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FORUGH FARROKHZĀD

PERSIAN POETESS AND FEMINIST

by

Mehri . Bharier

Submitted for the degree of
Master of Literature in Persian Studies.
University of Durham.
April 1978.

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FORUGH FARROKHZĀD: PERSIAN POETESS AND FEMINIST

by Mehri Bharier

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

This thesis is the first evaluation of the life and work of Forugh Farrokhzād, a Persian poetess and feminist who died tragically at the age of 32. The first part starts by relating the circumstances surrounding her death and goes on to describe her family background, childhood, education, marriage and divorce. It then gives an account of her publications as well as other artistic activities in films and the theatre.

The second part assesses her relationship to the movements for women's advancement in Iran. It covers the historical link between poetesses and feminists and also describes the activities of various critics of the role of women together with the work of various women's organizations. After examining the work of other Persian poetesses who had taken up the subject of women, Forugh's own views and writings on feminism are analysed and compared with them.

The third part evaluates Forugh's place in the history of Persian literature and, in particular, examines the style of her poetry. It begins by describing the main forms of classical Persian poetry, and then the reasons for the introduction and spread of various modern styles of poetry. Examples are given of work which clearly influenced Forugh, and this is extended to cover religious teachings and foreign writers and poets. Forugh's own views on poetry are then recounted, followed by a survey of the changing style of her work. This part ends with some critiques of her poetry by Persian poets and intellectuals.

In addition to bringing together and assessing information on Forugh, on poetry and on feminism in Iran, the thesis includes original or new translations of all or part of 24 of Forugh's poems as well as of the work of 20 other writers.

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INTRODUCTION

It is now 1978, eleven years after the death of Forugh Farrokhzād. She is still an enigma in the eyes of many, and I hope that this thesis will help people to understand better her life and her work. The thesis starts, in Chapter 1, with an account of her sudden and tragic death and her life and background. Chapter 2 assesses her relationship to the women's movement in Irān, and Chapter 3 evaluates her contribution to Persian poetry. To the best of my knowledge this is the first full study of the life and work of Forugh. In addition, the thesis contains my own translations of all or part of 23 of Forugh's poems,* most of which have never before been translated, together with new or original translations of poems by Nimā, Nāderpur, Shāmlu, Shahriār, Parvin E'tesāmi, Mahasti, Zhāleh, Eshqi, Behbehāri, Saffarzādeh, Dowlatābādi, Purān Farrokhzād (Forugh's sister), Kāmyār Shāpur (her son) and extracts of poems by many others. The thesis combines three of my own interests: Persian literature, the advancement of women in Irān, and the story of Forugh. On each of these topics it would, of course, have been possible to delve much deeper. Indeed, I hope to be able to do this in my future researches. However, in this thesis I have tried to strike an appropriate balance between the three topics in order to put Forugh's life and work in the proper context.

*In the translations I have put particular emphasis on trying to capture Forugh's feelings rather than presenting literal translations.

Persian literature is part of my heritage. I recall, when I was a child in Tehrān, sitting around the 'korsi' with my mother and father on Shab-e Yaldā (midwinter's eve), and reciting verses from Hāfez and Sa'di. My parents, both very knowledgeable about Persian literature and music, instilled in me an appreciation for which I shall always be grateful. I kept up this interest and was further stimulated during the period I spent as a teacher in the Department of Persian at Durham University by Mr. F.R.C. Bagley, the head of the department. Mr. Bagley has also supervised this thesis, and his comments, advice and criticisms have been extremely valuable in my work. I also appreciate the comments of Dr. Jalil Dustkhwāh, his visiting colleague at Durham.

Women's advancement in Irān has recently been fairly rapid. I myself was fortunate to be able to attend Tehrān University, where I studied English, and to be part of the first group of girl students in Irān to participate in activities which girls in the United States and Europe had been allowed to pursue for many years. These included educational tours, camping and the organization of seminars. Since I married, I have travelled in many countries and have lived in Great Britain and the United States. I have therefore been able to make personal comparisons between the status of women in different parts of the world.

To me, Forugh Farrokhzād was something of a puzzle when I first heard about her and read her poems in the 1950s. I was unable to decide for myself whether she was

* A low, square wooden table with room for a charcoal burner in the middle, and usually surrounded and covered with blankets to preserve the heat. People sit on mattresses around it with their feet under the blankets to keep warm.

someone to be admired or despised, even though I had lived through many of the problems which she faced. When Forugh died, I happened to be living in Tehrān, and reports about her accident and burial further increased my curiosity about her. Unfortunately, it was not until my husband had completed his own studies and research and my two daughters were at school that I was able to satisfy this curiosity.

During my research for this thesis I made two special visits to Irān. There I interviewed a veteran feminist leader, Mrs. Badr ol-Moluk Bāmdād, the poetesses Parvin Bāmdād and Tāherah Saffarzādeh, the short-story writer and film director Ebrāhīm Golestān, the poets Nāder Nāderpur and Mehdi Akhavan-e Sāles, the writer Professor Mohit Tabātabā'i, and a friend of the Farrokhzād family, Eslām Kāzemieh, as well as Parviz Shāpur, Forugh's husband, and Mrs. Turān Vaziri Tabar, her mother. These interviews were particularly useful in helping me get a feel for Forugh's work in various fields as well as an idea of her character and upbringing. I am grateful to all these people for giving me the benefit of their knowledge and memories. For arranging these interviews and providing moral support for my work, I would like to give special thanks to Professor Manuchehr Āgāh, Dr. Hushang Sāedlu, Mr. Farhād Massoudi, and Mrs. Parvin Fakdāman, as well as my very good friends Mrs. Pari Malāyeri and Sharif and Lisa Adib-Soltāni, all of whom made great efforts on my behalf in the midst of their busy lives.

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All the writing for this thesis has been done in Vienna, Virginia (near Washington D.C., U.S.A.), where I now live. I have made extensive use of the Library of Congress and I would like to thank Messrs. George Atayeh and Ibrāhim Pourhādi for their assistance. Most of all, however, I must thank my husband Julian and daughters Ānāhitā and Māndānā. They have given me the support and understanding which has enabled me to complete this thesis.

Mehri Bharier

April 1978.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

In this thesis, the following system of transliteration has been used:

<u>Persian</u>		<u>English</u>	<u>Persian</u>		<u>English</u>
ق	initial/final	*	ش		sh
س	median	ʃ	س		s
ا	and median <u>ا</u>	a	ز		z
و	and median <u>و</u>	o	ط		t
ه	and median <u>ه</u>	e	ظ		z
ر	median/final	ā	ع	initial * median/final <u>ع</u>	gh
پ		ā	ف		f
ت		b	ق		q
ث		p	ک		k
ج		t	گ		g
چ		s	ل		l
ح		j	م		m
خ		ch	ن		n
د		h	و	consonant	v
ذ		kh	و	median/final vowel	ow
ر		d	و	median/final vowel	u
ز		z	و	vowel for final <u>و</u>	o
ژ		r	ا	initial vowel	ow
ش		z	ا	initial vowel	u
س		zh	ه	consonant	h
		s	ه		

* not transliterated

Continued.....

TRANSLITERATIONContinued

<u>Persian</u>		<u>English</u>
◌ِ	vowel for final <u>◌ِ</u>	eh
◌ِ	vowel for final <u>◌ِ</u> (before ezāfeh)	e
ی	consonant	y
ی	median/final vowel	ey
ی	median/final vowel	i
یِ	initial vowel	ey
یِ	initial vowel	i
یِ	initial vowel	āy
یِ	median/final vowel	āi
◌ِ	final (ezāfeh after consonant)	e
یِ	or <u>یِ</u> (ezāfeh after vowel)	ye

* not transliterated

CHAPTER ONE

THE DEATH AND LIFE OF FORUGH

CHAPTER ONE

THE DEATH AND LIFE

OF FORUGH

In this chapter I attempt to build up from existing information and from Forugh's own verses a picture of the life of this famous poetess: of her birth and family background, her childhood and education, her early marriage and divorce. I also give a brief account of her publications in various books and magazines, and of her other artistic activities, particularly in films and the theatre. However, since it was Forugh's death, at the age of 32, which finally made her famous in Irān and led to a much wider recognition of her talents than she had received during her life, I begin the chapter with an account of the circumstances of her death and the effect it had on the Iranian literary scene and Iranian society.

Forugh's Death

Forugh Farrokhzād died in a traffic accident on February 14, 1967. Yet the true facts surrounding her death and particularly the two or three hours leading up to it remain hidden in the mists of time and the reluctance of her family and friends to divulge her last conversations on that fateful

afternoon. The rumours are that she committed suicide, or at least that her mind was very disturbed, in the moments before the accident occurred. These rumours are certainly given credence by the fact that Forugh made a fairly accurate forecast of the season, and even the time of day, at which she would leave this world. In addition, it appears that many of the actual details of the accident, normally published in the Iranian press, are missing from contemporary newspaper reports.

The process leading to Forugh's death can be considered to have begun in the winter of 1964/65, when she wrote the following lines (from her poem 'Imān beyāvarim be-āghāz-e fasl-e sard')

زمان گذشت
 زمان گذشت وساعت چهار بار نواخت
 چهار بار نواخت
 امروز روز اول دیماه است
 من راز فصلها را میدانم
 و حرف لحظهها را نمیفهم

به مادرم گفتم : «دیگر تمام شده»
 گفتم : «همیشه پیش از آنکه فکر کنی اتفاق میافتد
 باید برای روزنامه تسلیتی بفرستیم» .

شاید حقیقت آن دو دست جوان بود ، آن دو دست جوان
 که زیر بارش بگریز برف مدفون شد

'An age is over.

An age is over and the clock strikes four.

The clock strikes four.

Today is the first day of winter.

I know the secret of the seasons,

And I understand the language of time.

..... I told my mother that all is ended.

I told her that it always happens before you realize;

We must send an obituary to the newspapers.

..... Perhaps the truth was those two youthful hands,

those two youthful hands

Which are buried under a continuous snowfall.¹

It is, of course, possible to interpret these lines as purely symbolic views on death. However, some of the known facts about her death bear a resemblance to these lines which perhaps cannot be dismissed as coincidental. As the clock struck four on a winter's day in Tehrān she was fatally injured.² And as her body was being buried, the snow began to fall.³

The first, rather general, reports of her tragic accident, which occurred on Bahman 24, 1345 (February 14, 1967) are reasonably consistent. Forugh was driving her Jeep station wagon from the Golestān Studios in Qolhak, a northern suburb of Tehrān. At the Marvdasht crossroads in Darrus,⁴ a nearby suburban area, her vehicle collided with another station wagon. Forugh was reportedly thrown from her vehicle into the road, and she died before reaching hospital. In Tehrān at the time it was generally agreed that the accident was

Forugh's fault. She was coming out of a side road into a main road and apparently did not stop at the junction.⁵

Yet if this was her method of committing suicide it was surprisingly efficient.⁶ A passenger in Forugh's Jeep, Rahmān Asadi, was apparently completely unscathed by the accident, even though the vehicle reportedly crashed into a wall after Forugh had been thrown from it, and the driver of the other vehicle, Gholām Hoseyn Kāmyābi, was also completely unhurt.⁷ It is much more likely, if the reports are true, that given the instinctive rather than orderly manner in which all Tehrānis drive, Forugh's mind was elsewhere when she reached the crossroads. A number of people I have interviewed have suggested that earlier in the same afternoon she was involved in a lengthy and bitter argument at the Golestān Studios, where she worked, and that this had affected her driving.⁸

Some evidence for this was given recently by Yadollāh Royāyi, a former colleague of Forugh, in a television interview. He mentioned that on that last afternoon Forugh had recited a poem to him and asked him to write it down. Royāyi said that this poem was the last she ever composed, and, indeed, that the last lines of the poems were her last words on this earth. The poem was given the title 'I am Depressed' ('Delam Gerefteh Ast')

دلم گرفته است

دلم گرفته است

به ایوان میروم و انگشتانم را

بر پوست کشیده‌ی شب میکشم

چراغ‌های رابطه تاریکند
چراغ‌های رابطه تاریکند

کسی مرا به آفتاب
معرفی نخواهد کرد
کسی مرا به میهمانی گنجشک‌ها نخواهد برد
پرواز را بخاطر بسپار
پرنده مرگ‌نیست

'I am depressed; I am depressed.
I go to the balcony and I rub my fingers
against the taut skin of night.
The lamps of friendship are out;
The lamps of friendship are out.
Nobody will introduce me to the sun;
Nobody wants to take me to the sparrows' feast.
Be sure to remember the flight
(Because) the bird is going to die.' *

Today, it is still not clear why the Iranian newspapers were so remarkably silent about her accident after the first reports had been filed. The usual detailed descriptions of the cause of the accident, the results of the post-mortem, and the legal charges arising out of the accident, are missing from the press reports. There were no interviews with either of the two men involved in the accident, even though it was reported that Kāmyābi had been taken to the Tehrān Court of Justice for questioning. Whether or

* See Farrokhzād, F., Imān beyāvarim be-āghāz-e fasl-e sard, Tehrān, 1974, pp. 35-6.

not there was anything sinister in these omissions — and this would be the reaction of many who have studied the operations of the Iranian press — they certainly added to the aura of mystery surrounding Forugh's death.

Forugh had once stated that she hoped she would meet a sudden death; yet she could not have foreseen the tremendous impact which the news of her sudden death produced. A brief, five-line family obituary in the Tehrān newspapers on the day following her death announced the funeral arrangements. Although it had not been given any special prominence, the newspapers of the following day reported that hundreds of friends, poets, artists and writers attended the funeral as the snow fell at the Zahir od-Dowleh Cemetery in the north of Tehrān. In addition, wreaths from the Empress Farah, Prime Minister Amir Abbās Hoveydā, and the Iranian Women's Organization were laid on her grave.

This treatment was in sharp contrast to the many harsh criticisms she had faced during her life from officialdom, and indeed from many literary personalities, for her outspoken views on various subjects, particularly the role of women in society. It submerged the desires of her relatives, who were among the strongest of her critics, to lay her to rest without ceremony in a public cemetery near the religious city of Qom; and, since the Zahir od-Dowleh Cemetery is normally reserved for Sufis, it elevated her public stature

from vagabond to philosopher.

The eulogy was given by Yazdānbakhsh Qahremān. It was the first of the many which were to flow in increasing numbers from Iranian poets. He said that despite her suffering during her life she was the pride of Iranian women -- an untamed lioness -- and he ended his eulogy with the following lines:

مردی	
ولی به حق،	حیف از تو ای عزیز
مَرک تو زندگی است	حیف از تو ای فروغ
آری ،	ای دوستدار خلق .
تو زنده‌ای در قلب ملت ،	ای دشمن دروغ .
چون مَرک واقعی ، در ننگ بناگی است .	

'Poor dear, poor Forugh.

Lover of life, enemy of lies,

You are dead, but in truth your death is life.

Yes, you are living in the hearts of your countrymen

Because true death is the shame of being a slave.¹⁴

He recognized, that is, the freedom she had discovered for herself by fighting against the traditions and the hypocrisy of Iranian life.

Her sister, Purān Farrokhzād, in her own poem 'Beneath that White Stone', suggested, however, that Forugh had wasted her life because she was never happy with the existing situation of herself and of Iranian women in general, and because of her incessant criticism of life in the tradit-

* During the past few years, an annual Farrokhzād prize has been awarded for outstanding Iranian literary and artistic work.

ional middle-class Iranian manner. Using a rearrangement of some of Forugh's poetic lines, she asked whether Forugh had really found the happiness which she had sought now that she lay beneath her white stone tomb:

راستی
 در زیر آن سنگ سپید بر تو چه گذشت ؟
 ای تمامی معصومیت
 و نیابت حسرت‌ها
 آیا چشمان جستجوگر تو
 عمق ظلمت را شکافت
 و آن پنجره را
 به سوی روشنائی گشود
 آیا در دستهای نیازمند تو
 دانه‌های حقیقت جوانه زد
 و گیسوانت را به سبزی پیوند داد
 آیا قلب مهربانان
 که
 برای باغچه میسوخت ،
 به تمامی مهربانانها پیوست ؟

به من جواب بده
 ای مهربان من !
 در زیر آن سنگ سپید
 بر تو چه گذشت ؟

'Tell me truly,
 Beneath that white stone, what happened to you?
 Oh, you of complete honesty
 And complete misfortune!
 Do your piercing eyes scan the deepest darkness
 Like a window which lets in the light?
 Are the seeds of truth sprouting
 In your outspread hands?
 And has your hair become grafted to the grass?
 Did your kind heart,
 Which
 Prayed for the flowers,
 Meet the ultimate affection?
 Answer me!

Beneath that white stone

'What happened to you?'

Another contemporary poet, Ahmad Shāmlu (Bāmdād) used his eulogy to express his desire for continuance of the work Forugh had started:

نامت سپیده دمی است که بر پیشانی آسمان می گذرد
 - مہرک باد نام تو ا
 و ما همچنان
 دورہ می کنیم
 شب را و روز را ... هنوز را ...

'Your name is passing like a dawn on the sky's brow.

Blessed be your name!

We shall always recall it

By night and day, constantly.....' ¹⁶

On the other hand, M. Omid perceived Forugh's death both as a loss to a literary heritage which Nimā-Yushij had started -- 'I am still weeping over the death of Nimā' -- and as a loss of a national heroine, a woman who was noble and free, 'more manly than a man'.¹⁷

Among those who have written about Forugh, Sadr od-Din Elāhi has provided a perceptive appraisal of her work which is more balanced than most. He warns us to regard with great care the emotional words of her eulogists and detractors, words coloured excessively by friendship or enmity, and to appraise

Forugh's work in the context of the whole history of Persian literature rather than in just the post-Nimā era.¹⁸ These, and other comments on her work will be discussed in Chapter Three. Now it is necessary to begin the story of her brief but eventful life.

