PP. 433-460.
- ⁸ See Akhavan Sales, Mahdi; *Majmu'e-ye Maqalat*, Tehran, 1349 A.H./1971; Akhavan Sales, Mahdi; *Ata va Luqay-ye Nima Yushij*, Tehran, 1361 A.H./1983; Akhavan Sales, Mahdi; *Bed'atha va Bad'aye'e Nima*, Tehran, 1357 A.H./1978.
- ⁹ Shams Langrudi, *op. cit.*, PP. 2-19.
- ¹⁰ See Ahmadi, Ahmad Reza; *Tarb*, Tehran, 1341 A.H./ 1962.
- ¹¹ See Shams Al Ahmad's lecture in *Shabha-ye Sha'eran va Nevisandegan dar Anjoman-e Farhang-ye Iran va Alman*; *Dab Shab*, Naser Mo'azzen ed., Tehran, 1357 A.H./ 1979, PP. 117-119.
- ¹² Hamid Sabzevari, *Katab-e She'r-e Jang* (The Book of War Poetry), The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (Ershad) Publishing, 1362 A.H.
- ¹³ Ahmad Azizi, *Khatameh va Bagh-e Tanasokh* (Ambulatory Epistolary and The Garden of Incarnation), Barg Publishing, 1371 A.H.
- ¹⁴ Nader Naderpour, *Bargozi-deh Ash'ar-e Nader Naderpour* (Selected Poems of Nader Naderpour), Jibi Publishing, 1346 A.H.
- ¹⁵ Forouq Farokhzad, *Tavalodi Digar (Another Birth)*, Morvarid Publishing, 1342 A.H.
- ¹⁶ Majid Shafaq, *Ghazal-ha-ye Shaeran-e Emrooz (The Odes of Contemporary Poets)*, Sanaii Publishing, 1378 A.H.
- ¹⁷ Karim Rajabzadeh, "Majaleh Sber" ("The Poetry Magazine"), Volume 26, 1378 A.H.
- ¹⁸ Kamal Rafat Safaii, *Charkbesbi dar Atash (A Twist in the Wind)*, 1357 A.H.
- ¹⁹ Yadollah Royaii, *Lab-rikhteh-ha (The Flow-overs)*, Navid-e Shiraz Publishing, 1992
- ²⁰ Reza Barahani, *Khatab Be Parvaneh-ha (Addressed to the Butterflies)* and, *Why Am I not a NIMA-style Poet Anymore*, Markaz Publication, 1995