Forugh's First Birth

Forugh grew to believe that she had been born twice. She considered that her reincarnation was signalled by her fourth and final book of published poetry, which she indeed called 'Another Birth', and which contains a lengthy poem of the same name. ¹⁹ In this poem she says

من
پری کوچک غمگینی را
می شناسم که در اقیانوس مسکن دارد
ودلش را در یک نی لبک چوبین
مینوازد آرام، آرام
پری کوچک غمگینی
کو شب از یک بوسه میمیرد
وسحر گاه از یک بوسه به دنیا خواهد آمد

'I know a small, sad fairy
Who lives in an ocean
And sings of her feelings
On a small wooden flute,
Softly, softly.
A small, sad fairy
Who dies at night from one kiss
And from one kiss will be reborn into the world at dawn.*

In an interview, Forugh once went further and claimed that this verse itself was the start of a new life for her. It was, she admitted, the culmination of an unstructured life and education, and the end of her unsophisticated writing, the truth about which she had only just realized. ²⁰ Whether this self-appraisal was correct will become clearer after we have discussed her life and her work.

* This poem has been fully translated in at least two articles. See the references in the bibliography to the articles by Tikku (p. 165) and Tehrānian (pp. 63 ff.).

Forughzamān Farrokhzād (her full name) was born in Tehrān on Dey 15, 1313 (January 5, 1935). Her parents were middle-class; her father, Mohammad Farrokhzād, a colonel in the army, and her mother, Turān Vaziri Tabar, a housewife. She was the third of seven children and had four brothers and two sisters.* During her childhood she lived the typical quiet, secluded life of a Persian girl; active, inquisitive and sensitive, absorbing and questioning her environment but greatly restricted in the type of activities now regarded in most countries as essential for the healthy upbringing of an intelligent child.

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Entertainment was basically self-made. During the few years before Forugh went to primary school (and even after the age of seven) she spent her free hours playing with her sister Purān or her cousins or her family servant's children. Her sister writes that she and Forugh often used to sit under the acacia tree in their garden for hours, with their feet dangling in the small stream which carried water into their goldfish pond on its way through the neighborhood. The acacia tree is mentioned several times in Forugh's poems. This is not surprising when it is considered that it was one of her major childhood playthings. According to Purān they used to pull the blossoms from the tree, throw them into the running water and watch them be carried away, despite the constant scoldings of their mother.

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* In order of age, according to their mother, the Farrokhzād children were Purāndokht (Purān), now a poetess and writer, Amir-Masud, educated in Germany and now a surgeon, Forugh, Fereydun, who studied politics and economics in Germany and is now an impresario, Gloriā, who owns a boutique and Mehrdād and Mehrān, both German-educated industrial engineers. It may be noted that the original name of the family was not Farrokhzād, but Mošārreh.

Over the years, Forugh's view of her childhood garden became more and more harsh. Towards the end of her short life she wrote a poem entitled 'I feel sorry for the garden', in which she used recollections of her childhood experiences to describe her criticisms of what she thought to be the stagnant and hopeless life of a middle-class family.²³ She even used the fact that her sister loved flowers as a way of illustrating her sister's empty happiness within her constrained existence: 'She picks plastic flowers, but she gives birth to real children.'²⁴

On one occasion, when their brother's pet sparrow had died and had been buried in a corner of the garden, Purān and Forugh reportedly sprinkled the white acacia flowers over the grave and wept. Perhaps it was this incident which instilled in Forugh the notion expressed repeatedly in her poems that all graves were to be covered with white; it will be remembered that she forecast that her own grave would be covered with snow.²⁵

When the weather was too cold for the girls to play in the garden, entertainment had to be found in the house. In the presence of their elders they were probably seldom allowed to join in conversation, but when they were alone they could fantasize with tales of romance, the interpretation of their dreams, and the repetition and embellishment of traditional superstitions.²⁶ Recollections of such superstitions

* 'Delam barāye bāghcheh mi-suzad'. This poem has been translated by Massud Farzān. See Iranian Studies, Winter 1973, p. 55.

provided rough with the basis for her cynical poem entitled

'Somebody who is like nobody' ('Kasi keh mesl-e hich kas nist'), *
 27
 which starts with the lines

من خواب دیده‌ام که کسی می‌آید
 من خواب یک ستاره‌ی قرمز دیده‌ام
 و پلک، چشم‌های می‌پزد
 و کفش‌هایم‌هی جفت می‌شوند
 و کور شوم
 اگر دروغ بگویم

'I dreamt that someone was coming.

I dreamt I saw a red star;

And my eyelids keep on trembling,

And my shoes keep on pairing.

May I be struck blind

If I tell a lie.'

One of the best descriptions of the limited life led

by girls of her age in Tehrān is given in her poem 'Those days' ('Ān ruzhā'), **
 in which she writes:

آن روزهای خواب و بیداری
 آن روزها هر سایه رازی داشت
 هر جعبه‌ی سر بسته گنجی را نهان میکرد
 هر گوشه‌ی صندوقخانه، در سکوت ظهر،
 گوئی جهانی بود
 هر کس ز تاریکی نمی‌ترسید
 در چشم‌هایم قهرمانی بود

23

'Those days of ignorance and awareness;

Those days when every shadow held a secret

And every closed box concealed a treasure.

* This poem has been fully translated by Thomas M. Ricks in The Literary Review, Quarterly XVIII:I, Fall 1974, pp. 106-9.

** This poem has been translated in the article by Tehrānian (see bibliography), pp. 54 ff.

Every corner of a closet in the silence of noon
 Seemed like a world unto itself.
 Anyone not afraid of the dark
 Was a hero in my eyes.'

Towards 'Now-ruz', the traditional Persian new year festival, which begins on the first day of spring, the girls would find much more to entertain them. Purān wrote that they would sit beside the sewing machine of the family dress-maker and fashion small pieces of waste fabric into dresses and veils for their simple dolls. As winter drew to a close they could begin to talk of the visits and visitors, the gifts and sweets, and the new clothes and ribbons which always came with the calendar's biggest, and longest,* celebration.²⁹ If Forugh retained any happy memories of her childhood as she grew older, they belonged to 'Now-ruz'.
 But, as she said sadly in 'Ān ruzhā':³⁰

آن روزها رفتند
 آن روزهای جذبه و حیرت
 ...
 آن روزها رفتند
 آن روزهای عید

'Those days have passed;
 Those days of enchantment and wonder.
 ... Those days have passed;
 Those festive days.'

* The New Year celebration, at the time of Forugh's childhood, lasted for thirteen days. Nowadays, the official holiday is limited to three days, although the 13th day is also a holiday.

With servants to look after them at home, young children were rarely allowed to accompany their parents to social gatherings. Forugh's brother Fereyduun recalls how, on many occasions, their mother used to lock up the house and some of its rooms behind her before leaving to visit her friends or family.³¹ Leaving the traditional, religious and conservative home environment was usually a treat reserved for holidays such as 'sizdah-bedar', the thirteenth day of the new year, when it is considered unlucky to stay at home and when all Iranians are supposed to go out into the countryside, or for very special family occasions such as weddings or funerals or the return of one of the family from a pilgrimage to Mecca. Once in a while, however, Forugh would accompany her mother to the bazaar, and the memories of these trips lingered. She recalled that

بازار در بوهای سرگردان شناور بود
 در بوی تند قهوه و ماهی
 بازار در زیر قدمها پهن میشد، کش میآمد، با تمام
 لحظه‌های راه میآمیخت
 و چرخ میزد، در ته چشم عروسکها
 بازار مادر بود که میرفت با سرعت بسوی حجم
 های رنگی سیال
 و باز میآمد

با بسته‌های هدیه با زنبیل‌های پر
 بازار باران بود که میریخت، که میریخت،
 که میریخت

'The bazaar was afloat in pervading odours,
 In the sharp smell of coffee and fish.
 The bazaar would unroll under one's feet; it would
 spread and mingle with all the little sights
 along the way,
 And it would revolve, deep in the eyes of the dolls.
 The bazaar — it was mother who went quickly towards
 the many coloured, changing shapes,
 And who would return
 With gift packages, with full baskets.
 The bazaar — it was like rain, which rained and rained
 and rained.'

32

Forugh's Education

The restrictive atmosphere of Forugh's home is reflected in her belief that the start of her schooling was the first step in her loss of innocence. In a poem published after her death she wrote:

ای هفت سالگی
 بعد از تو که جای بازیمان زیر میز بود
 از زیر میزها
 به پشت میزها
 و از پشت میزها
 به روی میزها رسیدیم
 و روی میزها بازی کردیم
 و باختیم، رنگ ترا باختیم، ای هفت سالگی.

'Oh, seventh year!

.... After you, our playground, which was beneath the table,
 From under the tables
 Moved to behind the tables,
 And from behind the tables
 We reached the top of the tables.
 And on top of the tables we played
 And we lost. We lost your fresh tint
 O seventh year.' ³³

Like many young, urban, middle-class girls of the time, Forugh attended one of the growing number of mixed primary schools in Tehrān. In the early 1940s girls could go unveiled to school; nevertheless, she was possibly taken to the school door by her strict father or one of the family servants, who would have met her at noon and repeated the process in the afternoon for reasons of security.

The wide variety of subjects taught, along the lines of the French primary educational system, were interspersed with a considerable amount of religious education and reading from the Qorān which later reappeared in Forugh's work. For example, she used various verses of the Qorān as a basis for her lengthy poem 'Revolt against obedience' ('Esyān-e bandegi'), in which she made strong criticisms of religion. ³⁴

Forugh did not find schoolwork particularly easy. A brief insight into some of the academic problems she had at

primary school is given in the poem 'Kasi keh mesl-e hich kas nist', where she implies that the third-grade primer was difficult to learn:

کسی که مثل هیچکس نیست

.....

و میتواند
تمام حرف‌های سخت کتاب کلاس سوم را
با چشم‌های بسته بخواند
و میتواند حتی هزار را
بی آنکه کم یاورد از روی بیست میلیون بردارد

'Someone like no-one else (who)...

Could recite the hard lessons of the third-grade book

With his eyes closed,

And could even subtract one thousand

35

From twenty million without making a mistake.'

After she reached the age of eleven, Forugh tended to withdraw into herself much more than she had done before. She grew quieter, spent much of her leisure time delving into Persian literature, and the problems of life appeared to weigh more heavily on her mind. By the time she was thirteen, and had begun attending the Khosrowkhāvar High School, she had already started to write poetry.* She recalled later:

'When I was thirteen or fourteen I composed many ghazals, but I never published them. Now when I see ghazals I generally like them, but I tell myself, 'Young lady, you, too, had a ghazal-complex!'³⁶

Yet her originality caused problems for her. One of

* Her mother told me that Forugh had, in fact, composed short poems from the age of seven or eight.

her classmates, now Mrs. Yazdi, remembers that the essay-writing hour was one of the worst hours of school for Forugh. She explains Forugh's hatred of compulsory essay-writing by the fact that Forugh used to write so well, and that her teacher automatically assumed she had 'stolen' the essay from published authors. Consequently, Forugh was often reprimanded.³⁷ Indeed, one writer later said that Forugh's artistic abilities developed despite the lessons she had been taught at high school.³⁸

She left high school at fifteen, having finished the ninth grade, to attend a women's arts college. There she learnt dressmaking and painting and also met a number of students and teachers who were later to become close friends. Dressmaking provided a useful relaxation for her. She once said: 'When I return home from dressmaking I feel lighter in my mind and my poetry flows more freely'.³⁹ With painting she was able to diversify her artistry. She studied for a while under Petgar, a famous Iranian painter, learning the principles of art from him. She apparently learnt very quickly, helped by a natural instinct for, and understanding of, colour. Soon, however, she moved away from oil painting and started pen and ink drawings of contemporary life, producing sketches of high quality.⁴⁰

Forugh reached womanhood during the time she attended high school. She recaptures the impact this had in 'Realization'

('Daryāft.'):

آه، من پر بودم از شهوت - شهوت مرگ
هر دوستانم از احساسی سرسام آور تیر کشید

آه

من به یاد آوردم
اولین روز باوغم را
که همه اندامم
باز میشد در بهتی معصوم
تا پیامیزد با آن مبهم، آن گنگ، آن نامعلوم

* *

در حباب کوچک
روشنائی خود را
در خطی لرزان خمیازه کشید.

'Oh! I was filled with desire, a desire to die.

Both my breasts stung with a sensation that
brought delirium.

Oh! I remember

The first day of womanhood

When all my body

Opened with innocent amazement

Until it mingled with that vagueness, that dumbness,
that unknown.

In the small lamp

The flame itself

Yawned before it began to flicker.

As she matured, she used to imagine herself as a fully-grown woman. In one of her poems she recalls that she used to hang pairs of cherries from her ears in order to pretend that she was wearing ear-rings, and she used to place dahlia petals on her nails to pretend they were long;⁴² in another poem she remembers colouring her cheeks with geranium petals.⁴³ And as she matured, she naturally began to notice the attention of boys from the neighbourhood:

آن روزها رفتند
آن روزهای خیر آبی در رازهای جسم
آن روزهای آشنائی‌های محتاطانه، بازیائی رنگ
های آبی رنگ

دستی که بایک گل
از پشت دیواری صدا میزد
یک دست دیگر را
ولکهای کوچک جوهر، بر این دست مشوش،
مضطرب، ترسان

وعشق،
که در سلامی شرم آگین خویشتن را باز گومیکرد

در ظرهای گرم دود آلود
ما عشقمان را در غبار کوچه میخواندیم
ما با زبان ساده گل‌های قاصد آشنا بودیم
ما قلبهامان را به باغ مهربانی‌های معصومانه
میبردیم

و به درختان قرض میدادیم
 و توپ، با پیغام‌های بوسه در درستان مامیگشت
 و عشق بود، آن حس مغشوشی که در تاریکی
 هشتی

ناگاه

محصورمان می کرد
 و جذبه‌مان میکرد، در انبوه سوزان نفس‌ها و تپش‌ها
 و تبسم‌های دزدانه

'Those days have passed.

Those days of wonder at the secrets of the body.

Those days of careful acquaintance with the beauty of
 blue veins;

A hand that, with a flower,

Would signal another hand from behind a wall;

And little spots of ink on this trembling, quivering,
 fearful hand.

And love

Which was expressed again in shy hellos.

At warm, hazy noons

We would sing our love in the dust of the street.

We knew the simple language of the dandelion fairies;

We would take our hearts to the garden of innocent kindnesses

And lend them to the trees.

And a ball with messages of kisses would pass from hand
 to hand.

And it was love, that confused feeling which, in the
 darkness of a passage,

Suddenly

Would surround us

And would absorb us with its quick, burning breaths,
its heartbeats and its furtive smiles.'⁴⁴

In later years Forugh felt it necessary to warn other young girls of the dangers surrounding these feelings. In 'Lagoon' ('Mordāb'), she wrote:

آهوان، ای آهوان دشتها
گاه اگر در ممبر گلگشتها
جویباری یافتید آواز خوان
رو به استغنائی دریاها روان

.....
مرگ در مرداب را یاد آورید

'You young gazelles, running wild in the fields,
Sometimes when you are in the midst of flowers
You come across a singing stream, racing
Towards the independence of the ocean.

..... Yet you should remember (that some running water
meets its) death in a stagnant pool.'⁴⁵

Forugh's Marriage and Divorce

Forugh's adolescence ended abruptly when she was sixteen. Her father had moved to Tabriz during the previous months, deserting his wife and marrying again. Her mother, for her

part, found it increasingly difficult to retain a strict family discipline over Forugh, who had left the relative safety of a girls' high school and was becoming more involved in 'suspect' (and sexually mixed) activities such as writing and painting. And Forugh herself was developing friendships with some of the youths in the neighbourhood.

For a middle-class Iranian family of the early 1950s the dangers were clear: a daughter's reputation as a flirt was likely to besmirch the family name. Even worse, there was the possibility that she could lose her virginity, and therefore bring shame to the family. The solution was simple; marry her off as soon as possible to preserve the sanctity of the Farrokhzād name, preferably to someone whose work and life-style would lead her to abandon her artistic ambitions. In other words, force her to settle down.

Of course, it would have been possible for the Farrokhzāds to arrange a marriage for Forugh. This was still common practice in Irān, even in the metropolis; parents would arrange for their daughters to marry men whom they would not have seen or spoken to until their wedding day. For the families concerned there were numerous advantages to this system. One was that they could ensure that their child's spouse was from the appropriate social level. Another was that they could bargain over the terms of the

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marriage settlement; indeed, they could even retain control over the transaction by insisting that the conditions (such as evidence of virginity or lack of disease) were properly met. For the young partners in marriage this system was usually regarded uncritically as an extension of the blind respect with which they had been taught to regard the judgement of their elders.

In some, slightly more advanced families, a small element of choice was granted to the children. The boys usually had more choice than the girls, though girls would sometimes be given the opportunity of choosing between two or three candidates on the basis of sight alone. A typical way of stage-managing this operation was for the prospective bride to be allowed to take glasses of tea into the room where the negotiations were being held.

It seems that this was the sort of situation in which Forugh found herself in 1951. Her mother and father had provided the blandishments, the urging and the temptations; all she had to do was to take a rapid decision.⁴⁶ Somewhat to their distress, however, she chose a man who was a distant relation and whom she had met at various family gatherings, but who was eleven years older than Forugh. His name was Parviz Shāpur.

Parviz Shāpur came from the same sort of middle-class background as Forugh. He had graduated in economics in 1948 from the Finance Academy in Tehrān, and had spent the following two years in the army. He had recently obtained a new

* This settlement was important for the future security of the bride.

position in the Ministry of Finance's office in Ahvāz, then an arid, dusty town deep in the heart of the southern province of Khuzestān. He needed a wife to accompany him there and to help him establish a home. For Forugh's family this had a special advantage in that it would take Forugh physically away from them as well as from the cultural environment of Tēhrān. They were therefore willing to accept Forugh's 'decision'.⁴⁷

A simple marriage ceremony was organized quickly; so quickly in fact that Forugh was later to write

کوچه‌ای هست که در آنجا
پسرانی که به من عاشق بودند، هنوز

با همان موهای درهم و گردن‌های باریک و پاهای لاغر
به تبسم‌های معصوم دختر کی می‌اندیشند که یکشب او را
باد با خود برد

'There is a street in which those boys
With unkempt hair, thin necks and skinny legs
Are still in love with me.
They think of the innocent smile of a small girl
Whom, one night, the wind carried away.'⁴⁸

In an interview with Mahmud Sajjādi, years later, she told how, at sixteen, she had been naive, dainty and free as a butterfly. She had believed that marriage would be as it

was related in fairy tales. She had gone with a simple, credulous heart to her husband's house, to help him build their own castle, full of gaiety and good fortune, in which they would live happily ever after.⁴⁹ *

Yet the first shock of reality came on her wedding night:

سلام ای شب مصوم!
 میان پنجره و دیدن
 همیشه فاصله ایست .
 چرا نگاه نکردم ؟
 مانند آن زمان که مردی از کنار درختان خیس گذر میکرد
 چرا نگاه نکردم !
 انگار مادرم گریسته بود آنشب
 آنشب که من به دره رسیدم و نطفه شکل گرفت
 آنشب که من عروس خوشه های افاقی شدم
 آنشب که امهان پر از طنین کاشی آبی بود ،
 و آنکسی که نیمه های من بود ، به درون نطفه ای من بازگشته بود
 و من در آینه میدیدمش ،
 که مثل آینه پاکیزه بود و روشن بود
 و ناگهان صدایم کرد
 و من عروس خوشه های افاقی شدم

'Greetings, O night of innocence.

Between the window and what is seen

Is always a distance.

Why did not I look?

Like that time when a man used to pass beside the

dripping trees.

Why did not I look?

It seems that my mother cried that night,

* For Iranian girls at the time, marriage was often regarded as a door to freedom because a married woman could have a more active and varied social life, and use make-up.

That night when I found pain and the sperm took shape;
 That night when I became the bride of the acacia blossom;
 That night when Esfahān was full of the tingling
 reflection of blue tiles,
 And that person who was my half returned within me.
 And, in the mirror, I saw him.
 Like the mirror, clean and bright.
 And suddenly he called me
 And I became the bride of the acacia blossom.'⁵⁰

This poem, nevertheless, still displays Forugh's belief in the unity of marriage, a belief which was to remain with her for at least a few more months. Indeed, there is little doubt that Forugh was prepared to throw her whole being into the love of her husband. In one of the poems written soon after her marriage she said:

آری آغاز دوست داشتن است
 گر چه پایان راه ناپیدا است
 من به پایان دگر نیندیشم
 که همین دوست داشتن زیباست

'Yes, being in love is the beginning,
 Though the end of the road is unknown.
 I no longer think about the end,
 For this being in love is so beautiful.'

51

Forugh told Sajjādi that the early part of her married

life was like a clear sky with no cloud in sight.⁵² Soon, however, a tinge of uncertainty developed. She was less sure of herself or of the life she had embraced:

آتش ز من به خرمن امیدت
با شعله‌های حسرت و ناکامی
ای قلب آتینه جوی گنه کرده
شاید دمی ز فتنه بیارامی

می بندمت به بند گران غم
تا سوی او دگر نکنی پرواز
ای مرغ دل که خسته و بیتابی
دمساز باش باغم او، دمساز

'I will set alight your stack of hopes
With the flames of regret and disappointment.
Oh mischievous heart you are guilty.
Perhaps you will stop your mischief for a while.
I will tie you with a heavy rope of sorrow
So that you cannot fly towards him again.
Oh bird-like heart you are tired and restless.
Be patient still, patient in your grief for him.'⁵³

Writing down these feelings caused more problems than it solved. Ahvāz may have been 400 miles from Tehrān but the news soon spread among her own and her husband's fami-

lies that she was breaking the traditional rules of wifely silence with her poetry. This, in turn, led to gossip which finally darkened that clear early sky of her marriage. Some of the twenty poems she wrote in Ahvāz were published under her maiden name in the first edition of 'Asir' in 1952/3, but the reaction to her outspoken language led to increasing disagreements with her husband, who had, by and large, encouraged her to continue with her writings. * The surprise and disappointment which this brought to Forugh is clearly expressed in her poem 'Revolt' ('Esyan'), in which she says that she is prepared to accept all the other restrictions of marriage if only she be allowed to write her poetry freely: ⁵⁴

به لب‌هایم مزه، قفل خموشی
 که در دل قصه‌ئی نا گفته دارم
 زپایم باز کن بند گران را
 کزین سودا دلی آشفته دارم

بیای مرد، ای موجود خودخواه
 بیابگشای درهای قفس را
 اگر عمری به زندانم کشیدی
 رها کن دیگرم این یک نفس را

منم آن مرغ، آن مرغی که دیر است
 به سر اندیشه پرواز دارم
 سرودم ناله شد در سینه تنگ
 به حسرتها سر آمد روزگارم

* Parviz Shāpur told me in an interview that he had also been concerned to help Forugh keep a proper filing system both for her poems and her personal correspondence.

به لب هایم مزن قفل خموشی
 که من باید بگویم راز خود را
 به گوش مردم عالم رسانم
 طنین آتشین آواز خود را
 بیا بگشای در تا پر گشایم
 بسوی آسمان، روشن شعر
 اگر بگذاریم پرواز کردن
 گلی خواهم شدن در گلشن شعر

لبم با بوسه شیرینش از تو
 تنم با بوی عطر آگینش از تو
 نگاهم با شررهای نهانش
 دلم با ناله خونینش از تو

ولی ای مرد. ای موجود خودخواه
 مگو تنگ است این شعر تو تنگ است
 بر آن شوریده حالان هیچ دانی
 فضای این قفس تنگ است، تنگ است

مگو شعر تو سر تا پا گنه بود
 از این تنگ و گنه پیمانهای ده
 بهشت و حور و آب کوثر از تو
 مرا در قعر دوزخ خانه ای ده

کتابی، خلوتی، شعری، سکوتی
 مرامستی و سکر زندگان نیست
 چه غم گر در بهشتی ره ندارم
 که در قلبم بهشتی جاودانی است

شبانگهان که مه میرقصد آرام
 میان آسمان گنگ و خاموش
 تو در خوابی و من هست هوسها
 تن مهتاب را گیرم در آغوش
 نسیم از من هزاران بوسه بگیرفت
 هزاران بوسه بخشیدم به خورشید
 در آن زندان که زندانبان تو بودی
 شبی بنیادم از یک بوسه لرزید
 بدور افکن حدیث نام، ای مرد
 که تنگم لذتی مستانه داده
 مرا می بخشد آن پروردگاری
 که شاعر را، دلی دیوانه داده
 بیابگشای در تاپیر کشایم
 بسوی آسمان روشن شعر
 اگر بگذاریم پرواز کردن
 گلی خواهم شدن در گلشن شعر

'Don't put the lock of silence on my lips
 Because my heart has untold tales to tell.
 Release my feet from these heavy ropes
 Because my heart is troubled by this business.
 Come here, you man, you selfish being!
 Come and open the doors of the cage!
 Even if you imprison me for life,
 At least give me a breath of freedom again now!

I am a bird, a bird that for a long time
Had meant to fly.
But the songs in my cramped chest have become moans,
My life has ended in disappointment.

Don't put the lock of silence on my lips
Because I must tell my secrets.
I must make the fiery sound of my voice
Reach people's ears everywhere.

Come and open the door so that I may fly away
Towards the bright sky of poetry.

If you let me fly
I shall become a flower in poetry's garden.

My lips with sweet kisses are for you,
My body with its perfume is for you.
My eyes with their hidden sparks,
My heart with its tearful plaint, are all for you.

But oh, you man, you selfish being,
Don't say 'Disgrace! Your poem is a disgrace!',
For visionary lovers, you know,
Their cage is tight and cramping.

Don't say 'Your poem was wholly sinful,'
Let me drink a dose of this disgrace and sin!
You may have paradise, and houris and the water of Kowsar;
Let me make my home in the pit of hell.

* Traditionally, the name of the stream in Paradise.

A book, a quiet place, a poem and silence
 Are the rapture and ecstasy of my life.
 It does not matter if I am not admitted to paradise
 When there is an everlasting paradise in my heart.
 At night, when the moon dances silently
 In the still, dumb sky,
 You are asleep, while I, drunk with desires,
 Hug the body of the moonlight.
 The breeze took a thousand kisses from me.
 I gave a thousand kisses to the sun.
 In that prison where you were my warder
 One night my whole frame trembled from a kiss.
 Drop the talk of 'good name', O man!
 My disgrace has given me a drunken joy.
 I will be forgiven by God, for He
 Gave every poet a crazy heart.
 Come and open the door, so that I may fly away
 Towards the bright sky of poetry.
 If you let me fly
 I shall become a flower in poetry's garden.'

But it was not to be. Forugh took a trip back to her
 mother's house in Tehrān, then attempted a reconciliation with
 her husband, but by the spring of 1955 the marriage was
 effectively over. * The cynicism which grew within her

* Parviz Shāpur later displayed considerable artistic talent
 himself. He started writing humorous stories for the magazine
Towfiq in 1958, using the pen-name 'Kāmyār' when writing
 about men and 'Mahdokht' when writing about women. From 1967
 he contributed caricatures to the magazines Ma'in and Jahān-
 now, and then used a technique now called 'carikalimature'
 first in the magazine Khušeh and then in two books: Kush o

about the institution of marriage finally rushed to the
55

surface in 'The Ring' ('Halqeh'):

دخترک خنده کنان گفت که چیست

راز این - بلقہ زر

راز این - بلقہ که انگشت مرا

این چنین تنگ گرفته است ببر

راز این - بلقہ که در چهره او

اینهمه تابش و رخسندگی است

مرد حیران شد و گفت:

حلقه خوبختی است ، حلقه زندگی است

همه گفتند : مبارک باشد

دخترک گفت : درینا که مرا

بازدر معنی آن شک باشد

سالها رفت و شبی

زنی افسرده نظر کرد بر آن حلقه زر

دید در نقش فروزنده او

روزهائی که به امید وفای شوهر

بهدر رفته، هدر

زن پریشان شد و نالید که وای

وای، این حلقه که در چهره او

بازهم تابش و رخسندگی است

حلقه بردگی و بندگی است

Gorbeh, published in 1971, and Bā Gard-e Mīraqsam, published in 1975. He is now retired. In an interview, he told me that, on reflection, 'Forugh was as unpredictable as the spring — you could never forecast whether the sun would shine or the rain would fall'.

'A little girl asked with a smile, 'What is
The secret of this ring of gold?
The secret of this ring which encircles my finger
Holding it so tight?'

The secret of this ring, on the face of which
There is so much glitter and shine?'

The man was surprised. He said,
'It is the ring of good fortune; the ring of life.'

Everyone said, 'Congratulations!'

The little girl said, 'Alas, I
Still don't understand.'

Years passed. Then, one night
A sad woman looked at that golden ring,
Saw in its glittering pattern
Those days in which she hoped for a faithful husband
Were gone, all wasted.

The woman winced and moaned, 'Oh!
Oh! This ring whose face
Is still glittering and shining
Is the ring of slavery and bondage.'

Nine months after her marriage to Parviz Shāpur, Forugh
had given birth to her only child, a son named Kāmyār. But
by the time she was divorced, Kāmyār had reached the age of two, and
under Persian law as it then stood, Forugh was obliged to relinquish

custody of her son to her husband and to her husband's close family. The separation greatly affected her at first, although she soon began to regard it as yet another one of the obstacles which she had to overcome on her path of poetry. In 'Abandoned Home' ('Khāne-ye matruk'), she wrote

دانم اکنون کز آن خانه دور
شادی زندگی پر گرفته
دانم اکنون که طفلی به زاری
ماتم از هجر مادر گرفته
لیک من خسته جان و پریشان
میسپارم ره آرزو را
یار من شعر و دلدار من شعر
میروم تا بدست آرم او را

'I now know that from that far-away house

The joy of life has flown away.

I now know that a child in tears

Is mourning for its departed mother.

Yet, though I am tired and anxious

I follow my chosen path.

My friend is poetry; my lover is poetry.

I shall journey until I find him.⁵⁶

Forugh's contacts with her son were relatively limited during the rest of her life. He grew up with Shāpur's mother and brother, who apparently made every effort to convince him that

his mother and her family were among the most disgraceful people in the world. Forugh's brother Fereyduṅ recalls that when Kāmyār was placed in the Alborz boarding school in Tehrān, he refused to go and see anyone with the name Farrokhzād even when the school principal asked him to. Occasionally, Forugh would visit the school under an assumed name (since her son did not, in those days, even recognize her face) and would tell him that his mother loved him and thought about him. He refused to believe this and used to run away from his visitor.⁵⁷ When he was in his teens, Kāmyār was sent to England to study.⁵⁸ Now in his twenties and a poet himself,^{*} he will always have a small place in Irān's literary history if only because he was the inspiration for one of Forugh's most beautiful and moving poems, 'A Poem for You' ('She'ri barāye to):⁵⁹

این شعر را برای تو میگویم
 در یک غروب، تشنه تابستان
 در نیمه های این ره شوم آغاز
 در کهنه گود این غم بی پایان
 این آخرین ترانه لالاییست
 در پای گاهواره خواب تو
 باشد که بانگ وحشی این فریاد
 پیچد در آسمان شباب تو
 بگذار سایه من سرگردان
 از سایه تو، دور جدا باشد
 روزی بهم رسم که گر باشد
 کس بین ما، نه غیر خدا باشد

* A recent short poem by Kāmyār Shāpur, given to me by his father, is translated in Appendix A at the end of this chapter.

من تکیه داد، ام به دری تاریک
 پیشانی فشرده ز دردم را
 میسایم از امید، بر این در باز
 انگشتهای نازک و سردم را
 آن داغ ننگ خورده که میخندید
 بر طعنه های بیهوده، من بودم
 گفتم، که با ننگ هستی خود باشم
 اما دریغ و درد که «زن» بودم
 چشمان بیگناه تو چون لغزد
 بر این کتاب درهم بی آغاز
 عصیان ریشه دار زمانها را
 بینی شکفته در دل هر آواز
 اینجا، ستاردها همه خاموشند
 اینجا، فرشتهها، همه گریانند
 اینجا شکوفه های گل مریم،
 بیقدرتر ز خار بیابانند.
 اینجا نشسته بر سر هر راهی
 دیو دروغ و ننگ و ریاکاری
 در آسمان تیره نمی بینم
 نوری ز صبح روشن بیداری
 بگذار تا دوباره شود لبریز
 چشمان من، ز دانه شبنمها
 رفتم ز خود که پرده بر اندازم
 از چهر پاک حضرت مریمها
 بگسسته ام ز ساحل خوشنای
 در سینه ام ستاره توفانست

پرواز گاه شعله خشم من
 دردا، فضای تیره زندانست.

من تکیه داده‌ام به دری تاریک

پیشانی فشرده زرددم را

میسایم از امید بر این در باز

انگشتهای نازک و سردم را

با این گروه زاهد ظاهر ساز

دانم که این جدال نه آسانست

شهر من و تو، طفلك شیرینم

دیر نیست آشیانه شیطانست.

روزی رسد که چشم تو با حسرت

لفزد بر این ترانه درد آلود

جوئی مرا درون سخنهایم

گوئی بخود که مادر من او بود

'This poem I am writing for you

On a thirsty summer evening

Half way along this doomed road

In the old grave of this endless sorrow.

This is my final lullaby

Beside the cradle where you sleep.

Perhaps the frantic calls of my pleas

Will ring in the heaven of your youth.

Let the shadow of vagabond me

Be far apart from your shadow.

One day we shall reach each other, and if

Anyone stands between us, it will be none other than God.

I have leant my aching forehead

Against a dark door.

I rub my thin and cold fingers

On this open door in hope.

That disgraced person who used to laugh

At silly taunts -- it was me.

I said I would be the voice of my own life,

But, alas, O woe! I was a woman!

When your innocent eyes glance

Over this confused, never-started book,

You will see that a deep-rooted rebellion against our times

Is blooming in the heart of each verse.

Here, all the stars are quiet.

Here all the angels are crying.

Here the blooms of the 'Mary flower' *

Have less value than camel-thorn.

Here every way is blocked

By the demon of lies and disgrace and hypocrisy.

In the dark sky I cannot see

The bright morning light of awareness.

Let my eyes fill up again

With drops of dew.

I took it upon myself to unveil

The pure faces of the Holy Marys.

* Tuberoses.

I have drifted away from the shore of 'good name';
 In my bosom is the sign of a storm,
 A place where burns the flame of my anger.
 Alas, this is the dark air of prison.

I have leant my aching forehead
 Against a dark door.

I rub my thin and cold fingers
 On this open door in hope.

Against this group of superficial bigots
 I know this fight is not easy.

My sweet child, the city where you and I live
 Has long been a nest of devils.

A day will come when your eyes will glance
 Sadly through this painful tale.

You will find me in the midst of my words,
 And you will tell yourself, 'She was my mother.'

The life of a divorced woman in Tehrān was not easy in the mid-1950s. With no house of her own, Forugh was obliged to live in her mother's home. With no partner she was treated almost as a social outcast, and a dangerous temptation for other wives' husbands. And with little or no income she was forced to find work in an environment where most women who did not possess a high school graduation certificate worked in menial occupations. Above all, her fight for freedom to write poetry, and

the content of her first two published collections of verses, 'Asir' and 'Divār', had given her a wide notoriety and a name in Tehrān society which was almost totally disreputable.

At 22, therefore, Forugh found herself with nowhere to go except back to her poetry. She put concentrated effort into her third collection of poems, 'Esyān' which was published in 1957, and it was the surpassing quality of this work which finally opened a few doors for her. It also provided her with sufficient funds for an extended visit to Italy and to Germany where two of her brothers were studying. 60

On her return, she was able to obtain work on the weekly journal Verdowsi, where she worked with the editor, Ali Akbar Kasmā'i, sometimes writing about her recent travels and sometimes contributing items in verse. Kasmā'i soon became a close friend and, in an article published after her death, recalled that he was captivated by her. However, like many Iranian men, he considered love to be a synonym for peace and relaxation; Forugh thought it should be 'a medicine to release her from pain; an excitement to release her from sadness'. 61

He said that Forugh was still pursuing 'pure love' rather than love tainted by restrictions. She wanted a partner in love - not another husband - to enable her to forget her past, and, possibly, to take revenge on men and the laws that they made. He remembers that she once said:

"When two lovers reach the climax of lovemaking together, they find God". Kasmā'i added that she always wanted to be near God!⁶²

On one winter's night, when he was escorting her back to her mother's home, she told him that in summer the neighbours all looked out of their windows to see with whom she was returning and at what time. He admits that his first instinct was to feel glad that it was winter and that the neighbours' windows were closed. Then, however, he suffered pangs of regret, followed by open embarrassment. He, too, had become influenced by the emotional, highly personal fault-finding which overshadowed her life and her work. It is perhaps not surprising that Forugh and Kasmā'i soon went their separate ways.⁶³

The Last Eight Years

An important turning point in Forugh's life came in 1958, when she met Ebrāhim Golestān, a well-known Iranian film director and short-story writer.* She thought that, having tried journalism, she should not sit still. She felt driven to sample new delights, and saw in the cinema another outlet for her talents. She learnt cinematic techniques quickly and avidly, though this did not distract her from writing poetry.⁶⁴ Indeed, it appears that Golestān played a

* Ebrāhim Golestān came from a wealthy Shirāzi family. He owned the Golestān Studios where Forugh worked. At the time he met Forugh, he was married and had children.

vital part in encouraging her to persevere with all aspects of her work. The relationship which grew between them provided both a defence against the vituperative personal criticisms launched against her and, inevitably, further fuel for her critics.*

During the following five years, Forugh's film-work and poetry reached a new level of maturity. In 1959 she travelled to England for the first time to study film-making and to learn English, and in 1960 she played a short role in a film entitled 'Matchmaking in Irān', ordered from Golestān Studios by the Canadian National Film Institute. The following year saw her back in Khuzestān, the province in which she had made her marital home, this time as an assistant to Golestān in his production of a much-vaunted documentary 'Water and Heat' about Ābāiān, and of a film called 'One Fire'. A further visit to England enabled her to study film editing, and this was followed by an opportunity to produce a brief advertising film for Kayhān newspapers.

Some of the films in which she assisted or played remained unfinished. For example, a film about the Caspian Sea made in the summer of 1962 met this fate, while a scenario she wrote for a film about the life of women in Irān in early 1963 was never used. However, in the autumn of 1962, she took three of her colleagues to a leper colony

* In an interview, Ebrāhīm Golestān told me that he was opposed to the continuing discussion of his financial and other contributions to her life.

in Tabriz and produced perhaps the best of all her documentaries, 'The House is Black'. This film won the award for the best documentary at the 1963 Oberhausen Festival, though Forugh later said, 'This award does not mean anything to me. The prize is a statue. What use is a statue to me?'⁶⁵

It was the making of the film itself which was rewarding to Forugh. She recalls how, in her research for the film, she sat and talked and ate with the lepers, how she grew attached to some of them, and how she compared her own previous imprisonment - in family, school and marriage - with the miserable isolation of the lepers. She even adopted a young boy, Hoseyn,^{*} from the leper colony and took him into her mother's house to live.⁶⁶

The peak of her poetic achievement came in 1963 with the publication of 'Another Birth' ('Tavallodi Digar'), her fourth collection of poems. Some examples from it have been quoted earlier in this chapter, and more will be given in the following chapters. I have also mentioned Forugh's belief that this volume represented a new understanding and a new sophistication in her work. Suffice to say here that the volume finally turned the tide of criticism in Forugh's favour. It was, as contemporary poet Ahmad Shāmlu has said, full of the promise that she would reach the

* Hoseyn Mansuri is now (1978) about 20 and is reading Psychology in London.

pinnacle of poetic recognition in Irān.⁶⁷

The confidence given by her literary and cinematic successes was reflected in her social behaviour. She was now invited to parties and social gatherings of various types, and she began to gather crowds around her. This was not because of her beauty -- her face, which had never been beautiful, was beginning to look a little haggard -- nor because of her clothes, most of which were self-made and unpretentious. It was because of her words of honesty about her own life and about life in general. Sometimes, indeed, she went too far, causing embarrassment by the often almost childish delight which she took in throwing stones at tradition and the 'establishment'.⁶⁸

Forigh continued to work in a variety of fields. In late 1963, she acted in the Persian translation of Pirandello's 'Six Characters in Search of an Author'; she reportedly translated Bernard Shaw's 'Saint Joan' in preparation for a theatrical production in which she was to play the leading role;^{*} she toured a number of institutions in Europe at their request; and she became the subject of two short films about her life, one prepared for UNESCO and one by film director Bernardo Bertolucci.⁶⁹ She became convinced that in whatever she attempted she would succeed. In one of her last published poems, 'It is Only the Sound which Remains' ('Tanhā

*.I was unable to trace a copy of this translation.

Sedāst keh Mimānad'), she expresses this succinctly:

چرا توقف کنم ؟
 من خوشه‌های نارس گندم را
 با زیر پستان میگیرم
 و شیر میدهم

'Why should I stop now?

I can hold

Unripened ears of wheat to my breast

And give them milk.' ⁷⁰

Yet the beliefs about her impending death, which I mentioned earlier, also appear to have grown within her. At 32, she had changed her environment and seemed to have an entirely new and exciting life before her. Then she died.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. Farrokhzād, Forugh, Imān Bevāvarim be-Āghāz-e Fasl-e Sard, Tehrān, 1974, pp. 11 ff. This book was published after her death. The poem also appears in 'Unpublished Works', a section of the excellent compilation of articles about Forugh by Esmā'ili, A., and Sedārat, A., Jāvedāne-ye Forugh Farrokhzād, (which can also be pronounced Jāvedāneh Forugh Farrokhzād), Tehrān, 1968, henceforth Jāvedāneh.
2. Newspaper reports variously put the time of the accident between 4.00 p.m. and 4.30 p.m. See, for example, Ettelā'āt, Bahman 25, 1345, pp. 17-8, and Nuri-Alā, E., 'Seyri dar Seh Manze' tā Marg' in Jāvedāneh, pp. 200-31.
3. See article by Nuri Alā, loc. cit., p.224.
4. See Ettelā'āt, loc. cit.; also Ettelā'āt-e Haftegi, February 19, 1967. The Marvdasht crossroads is located at the junction of Marvdasht and Loqmān od-Dowleh Adham streets. Forugh's jeep, licence no. 1413T24, collided with a vehicle belonging to a private school, licence no. 1428T19.
5. An article written shortly after her death suggested that her accident was attributable to the fact that there was no traffic light or stop sign at the crossroads. It also suggested that, since there was no telephone or corner shop nearby, her death may have resulted from the delay in getting her to hospital. See the article by A. Am-irāni in Khāndanihā, Bahman 29, 1345, pp.3-4. However, when I was in Tehrān I visited the scene of the accident and it is clear that Forugh must have been driving excessively fast along the side road.
6. Boyuk Mostafavi, one of Forugh's artistic friends, mentioned at the time of her funeral that she had once attempted suicide in 1959. See Ettelā'āt, Bahman 27, 1345, p.8. No other source mentions this.
7. Ettelā'āt, Bahman 25, 1345, pp. 17-8. No mention of these two men is made anywhere else.
8. It has been suggested that the argument was a personal one with Golestān himself (see also the last section of this chapter). However, this cannot be substantiated.
9. It is probably fair to say that influence was put on the newspaper publishers by person or persons unknown to suppress some of the information surrounding Forugh's death.

10. Farrokhzād, Purān, 'My Sister, Forugh Farrokhzād', in Senid o Siāh, No. 702, Esfand 12, 1345.
11. Ettelā'āt, Bahman 25, 1345, p. 17.
12. Tehran Journal, February 16, 1967. Some indication of the fame of Forugh can be obtained from the fact that the English-language newspapers of Tehrān gave great prominence to the stories of her death and funeral.
13. Special permission was normally required for burial at this cemetery. Her friends and colleagues approached the influential Abdollāh Entezām for a recommendation as to a suitable resting place. He arranged for the funeral to be held at the Zahir od-Dowleh Cemetery, and the procession left for there from the Ministry of Justice. See Ettelā'āt, Bahman 27, 1345, p. 17.
14. Tehran Journal, loc. cit.; Also Qahremān, Y., 'Hayf az to, Forugh', Jāvedāneh, pp. 144-7.
15. Farrokhzād, P., 'Dar zir-e ān Sang-e Sepid', in Jāvedāneh, p. 131.
16. Bamdād, A., 'Marsieh', in Jāvedāneh, pp. 132-3.
17. Omid, M., 'Va az She'ri Nātamām . . .', in Jāvedāneh, p. 136.
18. See his excellent article in Senid-o Siāh, No. 701, Esfand 5, 1345, reprinted in Jāvedāneh, pp. 106-18.
19. Farrokhzād, Forugh, Tavallodi Digar, Tehrān, 1963. By 1971 this volume was already in its fifth printing.
20. Forugh became increasingly critical of her own work as she grew older. Some of these criticisms are reflected in a series of her collected interviews reprinted in Jāvedāneh, p. 169.
21. Forugh's full address in Tehrān was Khiābān Amirieh, Chahār-rāh Gomruk, Kucheh Khādem Azād, No. 39. These and other details are given in 'Zendegi-Nāneh' reprinted in various collections of her work including Enteqād-e Ketāb, Sowmāne-ve Forugh Farrokhzād, Tehran, 1963, pp. 38-9. This source says there were only four Farrokhzād children.
22. Forugh's sister Purān and her brother Fereydun both wrote numerous articles about her after her death, capitalizing on the revived fortunes of the Farrokhzād name. Fereydun has recently achieved some fame as a night-club and television impresario.
23. This poem was written in the summer of 1963 and is included in the collection of poems printed in Jāvedāneh, pp. 341-4.
24. Ibid., p. 343.

25. Farrokhzād, F., 'Khvāhar-e man, Forugh Farrokhzād' in Sepid-o Siāh, no. 702, Esfand 12, 1345, reprinted in Jāvedāneh, pp. 5-12. In articles by Fereydun, it is implied that Forugh herself buried the sparrow; indeed, that more than one sparrow was disposed of in this way.
26. My own recollections of a young girl's life at that time are very close to those mentioned by Purān Farr-
okhzād in the article reprinted in Jāvedāneh, pp. 5-12.
27. Farrokhzād, F., Imān Beyāvarim be-Āghāz-e Fasl-e Sard, pp. 11 ff.
28. The date of this poem is not certain. It was probably written in about 1960. It appears in Farrokhzād, For-
ugh, Tavallodi Digar, pp. 9-16.
29. See notes 25 and 26.
30. As for Note 23.
31. From interviews with Fereydun Farrokhzād in Jamshidi,
E., 'Farrokhzād-hā' in Sepid o Siāh No. 373, Tir 9,
1349.
32. From 'Ān Ruz-hā'. See Note 23. Another translation of
this poem appears in Tehrānian, M., 'Forugh Farrokhzād:
the Bitter Loss', in Iranian Studies, Spring 1968, pp.
54-62.
33. This poem appears as part of 'Imān Biyāvarim be-Āghāz-e
Fasl-e Sard', although it appears to have been originally
written as a separate poem.
34. 'Bandegi' was probably written in 1955 or 1956. It
appears in 'Esyān', pp. 11-33, (see Chapter Three).
and notes to this poem are in the same volume, pp.
137-8.
35. Farrokhzād, F., Imān, op. cit., pp. 64-72.
36. The quotation is from an article in Zan-e Ruz, No. 104,
Esfand 6, 1345, entitled 'Forugh Keh Bud?' which is
also reprinted in Jāvedāneh, pp. 22-9.
37. From the article quoted in Note 36.

38. From the article quoted in Note 36.
39. Forugh mentioned similar feelings in selections from her letters to Ebrāhīm Golestān, reprinted in Jāvedāneh, p. 14, under the title 'Az Chand Nāneh-ye Forugh'.
40. From the article quoted in Note 36.
41. Farrokhzād, Forugh, Tavallodi Digar; no date is given for this poem. It was probably written about 1960.
42. See her poem 'Tavallodi Digar' in the book of the same name, p. 167. This poem was probably written in 1962.
43. See 'Ān Ruz-hā', in her book Tavallodi Digar, p. 16.
44. As Note 43, pp. 14-16.
45. This poem, also probably written about 1962, appears in her book, Tavallodi Digar, pp. 94-7.
46. See Sajjādi, Mahmud, 'Forugh Farrokhzād', in Tehrān-e Mosavar, No. 1378, Bahman 29, 1348; also article by Purān Farrokhzād in Jāvedāneh, pp. 5-12. Some of the information in this and the preceding paragraphs is from my own childhood experiences.
47. Information from an interview with Nosratollāh Amini, former Mayor of Tehrān.
48. From the poem 'Tavallodi Digar' in the book of the same name, pp. 167-8.
49. See Sajjādi, Mahmud, 'Forugh Farrokhzād', in Tehrān-e Mosavar, No. 1378, Bahman 29, 1348.
50. Farrokhzād, F., Imān, op. cit., pp. 11 ff.
51. This is from the poem 'Az Dust Dāshtan', which appears in Asir, Tehrān, 1955, p. 161. In later editions of this book the date of the poem is given as 1956, though it was almost certainly written in 1951 or 1952.
52. Sajjādi, M., loc. cit.
53. This is from the poem 'Sho'le-ye Ramideh', which appears in Asir and was written in Ahvāz in the winter of 1953/4.

54. This was the first of her two poems with this title. It appears in Asir and was written in Ahvāz in the autumn of 1954. See Asir, pp. 73-6.
55. 'Halqeh' was written in Tehrān in the spring of 1955. It appears in Asir, pp. 149-50. It seems that the first edition of Asir, printed in 1952 contained only a few of the poems which appear in later editions.
56. This poem is from Asir, pp. 133-5, and was written in Tehrān in the spring of 1955.
57. See article by Fereydun Farrokhzād in Ferdowsi, Bahman 27, 1349.
58. Fahim, Kamal, 'Forugh Farrokhzād: From Rebellion to Social Love', in Kayhan International, February 13, 1974, p. 6.
59. Written in the summer of 1957, this poem appears in Esrān, Tehrān, 1972, pp. 55-60.
60. See the chronology of her life and work given in 'Zendegi-nāmeḥ' (ref: Note 21).
61. Kasmāi, Ali Akbar, from an untitled article in Ferdowsi, No. 304, Esfand 2, 1345, which is reprinted in Jāvedāneh, pp. 44-53.
62. Cf. Note 61.
63. Cf. Note 61.
64. See article in Zan-e Ruz, No. 104, Esfand 6, 1345.
65. See article mentioned in Note 64, 'Zendegi-nāmeḥ' (Note 21), and the untitled article by Farajollāh Sabā reprinted in Jāvedāneh, p. 128. Also Fahim's article in Note 58.
66. The boy, whose full name was Hoseyn Mansuri, was 11 years old at the time of Forugh's death. See article by Sabā mentioned in Note 65.
67. See Lazarian, Janet, 'Pillar of New Poetry', in Tehran Journal, May 30, 1972.
68. See article by Kasmāi mentioned in Note 61.
69. See sources mentioned in Note 65.
70. This poem was first printed in December 1966. It appears in Farrokhzād, F., Iman, op. cit., pp. 74 ff.

APPENDIX A TO CHAPTER ONEA POEM BY KĀMYĀR SHĀPUR

This poem, which was sent to me by Farviz Shāpur, Kāmyār's father and the ex-husband of Forugh Farrokhzād, bears a distinct similarity in content to many of Forugh's own poems. It was reprinted in Negin (a monthly journal) in Tir 1346 (June 1967):

<p>وقتی به شهر نیستی رسیدیم ، کیوتر های سفید خفتد بودند ، و خرس های خاکستری بیدار . در آنجا به جای خدایان ، بتهای مرمرین فرمانروائی می کردند و بجای نور چراغ ، شعله دهان ازدها بود</p>	<p>وقتیکه به شهر نیستی رسیدیم ، پرواندها غراب بودند ، و در بندر گاد ، به جای کشتی نهنگ ها لنگر انداخته بودند . *</p>
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'When we reached the town of non-existence
 Butterflies were eagles,
 And in the port, in place of ships,
 Crocodiles were anchored.

When we reached the town of non-existence
 White doves were asleep
 And grey bears were awake.
 There, in place of Gods,
 Marble idols were ruling,
 And, in place of lamplight
 Was flame from a dragon's mouth.'

CHAPTER TWO

FORUGH AND FEMINISM

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In Irān, the relationship between feminism and poetry is particularly clear. Poetry has, for the most part, been composed by educated Iranians, while the feminist movement has usually been led by educated women. Moreover, feminism has been one aspect of a general trend against the influence of reactionary religious leaders and towards westernization and modernization which has also been reflected in the subjects of modern Persian poetry.

The word 'feminism' can be given a number of different meanings.¹ The strictest meaning describes the philosophy of full social, economic and political equality of the sexes. Here I use the word in the more general sense of any action which encourages or supports the advancement of women's rights and interests. This avoids the difficult question of how far women should advance, and permits discussion of the concept in relation to an existing situation rather than to any theoretical ideal.

In this chapter I start with a historical sketch of the position of women in Irān over the ages, including some reference to early Persian poetesses. I then discuss the changes in this position during the first half of the twentieth century, and further developments during the 1950s and 1960s, when Forugh's books were being published. Following

this I describe some of the factors which influenced or encouraged changes in the position of women. These include westernization and opposition to the clergy as well as the words and actions of Persian women themselves. I then examine the work of a number of recent Persian poetesses, starting from Zhāleh and Parvin E'tesāmi, before assessing Forugh's own views and writings on feminism. Finally, I draw together the evidence in an attempt to discover whether Forugh really had a distinct and important role in the advancement of women's rights in Irān or whether she was just part of a trend which was in any case taking place.

Persian Women in History

In over 2,500 years of Persian history, few women have reached positions of great power or influence. During the seventh century A.D., Purāndokht and Āzarmidokht both became rulers of the country for brief periods, while during the 13th and 15th centuries, Queens Ābesh Khālun and Gowhar Shād played important parts in Fārs and Eastern Irān.² Such women were, however, exceptions to the general rule and did not have any real impact on the position of their fellow country-women.

Today, when we look back at the early history and traditions of Irān, we can see little justification for this situation. While there may have been good reasons why

women should not have been regarded as the equal of men, tradition did not supply sufficient reason for their complete domination by the opposite sex. As His Imperial Majesty the Shāhanshāh wrote in 1960, 'According to ancient Persian tradition, man and woman were created equal.' ³ In 1967, he further wrote, 'We are the heirs of an ancient civilization and culture which has never held women in low esteem.' ⁴

Even the spread of Islām ought not to have been the cause of women's subjugation. Several passages of the Qorān give equal standing to men and women in terms of human values, while the Prophet Mohammad not only said that 'The noble show respect for women, the base, contempt', but also gave instructions that he should be succeeded by his daughter Fātemeh's line rather than by any male relative. Furthermore, Islamic law makes a point of providing women with a certain degree of economic independence through rights of property ownership. ⁵

As many have pointed out, however, the laws of Islām can be interpreted in many different ways. The right of interpretation has always been available to the Moslem clergy, but few have seen fit to use it in such a way as to benefit the position of women in society. ⁶ Indeed, the additional provision, in the Shi'a sect, for temporary (or contract) marriages appears to have added to the idea that the

male was the dominant sex. (The purpose of this provision was to help overcome loneliness, prostitution and illegitimacy.)⁷

Before the beginning of the twentieth century the position of women gradually became worse. This is not to say that women were banned from studying or, even, from reading or writing poetry. It is just that this normally did not happen. There was no acceptance, even among intellectuals, that women should be given scope for advancement. Where they had any influence in decision-making, it was very much behind the scenes and was often related to simple matters of the household or harem. As a result, many of the women themselves became opposed to (or at least passive to) the idea of change. It is perhaps not surprising that a popular saying of the nineteenth century was that a woman should ask her husband three times each day what to do, what to say, and what to think.⁸

The poverty of women's education is reflected by Professor Browne. He wrote that 'almost any educated Persian can compose tolerable verses and the great majority do so, while the number of those who habitually indulge in this pastime on a considerable scale and have produced 'divāns' of poetry has been at all times fairly large'.⁹ Yet in his own survey of Persian poetry from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, Browne does not mention even one poetess.

M. Ishaque goes back further and is somewhat more careful. He says that although many women have composed verses throughout history — he gives some information about more than 100 of these — there are very few poetesses worthy of the name: 'One cannot claim to be a poet simply by writing a few verses'. He adds that there is often confusion as to whether certain poems were actually written by women or were simply attributed to them by their relatives or by tradition.¹⁰

Ishaque considers that Rābi'a Qazdāri, who lived in the 8th century, and about whom there grew up a number of romantic stories, was one of the first modern poetesses of Iranian origin. She apparently composed religious poems, and from such evidence as there is, these had depth and sincerity.¹¹ They could hardly be called feminist poems, however, and were not nearly so outspoken as those of Mahasti (Mahsati), who lived some 250 years later.

Among Mahasti's quatrains we find many of the characteristics which are later found in Forugh's work. She criticizes society in general:¹²

ای چرخ فلک خرابی از کینه تست
 بیدادگری عادت دیرینه تست
 ای خاک اگر سینه تو بشگافند
 بس دانه قیمتی که در سینه تست

O turning universe! Your spite causes decay.

Oppression is an old habit of yours.

O, Earth! If your heart were opened,

Many things of value would be found inside.

She talks of women's weak position: ¹³

چون مرغ ضعیف بی پرو بی بالم
افتاده بدام و کس نداند حالم
دردی بدم سخت پدید آمده است
امروز من خسته از آن می نامم

I am like a weak bird without feathers and wings.

I have fallen into a trap and no one knows what has become of me.

I feel a sharp pain in my heart.

Today, in my weariness, I complain of it.

She criticises her husband, whom she loves: ¹⁴

قصاب منی و در غمت می جوشم
تا کارد باستخوان رسد می گو شم
و سمیست که چون کشتی بفروشی
از بهر خدا اگر کشتی مفروشم

You are my butcher and I am boiling with worry over you.

I will try my best until your knife reaches my bones.

It is the custom that when you kill you sell.

For God's sake, if you kill me do not sell me.

And she is prepared to use vulgar language: ¹⁵

قاضی چو زنش حامله شد زار گریست
 گفتا ز سرِ قهر که این واقعه چیست
 من پیرم و کبر من نمی‌خیزد هیچ
 و این قبه نه مریم است این بچه ز کیست

The judge sulked when his wife became pregnant,
 And asked indignantly, 'What has happened;
 I am old and impotent.

This whore is not Mary, so whose is this baby?'

The similarities between the work of Mahasti and that of Forugh have not escaped contemporary commentators. For example, Yaghmā'i, writing after Forugh's death, compared her open-ness and frankness with that of Mahasti, though without assessing the quality of the poetry of either.¹⁶

A third woman discussed by Ishaque is Qorrat ol-Eyn, who lived in the 19th century. She was educated and eloquent and attained a leading position in the Bābi movement. She refused to live with her husband because he did not accept Bābism and is even said to have refused the Shāh's favours. Eventually, she died in prison. Ishaque concludes, however, that although a number of verses are ascribed to her, her fame comes mainly from her religious activities. Although Bābism preached female emancipation, she could not really be called a feminist because she made no specific effort to advance the position of Iranian women except by proving

that she could act, and in the end die, like a man. 17

Sects such as the Bābis and the Bahā'is, as well as Christian missionaries, generally did a dis-service to Iranian feminism by their support for it. During the nineteenth century the olamā of Shi'ite Islam became openly hostile to greater rights for women as part of their stand against new or different religions. In addition, they were afraid that the introduction of any aspect of western civilization would loosen their hold over the laws and customs of the country. Consequently, the fight for greater freedom for women became closely involved with the desire for modernization of the country and with the growing conflict between the state and the clergy.

The Status of Women, 1900-1950

Two major political events affected the status of women during the first half of the twentieth century. The first was the Constitutional Revolution; the second was the rise to absolute power of Rezā Shāh. Yet not all the effects of these two events were either positive or long-lasting. They illustrate, in many respects, how little is the real impact of changes in national laws.

The Constitution states in its introduction that every citizen of Irān shall have a share in the affairs of the state, and in Article 2 that the Parliament shall represent

the entire population of the country. It also states that all Persians shall have equal rights before the law, that they shall be free from arbitrary arrest, and that their houses cannot be entered nor their wealth taxed except under the law. Freedom of the press is also guaranteed by the Constitution. The far-sighted and educated Persians who had helped draw up the Constitution were, however, thwarted by the fact that the Parliament remained under the control of the feudal landowners and other persons who, like the religious leaders, did not want to see changes made.¹⁸

For women, what had first seemed like a door to freedom turned out to be another prison gate. Part of the election law which was later drawn up read:

'Those deprived of the right to vote shall consist of all females; minors and those under legal guardianship; fraudulent bankrupts; beggars and those who earn their living in a disreputable way; murderers, thieves and other criminals punishable under Islamic Law.'¹⁹

The Civil Code of 1939 was no better. It gave a husband permission to divorce his wife at any time he wished. One article said that no wife may hold a job without her husband's agreement, and another said, as Forugh was to learn much later, that in case of divorce the mother could keep her son only until the age of two; after that the son would be given to the care of the father. The Code allowed a man

to practice polygamy, but his wife (or wives) could not even spend a night outside his home without his consent.²⁰ Thus although the spirit of the Constitution appeared to favour greater rights for women, the actual results meant that women were really no better off after the Constitution than they had been before.

Almost as soon as Rezā Shāh came to the throne in 1925, he started to order certain actions which would lay the foundation for new laws favouring women's rights. In 1926 he asked the chief of police to take his wife to a public restaurant -- a most unusual occurrence -- and a short time later began urging ministers and deputy ministers to take their wives to official receptions.²¹ He encouraged women to adopt European dress, as some had already done, at least in the privacy of their homes. In 1931, a law was passed which enabled women, in certain circumstances, to start divorce proceedings.²²

To assist in his plans he arranged for the first meeting of the Congress of Women of the East to be held in Tehrān in 1932. This congress recommended that women should have the right to vote, that there should be compulsory elementary education for girls as well as boys, and that polygamy should be abolished.²³ Rezā Shāh clearly did not regard the voting issue as very important, but he took steps to expand state education for girls and let it be known that he frowned

on temporary marriages.

Rezā Shāh felt that a major obstacle to the advancement of women was the 'chador' or veil with which almost all women covered themselves when they were in public. By 1935, it was estimated that, with official encouragement, about 4,000 women in Tehrān (about three per cent of the female population of the city) had ceased to wear the veil when outside their homes. During this year, teachers, schoolgirls and the wives of army officers were ordered to abandon the veil, and the Shāh arranged, as one of the great events of the year, the first ever parade of schoolgirls in gymslips.²⁴

On January 7, 1936, just over a year after Forugh's birth, Rezā Shāh appeared in public with his unveiled wife and daughters for the first time. On this occasion he announced that 'the women of this country ... have been unable to display their talent and ability. ... We must not imagine indefinitely that one half of the community of our nation need not be taken into account.' This date is now regarded as the effective start of women's emancipation in Irān, since the veil was effectively banned on that day.²⁵

The general ban on the veil, enforced by the police who were authorized to strip off these now unlawful garments, was to cause many problems. The removal of restrictions, such as not being served in shops or not being allowed to travel on public transport, was a great help for women who had grown up to use the veil. Being asked to face the

stares of men and the insensitive actions of the police was another matter. The English-born Mrs. Olive Saratgar wrote: 'I was in time to see police tearing silken scarves from women's heads and handing them back in ribbons to their owners.'²⁶ while Peter Avery notes that some old ladies never went out again until after 1941.²⁷

The superficial nature of this ban is illustrated by the fact that as soon as Reza Shāh abdicated in 1941, the veil was quickly resumed by many women. This was either because the women, and their husbands, had felt that they were being disrespectful to Islām, or, as Avery suggests, that the veil was a useful device for disguising poverty.²⁸

An excellent description of the problems that women faced in the 1940s with respect to the veil is given in the British Admiralty handbook, Persia:

"Centuries of cloistered life have thus unfitted the majority of women for rapid improvement in their status. Hence the abolition of the chadar by Riza Shah has precipitated rather than removed a problem, which needs time and education for its solution. At present both men and women, where they depart from tradition, are trying to accept a European standard of external relations while retaining the mental reservations of the Islamic system. Educated men want their wives to be companions and yet wish to be free to beat them. ... The legislation of Riza Shah has greatly improved the status of women, allowing them to initiate divorce on certain grounds, and giving them control over their own property and the right to a dowry. But domestic influences generally are still those of the ancient regime, and the present agitation for the permissive use of the chadar probably reflects a considerable body of feminine opinion."²⁹

This situation remained much the same up to the mid-1950s. The same is true of the laws relating to the inequalities of women and men. As Avery writes,

"... women were unequal to men in theory in only five respects: a man could have more than one wife if he could prove himself rich enough to keep more than one establishment and to give each wife equal status and comforts. A woman, on the other hand, could only have one husband at a time. A man could divorce his wife when he wished, but a woman had to have special reasons for suing for divorce. A woman's inheritance rights were less than a man's, although modern reforms had reaffirmed her dowry claims on her husband and she had control of her own property. The man is legally head of the family and entitled to custody of the children. The woman might not vote nor stand as a candidate in elections." 30

The Status of Women: The 1950s

The status of Persian women was brought home clearly to Forugh during the 1950s, when she was between the ages of 15 and 25, was married, had a child, divorced, and then tried to establish an independent life. A useful description of women's position is given by the figures of the first national census of Irān, which was taken in 1956.³¹

For example, in the city of Tehrān in 1956, 66 percent of the women over the age of 15 were married, 13 percent were single, 17 percent were widowed and only four percent were divorced. For the ages 20-24 the percentage of divorcees was even lower. Thus Forugh was very much in a minority of women in Tehrān after she separated from her husband.

* A more detailed analysis of the status of women in five Iranian cities is given by Jacqueline Rudolph Toubā's 'The Relationship between Urbanization and the Changing Status of Women in Iran, 1956-1966', in Iranian Studies, Winter 1972, pp. 23 ff.

Then, if we look at the figures for employment, the low degree of women's emancipation is clear. Of all women in Tehrān over the age of 10, three-quarters were housewives and 16 percent were students of some sort; less than 10 percent were in paid employment. Of those who were employed, 60 percent were domestic servants, 13 percent were in craft industries such as dressmaking, and 17 percent were in professional occupations. Of the professionals, two-thirds were teachers, 30 percent were nurses, and only a very small number (121) were in artistic fields such as writing. Again it is clear that Forugh was one of a very small number in her chosen field.

In terms of education, the situation was somewhat different. Thirty-five percent of Tehrān's women could read and write in 1956 (compared with 55 percent of men), and 21,000 had a higher level of schooling than Forugh, who it will be recalled left after the ninth grade. In other words, Forugh would have been at a disadvantage compared with other women who had more education. It is perhaps not surprising that she first attended dressmaking classes after leaving school. This would have been one of the few openings for her if she were not able to get married.

These various figures suggest in themselves that pressure was growing for the advancement of women's rights during the 1950s. The presence of a large number of reasonably educated women with

few opportunities for employment in professional positions except teaching and nursing implies that Reza Shāh's educational reforms were beginning to have the effect he had hoped for twenty years previously.

However, it was not to be until the 1960s that changes in the law would provide a stronger legal basis for greater emancipation of women. As part of the series of measures known as the 'White Revolution', which came into force in 1963, women were given the right to vote and to stand for Parliament.³² Then, in 1967, the Family Protection Law was passed. Under this law*, no husband may marry another wife without the free agreement of his first wife; a husband cannot divorce his wife without a court order; and courts are required to try reconciliation before granting a request for divorce.³³ But even by this time substantial changes had taken place in the actual position of women, particularly in the larger towns. As a result of pressures from politicians, writers, and feminists of various types, Persian women during the 1960s were freer than they had ever been before in Persian history. Before discussing the role that Forugh played in these changes, I shall first assess the contribution of those who pressed for westernization, then the work of the women feminists and women's organizations, and finally the work of other Persian poetesses whose writings were influential during the twentieth century.

* This law, together with others relating to family affairs, are also to be found in 'Qānun-e Madani-ye Irān', Vols. 1-3, Tehrān, 1974.

Poets, Politicians and Feminism

From the beginning of the twentieth century, various poets and politicians tried to improve the status of women, both by criticizing their existing status and by encouraging westernization — a process which naturally included greater rights for women.

As many writers have pointed out, there was something of a breakthrough in the history of Persian poetry at about the time of the Constitutional revolution. Yār-Shāter, for example, says: "The greater portion of classical poetry concerned itself with general sentiments. ...Poets seldom touched on topical questions and ... their poetry hardly ever reflected contemporary events, unless in a very remote and indirect way." He goes on to say that in the early decades of the century, "for the first time poetry was directed towards the man in the street. ... Previously, poetry had been either court-poetry or poetry written for the cultivated members of society. The direct and indirect contacts with the West gave rise to a more liberal and democratic conception of society, and a result of this new democratic attitude was the incursion of colloquial language into poetry; the people had become significant, and their language was elevated to the rank of a language suitable for poetry. A number of popular poems and ballads

emerged; satirical, humorous and derisive verses were widely circulated."³⁴

Among the poets who took issue with the then existing status of women, three are outstanding: Eshqi, Lāhuti and Iraj. Sayyed Mohammad Rezā Mirzādeh Eshqi, who was born in Hamadān, was later to become a prominent liberal patriot and a newspaper publisher in his home town.³⁵ I have extracted the following verses from his poem 'Black Shroud' to illustrate his ideas and his style:

مر مرا هیچ گنه نیست بجز آنکه زنم
 زاین گناه است که تا زنددم اندر کفتم
 من سیپوشم و تا این سیه از تن نکتم
 تو سیپه‌بختی و بدبخت چو بخت تو منم
 منم آن کس که بود بخت تو اسپد کنم
 من اگر گریم، گریانی تو
 من اگر خندم، خندانی تو
 بکنم گر زتن این جامه گناه است مرا
 نکم، عمر در این جامه تپاه است مرا
 چکنم؟ بخت از این رخت سیاه است مرا
 حاصل عمر از این زندگی آه است مرا
 مرگ هر شام و سحر چشم بدراه است مرا
 زحمت مردن من يك قدم است
 تالب گور کفن در تنم است

.....

من به ویرانه زویران شدن ایرانم
 من ملکزاده این مملکت ویرانم
 دختر خسرو، شاهنشاه دیرین بودم

ناز پرورده در دامن شیرین بودم
 خانه اول من گوشه ویرانه نبود
 چه حرمانانه اجداد من این خانه نبود

....

شرم چه؟ مرد بسکی بنده وزن يك بنده
 زن چه کرده است که از مرد شود شرمنده؟
 چیست این چادر و روبنده نازینده؟
 گر کفن نیست، بگو چیست پس این روبنده؟
 مرده باد آنکه زنهان زنده به گور افکنده
 بجز از مذهب هر کس باشد!
 سخن اینجای دیگر بس باشد
 بامن از يك دوسه گوینده هماواز شود
 کم کم این زمزمه در جامعه آغاز شود
 با همین زمزمه ما روی زنان باز شود
 زن کند جامه شرم آرد و سرافراز شود
 لذت از زندگی جمعیت احراز شود
 ورنه تا زن به کفن سر برده
 نیمی از ملت ایران مرده

'I have no fault except that I am a woman.

Because of this fault I must remain in a shroud as long
 as I am alive.

I wear black, and as long as I do not take it off,

You are unfortunate, and I, like your fortune, am unlucky.

I am the one who can change your fortune;

If I cry, you will cry too,

If I laugh, you will laugh.

If I take off this veil I commit a crime,

And if I do not my life will be wasted inside it.

What can I do? My luck is bad because of this veil;

Sighs are the result of living this life.

Death is waiting for me each night and dawn.

The time of my death is one step away;

To the edge of the grave I wear a shroud.

...

I am ruined because of Irān's ruin.

I am the princess of this ruined country.

I was the daughter of Khosrow, the ancient king.

I was pampered in Shirin's lap.

My first house was not the corner of a ruin.

This house is not the home of my ancestors.

...

Why this shame? Man is God's servant and woman is too.

What have women done to be ashamed before men?

What is this veil, this ugly face-cover?

If it is not a shroud, tell me what is this face-cover.

Down with those who have buried women alive.

It is not religion, whoever they maybe.

What has been said above is enough.

If a couple of speakers speak in the same tone as mine,

This murmur will gradually spread in society.

Through this murmur the women will gain confidence.

The women will take off this shameful cloak and be proud.

The delights of life will then be enjoyed by all the people.

But as long as the women are covered in shrouds,

Half the people of Irān are dead.' 36

Similar sentiments were expressed by Abu'l-Qāsem Lāhuti, the son of a Kermānshāh shoemaker who, having had his education in Tehrān financed by a family patron, became a strong supporter of the Constitutional movement.³⁷ For example, his poem 'To the Daughters of Irān' contains the following lines:

اندر این دور تمدن، صنما، ایق نیست
دلبری چون تو ز آرایش دانش به کنار
ننگ باشد که تو در پرده و طغی آزاد
شرم باشد که تو در خواب و جهانی بیدار

....

سخن ازدانش و آزادی و زحمت بی گوی
تا که فرزند تو با این سخنان آید بار
به یقین گر تو چنین مادر خوبی باشی
مس اقبال وطن از تو شود زر عیار

'At this stage of civilization, my beauty, it is not right
That such a charming person as you should be deprived
of the adornment of knowledge.
It is a shame that you are veiled while others are free.
It is a shame that you are asleep while the world is
awake.

...

Speak of knowledge and freedom and hard work
So that your children may grow up with these words.
Surely, if you are such a good mother
You will change the copper fortune of your country
into pure gold.³⁸

Many consider Shāhzādeh Iraj Mirzā Jalāl ol-Mamālek (Iraj) to have been the undisputed master of popular, colloquial

poetry in the time.³⁹ He came from a family of poets and was a descendant of the second Qājār monarch, Fath Ali Shāh. He was born in Tabriz and obtained his education there. He gained great popularity as a writer during his lifetime.⁴⁰ Some of his views on women are expressed in his 'Āref-nāmah', which begins with the following lines:

خدايا، تا کی این مردان به خوابند؟	زنان تا کی گرفتار حجابند؟
چرا در پرده باشد طلعت یاز؟	خدايا زین معما پرده بر دار
مگر زن در میان ما بشر نیست؟	مگر زن در تمیز خیر و شر نیست؟
توبنداری که چادر ز آمن و روست؟	اگر زن شیوه زن شد مانع اوست؟

'Oh God! Until when will these men be asleep; until when will these women be veiled.

Why should the loved one's face be covered? O God, uncover this mystery.

Are not women humans like us? Do not women recognise good and evil?

Do you think this veil is made of iron and zinc, that it can stop women from being coquettish.'⁴¹

Although these poets, and others such as Āref, Kamāli and Bahār, expressed their feelings in clear, strong terms, their impact was surprisingly slight on the government of the time.⁴² Many people knew these verses by heart, yet the message, if it sank in, did not result in any significant changes in the status of women.

The change of dynasty in 1925 brought about a different type of approach to women's problems. From this time on-

wards, pressure for an improvement in the situation of women became an integral part of the general pressure, imparted and supported by Rezā Shāh, for modernization through westernization. At this time a number of politicians, such as Hasan Taqizādeh and Ali Akbar Siāsi, adopted the view that there should be a complete acceptance of the West, even though they differed as to how this should be achieved and which Western countries Irān should follow. All, however, distinguished between the adoption of Western technology and the adoption of Western customs. Banāni quotes one writer as saying: 'We must learn their science, their technology, and emulate their sense of lawfulness, responsibility and initiative. Otherwise, any ape can learn their dances'.⁴³

Many of these arguments, though not attacking religion, were directed against the power of the clergy, even when propounded by former olamā or sons of olamā.⁴⁴

Such arguments supported Rezā Shāh's ambitious and largely successful programme of modernization in education, industry, transport and government administration, as well as his more superficial reforms such as replacing traditional Persian names and dress by European forms.⁴⁵

Some writers suggest that Rezā Shāh's reforms did not reach into the home. For example, 'A large number of girls are growing up at Tehrān and Esfahān to become teachers and nurses, but the vast majority even of urban women retain the mental habits of the nineteenth century still'.⁴⁶ However,

the influence of these reforms, as will be seen later, was much more pervasive in the long-term than any political or poetic propaganda. They led, eventually, to much greater pressure from women themselves for the advancement of women's rights.

The Women's Movement

Throughout this century, a number of Persian women have, through their efforts or example, helped the feminist cause. Of course, it is not possible to list all these women here. Nor is it always clear whether those women who have reached high positions have themselves held a feminist philosophy. Most have come from rich upper or middle class families, with broad-minded parents who have been in contact with western countries. Many have spent a considerable proportion of their early life in Europe, the United States, or a western environment within Irān. As the rights of women have spread, many more from similar backgrounds have joined the growing numbers of various organizations which, in name at least, appear to support the feminist movement. Again, however, the distinction between those committed to feminism and those just seeking organizational status is not always clear.

Around the turn of the century, Hājji Mirzā Hādi Dowlatābādi stressed the need for girls' education and provi-

ded an example through his daughter Sedūqeh. She became one of the pioneers of Persian feminism when, in 1920, she founded a journal in Esfahān with the title 'Zabān-e Zanān' (Women's Voice) — the first publication edited by a woman in Irān. She was forced to leave the country but returned in the 1930s to become first a school inspector and later head of the Ladies' Centre (Kānun-e Bānuvān). ⁴⁷

Apart from some small private classes arranged by groups of educated fathers for their daughters, there were, by 1910, only about six Iranian schools providing modern education for girls in Tehrān. These had been founded in the immediately preceding years by patriotic, constitutionalist Iranian ladies. More important were two foreign schools. One was 'Zhāndārk' (Joan of Arc), which was sponsored by the French Government, and which is still in existence. The other was an older institution, established in 1896, the American Mission School for Girls. Out of these two schools graduated a number of Irān's later feminists. ⁴⁸ Among the most famous of these was Parvin E'tesāmi, about whom more will be written later in this chapter.

Another graduate of the American School, Mehr Bānu, became a teacher and later promoted the Society of Graduates of the American School, whose aim was to improve women's education and rights, e.g. in divorce, without challenging the religious leaders. Other graduates of the school founded a journal called 'Ālam-e Nesvān' (Women's World), which tried to spread information to women on family affairs and house-keeping. A small but vigorous society named the League of Patriotic Women came into being in 1922. Its founder and first president was a Qājār princess, Mohtaram Eskandari, who died soon afterward and was succeeded by Mastureh Afshār. In 1924, this League published a periodical named 'Nesvān-e Vatankhwāh' (Patriotic Women). ⁴⁹

During the 1920s and 1930s many other journals dealing

with various aspects of women's life in Irān were founded. Some did not last long; others were less influential than the actions of a few brave women whose names were to become household words. For example, Sārā Khānom dared to appear in public without a veil long before this was officially encouraged by the Chāh. She became the first woman employed in the Iranian Civil Service and was the first woman to represent her country at an international meeting -- the Philadelphia Trade Fair of 1926. Another woman, Khānom Shahnāz Āzād, was jailed for publicly denouncing the veiling of women.⁵⁰

As Rezā Shāh took full command of the country during the 1930s and was clearly a strong supporter of greater rights for women, the actions and words of feminists became less strident and less important than the actions and words of the Shāh himself. By increasing the number of schools and, especially, by opening Tehrān University in 1936 to women students, he encouraged a group of intelligent women to become leaders in their chosen fields and to become influential in later movements supporting women's rights.⁵¹

Surprisingly, many of the outstanding academic achievements of the first groups of educated Persian women were in the scientific fields rather than the arts. For example, Dr. Akhtar Ferdowsi, an early girl student at Tehrān University, obtained her doctorate in pharmaceuticals and became a professor in the university.⁵² Dr Tal'at Habibi

had a similar history but in the field of zoology.⁵³ Dr. Malekzādeh Bayāni,⁵⁴ whose education was mainly in Paris, became a leading archaeologist, as did Mrs. Zahrā Nabil, who later became a Senator.⁵⁵

Other women moved into sociology, law and related fields. Dr. Tāj-Zamān Dānesh, for example, became a professor and adviser to the government on criminology.⁵⁶ Mrs. Kowkab Ma'ārefi obtained a doctorate in humanities from the United States and later became a high civil servant in the Ministry of Health.⁵⁷ Dr. Mehrangiz Manuchehriān, one of the first women entrants and graduates of Tehrān University, founded the Iranian Federation of Women Lawyers and later became a Senator.⁵⁸

While these women, and many others like them, were engaged in study, others were helping in the general advancement of education. One of the most famous of these was Mrs. Bersabeh Hossepiān, who graduated from Geneva and opened Armenian kindergartens in Irān in the 1920s. In 1931 she was able to obtain permission to open the first official kindergarten in Tehrān for boys and girls.⁵⁹ Yet another woman who became famous was Dr. Leylā Kurbakhsh, who was the first woman to open a pharmacy in Tehrān.⁶⁰

Very few of these women are known to have associated themselves closely with the feminist movement or with the various women's organizations which have sprung into existence during the past twenty years. Their contribution has been rather to show that Persian women are quite capable of

handling the work and responsibilities previously reserved for Persian men.

A second group of women, in addition to becoming eminent in their various fields, were more closely connected with the feminist movement either through their work with women's organizations or because of the nature of their work. For example, one of the first students at Tehrān University, Mrs. Badrol-Moluk Bāmdād, is now regarded as a leader in the Iranian women's movement. Among various important achievements she has been a lecturer in the Girl's Teacher Training College, founder of a model private school in Tehrān, founder of a women's association (The Women's League of Supporters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), editor of the newspaper 'Zan-e Emruz' (Today's Woman), and author of books on a wide variety of subjects from housekeeping to social behaviour.⁶¹

Two women whose importance also derived from their work in education are Dr. Forugh Kiā and Dr. Farrokhru Parsāy. The teaching ability of the former spanned such subjects as biology, women's diseases, home nursing and midwifery, and literature.⁶² The latter was one of the first women to become a Member of Parliament, and later the first woman to become a Minister (of Education) in the Iranian Cabinet. Dr. Parsay studied medicine and was a high school principal before becoming a civil servant. While Minister of Education she was also chief of the federal organization of women's societies.⁶³

Three other civil servants are worthy of mention. Mrs.

Effatol-Moluk Nahvi followed her education in Europe and the United States by being appointed to the United Nations Office in Tehrān and later the Plan Organization. She became the first woman Director-General (in the Ministry of Water and Power) and has been Irān's Representative on the International Commission on the Status of Women.⁶⁴ Dr.

Parvin Sufi-Siāvash had a background in law before becoming a teacher, educational inspector, and high school principal. She has written a number of articles on the protection of women workers and is Chief of the Society Campaigning against Women's Illiteracy. At present she is an undersecretary in the Ministry of Interior.⁶⁵ Mrs. Hājar Tarbiat, who became a Member of Parliament and later a Senator after working at high levels in the Ministry of Interior, was a founder member of the 'Kānun-e-Bānuvān' (Ladies' Centre) in 1935, before becoming principal of the Tehrān Teacher Training College and Director-General of Social Affairs at the Ministry of Interior.⁶⁶

While many of the minority sections of the Iranian population had their own women's organizations (for example, the Armenian Women's Charity Society, the Zoroastrian Women's Charity Organization, the Iranian Jewish Women's Organization), as did professional groupings (the Women Jurists' Association, Irān Nurses Association), a number of broader societies were also formed.⁶⁷ In 1944, the Iranian Council of Women ('Showrā-ye Zanān-e Irān') was founded by Mrs. Safieh Firuz, who was a daugh-

ter of Hajj Mohammad Hasan Namāzi, the famous Iranian merchant, who was educated mainly in Hong Kong.⁶⁸ During the 1950s particularly the Council of Women became more active than the older Ladies' Centre, which had been transformed into an adult education centre for women and remained under the direction of Sediqeh Dowlatābādi until her death in 1961. In 1956, the Council of Women presented a list of requests to the Shāh. This included 'reform of laws regarding the status of children and the implementation of divorce; removing all inequalities between men and women under the civil law; banning polygamy; banning temporary marriage; granting women equal opportunities for government employment; eliminating provisions of the penal code which permit husbands, fathers or brothers to kill their daughters, wives or sisters (in certain circumstances such as adultery, etc.); enacting a labour law which would more nearly equalize the conditions of work of men and women; establishing social insurance for women as well as men; in educational work, recognition of the equality of women in administrative, technical, and teaching functions; putting only qualified women in charge of girls' schools; inviting women to participate in the High Council on Education; giving women supervisory positions in social welfare projects; and more vigorous protection of the right of women to vote in municipal elections.' There was not, however, any immediate response to these requests.⁶⁹

Other organizations to be formed during the 1950s were the 'Jam'iat-e Bidāri-ye Zanān' (Women's Awakening Society), 'Jam'iat-e Kāh-e Now' (New Path Society), and the

Ladies' Cultural Society. Nevertheless, as Binder has pointed out, most of the women who are leaders in these groups belong to several organizations. He estimated the total membership of all the organizations in 1959 at 3,000 to 5,000 only.⁷¹

Binder also notes that the women were not very aggressive in their demands, nor particularly revolutionary in their methods. Though the leaders were all from influential families, they did not appear to work through their male relatives. They preferred making representations to the government or the court rather than trying to reach out for mass support. Their social positions largely determined their loyalty to the regime, even though some were known to have formerly been members of the Tudeh party. Many were associated with the Mardom party, but only because this party had outspokenly favoured women's rights.⁷²

The growing number of different women's associations led, in March 1959, to the creation of the High Council of Women's Organizations, which incorporated all the eighteen societies then existing under the Honorary Presidency of Princess Ashraf, the twin sister of the Shāh. Fifty women who had been pioneers in various branches of the women's movement were elected as the founding members of this council. In effect this move reaffirmed the loyalty of the women's leaders to the Shāh and his government. The member associations retained their names and functions.⁷³

A further consolidation of the women's associations took place in August 1966, when the Organization of Iranian Women (under the patronage of Princess Ashraf) was formed. By 1971 this body had 32 member associations and 14 affiliated associations, and claimed a total membership of 70,000 for its 89 branches spread throughout the country. The Organization of Iranian Women has held annual meetings in Tehrān and has become associated with similar organizations in other countries. However, for the most part, it appears to have been a follower rather than a leader in the feminist movement in Irān.⁷⁴

Feminist Poetesses

Most Persian poetesses of the twentieth century wrote at least some of their poems about the position of women. Indeed, their fame usually grew around such feminist poems. In the following section I illustrate this type of work with some new translations of poems by the best-known of these poetesses.

Ālam Tāj 'Zhāleh' Qā'em Maqāmi, who was born in 1834, was one of the first poetesses to break away from the seclusion of the harem and the traditional content of classical poetry. She was the daughter of Mirzā Fathollāh, who came from a family of diplomats and was the son of a Prime Minister (Qā'em-Māqām Farāhāni), and Bānu Maryam, who arranged for her to study Arabic and Persian with private tutors. When she was

sixteen, a marriage was arranged for her with Ali Morād Khān Bakhtiāri, who was forty years old and shared none of her educational background or literary interests. She gave birth to a son, Hoseyn Pezhmān Bakhtiāri, but when he was nine years old her husband died, and because of the already-mentioned child custody law, Hoseyn was taken away from her and put into the care of her late husband's uncle. From that time, Zhāleh started to fight for women's rights. She became a member of one of the early unofficial women's societies, and spoke out fearlessly in favour of women's rights in divorce and against misuse of religion. Many of her poems were published in the journal 'Maghmā'. Her son, Hoseyn Pezhmān, who became a distinguished poet and scholar, collected them into a divān, which was published in 1933, about 13 years before she died in 1946. ⁷⁵

Two of Zhāleh's most forceful poems with a feminist theme are 'Advice to My Sisters' (Andarz be Khwāharān) ⁷⁶ and 'The Rights of Women and Men' (Hoquq-e Zan o Mard). ⁷⁷ In the former, translated below, she urges women to band together to protect themselves against being down-trodden by men; in the latter, which is given with my translation in Appendix 3 to this thesis, she makes a lengthy case for women's rights, using simple logic and reference to Qor'ānic precepts.

بر آرد سر از دامن خاوران
 که تهمت فروگیری از خواهران
 تو باری میفزای سنگی بر آن
 گرت نازشی هست بر شوهران

در توبه بازست تا آفتاب
 تو ای خواهر نازنین توبه کن
 فلک هشته بر دوش ما بارها
 درینا که از کار خود غافل

که فرمان دهانند و فرمان بران
 چه داریم شایای هم بستران
 که نکست نام تو بر سروران
 ترا خود بس این بندهای گران
 مشو مایه عبرت دیگران
 در این سرزمین داور داوران
 که دختر بود حامی دختران
 مشو یار مردان بد گوهران
 که بدین نگردند بینش و دان

زنان را نخوانند مردان بزن
 بجز بستر گرم و آغوش نرم
 کت خانه گویند و گه بچه‌ها
 پس ای خواهرای دخترای هم‌نشین
 یکی عبرت از مادر خویش گیر
 چو نام زنانرا فراموش نبرد
 تو باری به زشتیش نامی مکن
 حمایتگر خواهر خویش نبرد
 نکوئی نگرشو نه زشتی تراش

گرم عیب باشد هنر نیز هست
 هنرین شو ای بهتر بهتران

'The door of your repentance is open until the sun rises
 from the east.

You must repent, O lovely sister, so that you can belie
 the charges against your sisters.

Nature has put a load on our shoulders; do not add
 another stone to it.

Alas you are neglecting your task if you only pay court
 to your husbands.

Men will never treat women like women when they are both
 the governors and the governed.

Apart from a warm bed and a soft embrace, what do we have
 of value for our husbands?

Sometimes they call you 'house' and sometimes 'child';
 your master is ashamed of your real name.

So, O sisters, O girls, O fellow-women, for you there
are enough heavy ropes,

Learn a lesson from your own mother; do not become an
object-lesson for others.

Although those who are the supreme judges in this country
have forgotten the name of women,

Never besmirch this name, for girls must defend each other.

Be a defender of your sisters, not an ally of ill-natured men.

Try to be optimistic not pessimistic, for wise people do not
become cynical.

If I have faults, I also have merits.

Care for merit, O best of the best! '

After Zhāleh, the outstanding poetess of modern times was Parvin E'tesāmi. She was a shy, reserved young woman who, like Forugh later, was divorced after a very short marriage, and some of whose poems, such as 'The Broken Roof' ('Bām-e Shekasteh'), and occasional verses,* tell of the bitter effect of this divorce on her. Also like Forugh, she took no part in women's organizations but significantly influenced greater women's

* See the footnote on p. 268 of her 'divān'. 'Bām-e Shekasteh' is similar in content to Forugh's poem, 'Abandoned Home' (see Chapter One).

rights through her poetry. Even before enrolling in the American Girls' School, she had learnt Arabic and Persian from her father, who was an eminent journalist and scholar. She was sensitive and compassionate, and wrote about the problems of women in the same way as she wrote about the problems of all poor, down-trodden and oppressed people, with whom she deeply sympathised.⁷³ Her concern with the advancement of her sex comes through in many of her poems, but in none perhaps so strongly as in 'Women in Irān' (Zan dar Irān), which she wrote after the compulsory unveiling on January 7, 1936:

<p>پیشه‌اش، 'جز تیره‌روزی در پریشانی نبود زن چه بود آن روزها، گر زانکه زندانی نبود کس چو زن، در معبد سالوس، قربانی نبود در دبستان فضیلت، زن، دبستانی نبود آشکارا بود این بیداد، پنهانی نبود در نهاد، جمله گرگی بود، چوپانی نبود سر نوشت و قسمتی، جز تنگ‌میدانی نبود این ندانستن، ز پستی و گرانجانی نبود خرمن و حاصل نبود، آنجا که دهقانی نبود بهر زن هر گز نصیبی زین فراوانی نبود در 'گلستان'، نام ازین مرغ 'گلستانی نبود زیرک آن زن، کور هوش این راه، ظلمانی نبود با زُمرّد یاره و لعل بدخشانی نبود عزت از شایستگی بود، از هوسرانی نبود قدر و پستی، با گرانی و به ارزانی نبود 'گوهر تابنده'، تنها گوهر گانی نبود زیور و زر، پرده پوش عیب نادانی نبود جامه عجب و هوی بهتر ز عریانی نبود پاک را آسیبی از آلوده دامانی نبود</p>	<p>زن در ایران، پیش ازین کوئی که ایرانی نبود زندگی و مرگش اندر کنج عزلت میگذشت کس چو زن، آندر سیاهی فریاد منزل نکرد در عدالتخانه انصاف، زن شاهد نداشت دادخواهی‌های زن میماند، عمری بی جواب بس کسان را جامه و چوب تسانی بود، لیک از برای زن، بمیدان فراخ زندگی نور دانش را ز چشم زن نوبان میداشتند زن کجا بافنده میشد، بی نخ و دوک هنر میوه‌های دگّه دانش فراوان بود، لیک در قفس می‌آرمید و در قفس میداد جان بهر زن، تقلید تیه فتنه و چاه بلاست آب و رنگ از علم میبایست، شرط برتری جلوه صد پیر نیان، چون یک قبای ساده نیست آرزش پوشنده، کفش و جامه را ارزنده کرد سادگی و پاک‌وی برهیز، یک یک گوهرند از زر و زیور چه سود آنجا که نادان است زن عیبها را جامه برهیز پوشانده است و بس زن، سبکساری نبیند تا گرانسنگ است و پاک</p>
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زن و کجور است و عفت گنج و حرس : آزه دزد
 آهر من بر سفره تقوی نمیشد میهمان
 وای اگر آگه ز آئین نکجهائی نبود
 تا آنکه میدانست کآنججا جای مهادانی نبود
 توشه‌ای و رهنوردی ، جز پشیدانی نبود
 چادر یوسیده ، بنیاد مسلهانی نبود
 پایراه راست باید داشت ، کاندرا راه کج
 چشم و دل را پرده میبایست ، اما از عفاف

Until now, you could say that women in Irān were not Iranians.

Apart from misery and worry they had no function.

The woman's life and death took place in the corner of sec-

clusion. What was a woman in those days if not a prisoner?

Nobody else lived in darkness for centuries as women did;

Nobody else was sacrificed in the temple of hypocrisy as
 women were.

In the court of justice and equity, women had no witnesses;

in the school of merit, women were not pupils.

The pleas of women were left unanswered in their lifetimes;

and this injustice was open, not hidden.

There were many who wore shepherd's clothing, but inwardly

were wolves, not shepherds.

For women, in life's broad arena, there was no destiny or role

except narrowness.

The light of knowledge was hidden from the eyes of women;

but their ignorance was not due to inferiority or stupidity.

How could a woman be a weaver without the thread and spindle of merit? There could be no harvest or crop where there was no cultivator.

The fruits on offer in the shape of knowledge were plentiful; but there was no share in this plenty for women.

She stayed in a cage and died in a cage; in the garden there was no mention of this garden-bird.

The woman's lot was to follow the road of precedent, through the desert of anxiety to the well of calamity; clever was the woman who got off this dark road.

She needed a complexion made beautiful by knowledge; an emerald bracelet or a ruby from Badakhshān was no sign of excellence.

A hundred lengths of shot silk have less splendour than the simple robe (of knowledge); glory is from virtue, not from glamour.

The character of the wearer makes shoes and clothes precious; worth and mediocrity do not stem from dearness and cheapness.

Simplicity, purity and austerity; each is a jewel; jewels from mines are not the only ones that shine.

What was the use of gold and ornaments in a place where the women were ignorant? The ornaments and gold could not hide the blemish of ignorance.

Blemishes can be hidden by the robe of austerity; the robes of arrogance and sensuality are no better than nakedness.

No woman is frivolous if she is dignified and pure; no pure person falls into the evils of vice.

Woman is a treasurer, purity is the treasure, greed and avarice are the thieves; she is lost if she does not know how to protect her treasure.

The Devil is not invited to the table of virtue; he knows that there is no place for him there.

We must set our feet on the right road, because when we take the wrong road our only diet is remorse.

The eyes and the heart need a covering, but one of decency; the outworn veil has nothing to do with being Moslem. ⁷⁹

While Parvin E'tesāmi wrote poetry in the classical form, most later poetesses tended to use 'modern' or 'free' forms of verse. (See Chapter Three). Among those worthy of mention in the period following the Second World War are Simin Behbehāni, Parvin Dowlatābādi and Tahereh Saffarzādeh.

Simin Behbehāni was born in 1927, the daughter of Abbās Khalili, a newspaper publisher and novelist, and Fakhr-e 'Adel who founded the literary society 'Daneshvārān-e Irān'. She lived with her mother after her parent's divorce and soon revealed her own literary talent, publishing three collections of poetry. She became a high school teacher, and in some of her poems she has used scenes from the classroom to depict the hardships faced by Iranian women. An excellent example is her poem 'Passive Verb' (Fe'l-e Majhul): ⁸⁰

بچه‌ها صبحتان بخیر . . . سلام

درس اول فعل مجهول است

فعل مجهول چیست میدانید ؟

نسبت فعل ما به مفعول است

دردهانم زبان چو آویزی

در تهیگاه زنگ می‌لغزید

صورت ناساز آنچنان که مگر

شیشه بر روی سنگ می‌لغزید

ساعتی داد آن سخن دادم

حق گفتار را ادا کردم

تا ز اعجاز خود شوم آگاه

و ژاله را ز آن میان صدا کردم

و ژاله از درس من چه فهمیدی ؟

پاسخ من سکوت بود و سکوت بود

ده جوابم بده کجا بودی ؟

رفته بودی به عام «دهروت» ؟

خنده‌ی دختران و غرش من

ریخت بر فرق ژاله چون باران

لیک او بود غرق حیرت خویش

خشمگین انتقامجو گفتم

بچه‌ها گوش و ژاله «سنگین است

دختری طمنه زد که نه جانم

درس در گوش «ژاله» یاسین است.

باز هم خنده‌ها و همه‌ها

تند و پی گیر میرسد بگوش

زیر آتششان دیده‌ی من

و ژاله آرام بود و سرد و خموش

رفته تا عمق چشم حیرانم

آن دو میخ نگاه خیره‌ی او

موج زن در دو چشم بی‌گنهنش

دازی از روزگار تیره‌ی او

آنچه در آن نگاه میخواندم

قصه‌ی غمه بود و حرمان بود

نالای کرد و در سخن آمد

با صدایی که سخت لرزان بود

«فعل مجهول» فعل آن پدربست

که دلم را ز درد پر خون کرد

خواهرم را به مشت و سیلی کوفت

مادرم را ز خانه بیرون کرد

شب دوش از گرمی تا صبح

خواهر شیرخوار من نالید

سوخت از تاب شب برادر من تاك

تا محردر کنار من نالید

از غم آن دو تن دو دیده من

این یکی اشک بود و آن خون بود

مادرم را دگر نمی دانم

که کجا رفت و حال او چون بود

گفت و نالید و آنچه باقی ماند

حق گریه بود و ناله‌ی او

شسته میشد به قطره‌های سرشک

چهره‌ی همچو برتک لاله‌ی او

نالای من به ناله‌اش آمیخت

که غلط بود آنچه من گفتم

درس امروز قصه‌ی غم تست

توبگو من چرا سخن گفتم ؟

فعل مجهول فعل آن پدربست

که ترا بیگناه میسوزد

آن حریق هوس بود که دراو

ماذری بی پناه میسوزد

"Good morning, children. Salaam.

The first lesson is about the passive verb.

Do you know what a passive verb is?

It is the relation of a verb to its object."

In my mouth my tongue was like a pendant

Which moves inside the emptiness of a bell.

My face was as disagreeable

As the sound of glass rolling on stone.

For an hour I kept on talking about it,

Then, having said what it was my duty to say,

To find out how well I had spoken

I called Zhāleh out from among the others.

"Zhāleh, what did you learn from my lesson?"

The answer was silence, silence.

"Come on, answer me. Where were you?

Have you been daydreaming?"

The laughs of the girls and my own stern voice

Poured over Zhāleh's head like rain.

But she herself was sunk in bewilderment.

Angry and vengeful, I said,

"Children, Zhāleh is deaf."

A girl said sarcastically, "No, miss!

Lessons in Zhāleh's ears are like 'Yā-sin' ".*

More laughs and noises

Continued to reach my ears.

* There is a Persian saying that reading verses of 'Yā-sin' from the Qorān into a donkey's ear does not help to move the donkey.

Under my fury, erupting glare
Zhāleh stayed quiet, cold and silent.
The two nails of her piercing glance
Struck deep into my bewildered eyes.
In her two innocent eyes
Secrets from her dark life welled up.
All I could read in her eyes
Was a story of sadness and deprivation.
She sighed and started to speak
With a voice which was brittle and shaking.
"The passive verb is the action of my father
Who made my heart bleed with pain.
He punched and slapped my sister,
And threw my mother out of the house.
Last night till dawn my baby sister
Was sobbing from hunger.
My brother, hot with fever,
Was moaning beside me till dawn.
Sorrow for the two of them made this eye of mine weep,
Made this eye of mine bloodshot.
I do not know my mother now,
Or where she went and whether she is well."
She spoke and sighed, and then
only her weeps and sobs remained.
Her face, so like a tulip's petal,

Was being washed by her tear-drops.

My own grief mixed with hers.

"All I have said was wrong.

Today's lesson is a story of your sorrow.

Tell me, why did I speak?

The passive verb is the conduct of the father

Who pains you in your innocence.

It was the blaze of his whim

That is destroying a homeless mother." 31

Parvin Dowlatabadi, born in 1922, is the daughter of Hesam od-din Dowlatabadi, who was a politician and deputy.

She also became a teacher and founded her own school as well as publishing her poetry in various journals. 82

Her work has a more philosophical slant than that of many other poetesses, as her poem 'This is Life' (Zendegi in Ast) shows:

زندگی این است،
 در شرنگی شهید و در شهیدی شرنگی
 در امید روشنی افتاده نقش تیره رنگی
 راه را نگشوده بستن
 بسته درها را شکستن
 در قبای قیرگون شب ره فردا سپردن
 روز روشن را به ژرفای شب یلدا فکندن
 زندگی این است
 زینگونه است،

در سپید اندام مهتابی طراز خواب بستن
 در دل رؤیا به بال نتره گون ابری نشستن
 قفل‌های قلعه اندوه و محنت در شکستن
 بندها را، گرچه از زربفت تار گیسوی خورشید باشد
 با سرانگشت تمنایی گسستن

زنده بودن، زندگی کردن به کام آزاده بودن
 بستر سبز چمنزار خیال از هم گشودن.

سایه روشنهای وهم سرد از خاطر زدودن
 زندگی این است.
 باور خودخواستن، از عاریت اندیشه ناآشنایان درگذشتن
 هستی از خود یافتن
 نیستی از خویش جستن
 در دل خاک سیه چون دانه پاکیزه رستن
 آسمانی بودن خود، در خیال آرام رود رفته شستن
 زندگی این است
 جز این نیست
 هذیانی است هستی
 کز تب گرم جوانی جان گرفته
 رنگ کفر از نقش بس ایمان گرفته
 زندگی این است
 نقش درهم مانده طیفی که از خورشید می تا بد
 در سپیدی رنگ می یازد
 در سیاهی شب نورد خسته را ماند
 که از دور از جهانی ناشناس اما زما،
 پاکشان و قصه گویان باز می آید.

'This is life.

In bitterness sweetness, in sweetness bitterness.

The hope of light shadowed by the pattern of darkness;

It is closing unopened roads,

Breaking down closed doors.

Walking towards tomorrow in the black cover of night,
 Throwing bright daylight into the depth of midwinter's night."

This is life.

It's like this.

Thinking of sleep

In the white glow of moonlight,

Sitting on the silver wings of clouds

In the midst of dreams,

Breaking the locks of the fortress of sadness and grief,

Tearing ropes with the fingers of desire, even when

they were made of the golden thread of the sun's rays.

Being alive, living, free to do as you please.

Tearing up the green bed of the lawn of fantasy,

Wiping the shadows of cold fear from one's memory.

This is life.

Choosing one's own beliefs, not borrowing the thoughts

of strangers.

Finding existence in one's self,

And non-existence in one's self.

Growing like a pure seed in the deep black soil.

Being angelic one's self, washing one's self in the

silent thoughts of a running river.

This is life.

Nothing but this.

* Shab-e yalda

Existence is a delirium brought to life
 By the hot fever of youth,
 A disbelief whose colours come from the many patterns
 belief.

This is life.

The mixed pattern of the rainbow which comes from the
 sunlight

Fades into whiteness.

In the darkness of night, life appears as a tired sleep-
 walker,

Who returns from far, from an unknown world but from ourselves,
 Dragging his feet and telling tales. ³³

As Iranian women became freer, some behaved irrespon-
 sibly. One modern poetess who criticises misuse of
 emancipation is Tāhereh Saffārzādeh, who was born in Sirjān
 in 1938. She received her university education in the
 United States and has produced poetic works in both English
 and Persian.³⁴ In her poem 'Child of the Century' (Kudak-e
Qarn), she condemns mothers who abandon their children to
 go out drinking, dancing and gambling:

کودک این قرن
 هر شب در حصار خانگی تنهاست
 پر نیاز از خواب اما ، وحشتش از بستر آینده و فرداست
 بانگ مادر خواهش آویزه بی در گوش این دنیاست
 گفته اند افسانه ها از ، مهربانیها مادر
 غمگاریهای مادر

درببر گهواره‌ها : شب زنده‌داریهای مادر
 لیک آن کودک ندارد هیچ باور !
 شب‌چو خواب آید درون دیده‌ی او
 پرسد از خود : «بازاه شب مادرم کو ؟»
 بانگ آرامی برآید :
 چشم برهم نه که امشب مادرت اینجاست .
 پشت يك ميز

زیر پای دوده‌های تلخ سربی رنگ
 در میان شعله‌های حقه و نیرنگ
 در تلاش و جستجوی بی‌تنت !
 چهره‌اش لبریز از زلفار فکری برد

فکر باخت ، فکر پوچ ! فکر هیچ
 مانده در بن بست راهی تنک
 کودک تنها دهد آواز :

و آی مادر . خاله‌های بخت من در دستهای توست !
 دستهای تو ، که محکم می‌فشارد برگ بازی را :
 زود بر خیز از میان شعله‌های حقه و نیرنگ
 وای می‌ترسم که دست تو و بخت من بسوزد بر سر این آتش خون‌رنگ
 های وهوی این سداها !
 و آخرین دست ، آخرین برگ ، آخرین شانس ،
 راه می‌بندد بروی ناله‌های کودگانه
 می‌برد از خواب
 دیده در بیداری ! آن چیزی که او در خواب دیده

*

شام دیگر چونکه خواب آید درون دیده‌ی او
 پرسد از خود : «باز امشب مادرم کو ؟»
 بانگ آرامی درون گوش او آهسته لغزد :
 و مادرت اینجاست . . .

درسرای رنگی شب زنده داران ،
 در هوای گرم و عطر آمیز يك زندان

قامت آن مادر زیبا بدور قامت بیگانه‌یی بیجان و دستش کردن
 آویزاست

پای آنان در زمین نرم آهنکی قدم دبیزست
آن اطاق از بانك دنوش، و خندهی «مستانه» لبریز است
میزند فریاد !

«مادر جای من آنجاست، آغوشی که مرد ناشناسی سر نهاده،
ناله‌های پر شکفتن، کم شود در نمره‌های :

« آخرین دور؛ آخرین رقص؛ آخرین جام . . .
تاسپیده دم که خواب از دیده‌ی شبها در آید
مادر آن کودک تنها درون لانه‌ی آغوشها پرمیکشاید
دیده در بیداری : آن چیزیکه او در خواب دیده .

شام دیگر مادرش در خانه است ، آنجاست

در اطاق اوجدالی باید بر پاست ،

گفتگوئی تلخ و نادمینجار ، دعوائی پر از تکرار

دعوا بر سر پول است و دعوا بر سر تنك خیابان هاست

كودك بیچاره ترسان و لرز لرزان

سر کند در زیر بالابوش پنهان

پیش خود گوید : خوش آن شبها که در این خانه، مادر نیست ! »

از هیاهوی شبان کام :

آخرین دست، آخرین رقص ، آخرین جام، آخرین دعوی تنك و نام

کبی رود در خواب راحت

كودك این قرن بی فرجام ؟

'The child of this century

Is alone each night within the walls of his home.

He is drowsy, but at bedtime he is frightened of the future
tomorrow

His cries for his mother will ring in the ears of the
world.

He has been told tales of a mother's kindness, a mother's
compassion;

How a mother sits awake and watchful beside the cradle.
But this child does not believe them.
At night, when his eyes grow drowsy,
He asks himself: 'Where is my mother again tonight?'
A soft voice answers:
'Close your eyes, because tonight your mother is here,
Sitting at a card table
Under a pall of bitter grey smoke
In the midst of flames of trick and deceit,
Striving to find good luck.
Her face is full of rusty thoughts of winning
And losing; empty thoughts, useless thoughts.
Left at the end of a narrow cul-de-sac,
Her lonely child cries out:
'O mother. My trump suit is in your hands,
Those hands which hold the cards so tight.
Quick, get out of the flames of trick and deceit,
I fear your hands and my fortune will be burnt by this
 blood-coloured fire.'
Sounds of laughs and shouts,
'Last hand, last card, last chance',
Shut off the child's moans.
Suddenly he is awake
And sees in his wakefulness all he has seen in his sleep.
Another night, when his eyes grow drowsy,
He asks himself: 'Where is my mother again tonight?'

A soft voice says quietly in his ears

'Your mother is here

In a gaily-coloured abode of night-life,

In the warm and scented air of a prison.

Your beautiful mother is wrapped around the figure of
a stranger, her arms around his neck,

Their feet on the floor, moving to the soft music

In a room full of merriment and drunken laughter.'

He cries:

'O mother! My place is there, on that bosom where
that strange man lays his head.'

But his astonished cries get lost in the noise.

'Last round, last dance, last glass'.

Till dawn, when sleep comes out of the eyes of night,

The mother of that lonely child whirls inside a nest
of arms.

He sees in his wakefulness all he has seen in his sleep.

Another night his mother is at home. She is there

In her room, quarreling with his father.

They say bitter, abnormal, angry words, and repeat them.

The quarrel is over money and the disgrace she brings to
the streets.

The poor child, frightened and shaking,

Hides his head under the blanket

And tells himself:

'Happy are those nights when mother is not at home'.

With all those noises all those nights --

Last hand, last dance, last glass, last quarrel about
disgrace to reputation --

When can he ever sleep peacefully,

The child of this unfortunate century?'

85

Forugh on Feminism

In assessing Forugh's contribution to feminism in Iran, one can only look at the way she lived her life (which I have described in the previous chapter) and at her poetry.

Forugh did not associate herself with any of the various women's organizations or movements; she was neither a politician, nor had any desire to be. It would probably also be fair to say that she was much more concerned with explaining her own position to the rest of the world, and ensuring that she obtained certain freedoms for herself, than with fighting for the rights of women in general.

In the end, perhaps, it was this approach which raised her stature as a feminist over many others who were more obviously active and influential in the feminist movement. Her background also helped. She did not come from a rich or powerful family; she did not have a particularly good education; and she had experienced at first hand many of the problems which Persian laws and customs created for women. In other words, she was not just a do-gooder.

Nevertheless she did write feminist poetry. One of the most famous of such poems is 'To My Sister' (Be-khwānaram), in which she openly asks for a change in the law:

خیز از جا ، بی آزادی خویش خواهر من ، زچه رو خاموشی
خیز از جای که باید زین پس خون مردان ستمگر نوشی

کن طلب حق خودای خواهر من از کسانی که ضعیف دارند
از کسانی که بصد حیثه و فسق گوشه خانه ترا بنشاند

تابکی در حرم شهوت مرد مایه عسرت و لذت بودن
تابکی همچو کنیزی بدبخت سر منور و پشیمانی بودن

تابکی در ره بیک لقمه نان صیغه حاجی صد ساله شدن
هووی دوم و سوم دیدن تابکی ظلم و ستم .. خواهر من

باید این ناله خشم آلودت بیگمان نمره و فریاد شود
باید این بند گران باره کنی تا ترا زندگی آزاد شود

خیز از جای و بکن ریشه ظلم راحتی بخش ، دل پر خون را
جهد کن ، جهد که تغییر دهی بهر آزادی خود قانون را

'Rise up to demand your freedom! Why do you remain
silent, my sister?

Rise up, because from now on you must drink the blood
of tyrannical men.

Demand your rights, my sister, from those who keep
you powerless,

From those who, with a hundred tricks and lies, keep
you cloistered at home.

For how long, in the harem of men's lust, are you to
be a mere object of pleasure and delight?

For how long a miserable slave, prostrating your
proud head at his feet?

For how long, for a scrap of bread, must you become
the temporary wife of a hundred year old Hajji,

And put up with rival wives -- a second, a third..?

For how long this tyranny and injustice, my sister?

This angry moan of yours must surely become a shout
and a roar.

You must cut these heavy ropes, so that your life may
be made free.

Stand up! Uproot this injustice! Give comfort to
your bleeding heart!

Fight, fight, for the sake of your freedom, to change
the law.' * 36

After her marriage, Forugh soon discovered that she was caught in a dilemma because of the laws and customs of the country. If she spoke out against her husband, or even if she spoke her mind on such forbidden subjects as love, she would be strongly criticised. If, however, she remained silent, she felt that she would be under such strain that she would be unable to carry out her wifely duties. This dilemma is captured in the poem 'Prisoner' (Asir):

* The Family Protection Law, which restricts polygamy and divorce, was passed in June 1967, four months after Forugh died.

ترا میخوام و دانم که هر گز
 به کام دل در آغوش نگیرم
 توئی آن آسمان صاف و روشن
 من این کنج قفس، مرغی اسیرم

ز پشت میله‌های سرد و تیره
 نگاه حسرت‌م حیران به رویت
 در این فکرم که دستی پیش آید
 و من ناگه گشایم پر بسویت

اگر ای آسمان خواهم که یکروز
 از این زندان خامش پر بگیرم
 به چشم کودک گریان چه گویم
 ز من بگذر، که من مرغی اسیرم

در این فکرم که در يك لحظه غفلت
 از این زندان خامش پر بگیرم
 به چشم مرد زندانبان بخندم
 کنارت زندگی از سر بگیرم

من آن شمع که با سوز دل خویش
 فروزان میکنم ویرانه‌ای را
 اگر خواهم که خاموشی گزینم
 پریشان میکنم کاشانه‌ای را

در این فکرم من و دانم که هر گز
 مرا یارای رفتن زین قفس نیست
 اگر هم مرد زندانبان بخواهد
 دگر از بهر پروازم نفس نیست

ز پشت میله‌ها، هر صبح روشن
 نگاه کودکی خندد برویم
 چو من سر میکنم آواز شادی
 لبش با بوسه می‌آید بسویم

'I want you, but I know that I never will
Be able to embrace you as I wish
You are a clear and bright sky;
I am a captive bird in the corner of this cage.
From behind these cold and dark bars
My envious eyes are gazing at your face.
In my mind a hand came forward
And I was suddenly able to fly towards you.
I am thinking that in an unguarded moment
I might fly away from this silent prison,
Laugh in the eyes of the gaoler,
And start life afresh beside you.
But in my mind I knew that
I shall never be able to leave this cage.
Even if the gaoler allowed me,
I would not have enough breath to fly.
From behind the bars, each bright morning,
A child's face smiles at me
And when I start to sing happily
His lips come towards me with kisses.
O heavens, if one day I want
To fly from this silent prison,
What can I say to the weeping eyes of this child?
Leave me alone, I am a caged bird!

I am a candle whose flaming heart
 Will brighten a ruined place.
 If I choose to remain silent
 I shall break up a home.' ... 87

The futility of an Iranian woman's life, the lack of respect with which men treated her, and the feeling that there was no one who would even listen to her problems, is expressed by Forugh in her poem 'A Bitter Tale' (Afsāne-ye Tallh):

نه امیدی که بر آن خوش کنم دل
 نه پیغامی نه پیک آشنائی
 نه در چشمی نگاه فتنه سازی
 نه آهنگ پر از موج صدائی

ز شهر نور و عشق و درد و ظلمت
 سحر گاهی زنی دامن کشان رفت
 پریشان مرغ ره گم کرده ای بود
 که زار و خسته سوی آشیان رفت

کجا کس در قفایش اشک غم ریخت
 کجا کس یاز پانش آشنا بود
 ندانستند این بیگانه مردم
 که بانگ او طنین نالهها بود

به چشمی خیره شد شاید بیابد
 نهانگاه امید و آرزو را

دریفا ، آن در چشم آتش افروز
بدامان گناه انکند او را

بهاو جز از هوس چیزی نگفتند
در او جز جلوۀ ظاهر ندیدند.
بهر جا رفت، در گوشش سرودند
که زن را بهر عشرت آفریدند

شبی در دامنی افتاد و نالید
مرو! بگذار در این واپسین دم
ز دیدارت دلم سیراب گردد
شبح پنهان شد و در خورد برهم

چرا امید بر عشقی عبث بست؟
چرا در بستر آغوش او خفت؟
چرا راز دل دیوانه‌اش را
بگوش عاشقی بیگانه خو گفت؟

چرا؟! ... او شبنم پاکیزه‌ای بود
که در دام گل خورشید افتاد
سحر گاهی چو خورشیدش بر آمد
به کام تشنه‌اش لغزید و جان داد

به جامی باده شورافکنی بود
که در عشق لبانی تشنه می سوخت
چو می آمد زره پیمانۀ نوشی
بقلب جام از شادی میا فروخت

شی، ناگه سر آمد انتظارش
لبش در کام سوزانی هوس ریخت
چرا آن مرد بر جانش غضب کرد؟
چرا بر ذره‌های جامش آویخت؟

کنون، این او و این خاموشی سرد
نه پیغامی، نه پیک آشنائی
نه در چشمی نگاه فتنه‌سازی
نه آهنگ پر از موج جدائی

'There is no hope to cheer my heart,
No message, no friendly postman,
No provoking look in the eye,
No tune full of lilting melodies.
From the city of light and love and pain and darkness,
A woman trudged out sadly at dawn,
A worried bird which had lost its way,
Going, tired and sorrowful, towards its nest.
Where did anyone weep for her?
Where did anyone know her language?
These strangers did not recognize
That her voice had a tone of sorrow.
She gazed at someone's eyes to try to find
Her hidden hopes and wishes.
But alas, those two burning eyes
Threw her into the lap of sin.

They told her only of desire.

They saw only her outward aspect.

Wherever she went they sang in her ears

That women are created for enjoyment.

One night she fell upon a lap and cried

'Don't go. In these last moments let

My heart be gladdened by seeing you.'

But the ghost disappeared and the door shut.

Why did she put her trust in a useless love?

Why did she sleep in the bed of his embrace?

Why did she tell the secret of her foolish heart

To the ears of a stranger?

Why? She was the clear morning dew

Which fell into the sunflower's trap,

And at dawn, when the sun rose,

Fell into its thirsty mouth and died.

She was the strong wine in the glass

That was burning with the love of thirsty lips.

When the wine flowed, the drinker glowed from happiness,

Set the wine aflame in the heart of the glass.

One night, suddenly her waiting ended;

Her lips poured desire on a burning mouth.

Why did that man become so angry with her?

Why did he cling to the fragments of her glass?

And now here she is, and this cold silence.

No messages, no friendly postman,

No provoking look in the eyes,

No tune full of lilting melodies.'

33

As can be seen in the above poem, Forugh's views offer a sometimes confusing picture -- she appears to be unable or unwilling to distinguish between her own personal problems and those of women in general. Some writers consider that her contribution to feminism was simply the outspoken way in which she dealt with matters which women had hitherto been forbidden to mention. Others, myself included, feel that she was using her own experiences to illustrate a much deeper philosophy. The poem 'Bin' (Gonāh) seems to support the first point of view; the poem 'Confession' (E'terāf) the second.

گنه کردم گناهی پر زلدت
 در آغوشی که گرم و آتشین بود
 گنه کردم میان بازوانی
 که داغ و کینه جوی و آهنین بود

در آن خلوتگه تاریک و خاموش
 نگه کردم بچشم پر ز رازش
 دلم در سینه بی تابانه لرزید
 ز خواهش های چشم پر نیازش

در آن خلوتگه تاریک و خاموش
 پریشان در کنار او نشستم
 لبش بر روی لبهایم هوس ریخت
 ز آندو، دل دیوانه رستم

فرو خواندم بگوشش قصه عشق:
 ترا میخواهم ای جانانه من
 ترا میخواهم ای آغوش جانبخش
 ترا، ای عاشق دیوانه من

هوس در دیدگانش شعله افروخت
 شراب سرخ در پیمانہ رقصید
 تن من در میان بستر نرم
 بروی سینه اش مستانه لرزید

گنه کردم گناهی پر زلدت
 کنار پیکری لرزان و مدهوش
 خداوندا چه میدانم چه کردم
 در آن خلوتگه تاریک و خاموش

'I committed a sin, a sin full of pleasure,
 In an embrace which was warm and fiery.
 I committed a sin within arms
 Which were hot and vindictive and strong.
 In that dark and silent private place
 I looked into his secret-laden eyes.

My heart shook uncontrollably in my chest
From the entreaty of his imploring eyes.

In that dark and silent private place
I nervously sat next to him.

His lips poured desire over mine

I overcame the anxiety of this distraught heart.

I told his ears the story of love,

I want you, O my love.

I want you, my life-giver.

You, my distraught lover.

Desire blazed in his eyes.

Red wine danced in the glass.

My body in the midst of the soft bed

Moved drunkenly over his breast.

I committed a sin, a sin full of pleasure

Beside a trembling, senseless form.

O God, I do not know what I did

In that dark and silent place.' ³⁹ *

تانهان سازم از تو بار دگر
راز این خاطر پریشان را
میکشم بر نگاه نازآلود
نرم و سنگین حجاب مژگان را

*This poem has also been translated by Girdhari Tikku. See his article in Studia Islamica, No. 26, 1967, p. 159.

دل گرفتار خواهشی جانسوز
 از خدا راه چاره میجویم
 پارساوار در برابر تو
 سخن از زهد و توبه میگویم

آه... هرگز گمان مبر که دلم
 بازبانم رفیق و همراه است
 هرچه گفتم دروغ بود، دروغ
 کی ترا گفتم آنچه دلخواه است

تو برایم ترانه میخوانی
 سخنت جذبه‌ای نهان دارد
 گوئیا خوابم و ترانه تو
 از جهانی دگر نشان دارد

شاید اینرا شنیده‌ای که زنان
 در دل «آری» و «نه» به لب دارند
 ضعف خود را عیان نمیسازند
 راز دار و خموش و مکارند

آه، من هم زخم، زنی که دلش
 در هوای تو میزند پروبال
 دوستت دارم ای خیال لطیف
 دوستت دارم ای امید معال

'So that I may hide from you again
The secret of this worried mind,
I pull the soft yet heavy cover of my eyelashes
Over these boasting eyes.

My heart is gripped by a burning desire.

I am asking God for a solution.
Like the devout, in front of you,
I talk about piety and repentance.

O don't ever think that my heart
Is friend and companion to my tongue.
All I have said is lies, just lies.
When did I tell you what my heart desired?

You are singing a song for me,
Your word has a hidden rapture.
I seem to be asleep, and your song
Brings word of the other world.

Perhaps you have heard about women
That their hearts say 'yes' while their lips say 'no'.
They do not show their weakness.

They are secretive and quiet and deceitful.

Oh, I am also a woman, a woman whose heart

Flies forth in desire for you

I love you, O tender fantasy!

I love you, O impossible hope.' 90

Conclusion

Forugh was unlike most other Iranians, male or female, who had argued for the advancement of women's rights in Iran. As we have seen, apart from some fragments of Mahasti's outspoken writing, Forugh was really the first poetess to express a woman's feelings frankly and fearlessly. Zhāleh used logic and knowledge of the religious and state laws to argue her case, while Parvin E'tesāmi wrote moving social poems in genteel language and classical form. Moreover, Forugh did not have the background of these other poetesses. Whereas Zhāleh and Parvin E'tesāmi had family support as well as financial and literary status to carry out far more than they actually did, Forugh had to battle with both family and society in order to make any impression at all. Thus, Forugh's achievements in the field of feminism must be given additional credit when compared with most others.

Even those poetesses of more modern times who moved away from the traditional form and content of poetry did not stress personal feelings. Simin Behbahāni wrote of physical and mental cruelty to women in general, Parvin Dowlatabādi concentrated on more philosophical aspects, while Tahereh Saffārzādeh criticised the misuse of freedom by those women who had obtained it.

Similarly, poets such as Eshqi, Lahuti, Iraj, Āref, Kamāli and Bahār expressed pro-feminist views in strong terms, but only as part of their overall criticisms of society and government. Not only did these have little immediate impact, but they could not begin to delve into what women themselves were actually thinking and feeling in the way that Forugh did.

In addition, Forugh differed from most of the Persian women who had been involved in the women's movement through their organizations, their positions, or their achievements. Most of these women were from relatively rich families which had wide contact with the West, whereas Forugh was from an ordinary family with little outside contact, and she had neither the education nor the ambition for power or personal position.

During the latter part of the 1950s and the 1960s, there was a growing number of young women who had received more than an elementary education, who were starting to break into positions formerly restricted to men, who were not overawed by conventional religion or tradition, or by their elders and rulers, and who needed a heroine to inspire them with confidence. By speaking out in the way that she did, Forugh provided them with a voice which spoke their own language.

Forugh's poetry also impressed Iranian men, particularly younger men. The earlier poetry and feminist writings had spoken of women in the abstract and had treated their relations with men as general ethical, social and legal problems. Forugh presented women as living creatures, each an individual with her own emotions and abilities and personality. Forugh's poetry shocked many men by its frankness, but it impressed many more by its reflection of real feeling and experience, and helped them to understand the individual woman in their lives better.

Whether Forugh was self-centred or concerned about women in general, there is no doubt that she ultimately made a significant

impact on the advancement of women's rights in Irān. It is true that she had many predecessors, that there had been some changes in the law over time, that the spread of Western ideas had opened the eyes of many Iranians, and that, indeed, by the time her poetry became famous (or notorious), there had already been some progress at least in the status of urban women. However, Forugh gave a push to the feminist cause at a time when it was perhaps most needed. Inevitably, her greatest influence on the status of women came after her death, but in my judgement she had done enough when she was alive to be regarded as one of Irān's leading feminists.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO.

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4. Pahlavi, H.I.M. Mohammad Rezā Shāh, The White Revolution, 1967, p.92.
5. Ārāsteh, R., op. cit., p. 175.
6. See, for example, Bagley, F.R.C., 'The Iranian Family Protection Law of 1967', in Bosworth, C.E., (ed.) Iran and Islam, 1971, p.48.
7. Ārāsteh, op. cit., p. 174.
8. Pahlavi, The White Revolution, pp. 93-4.
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14. Ibid., p. 22.
15. Ibid., p. 26.
16. Yaghmāi, H., 'Obituary of Forugh Farrokhzād' in Yaghmāi, Vol. 19, No. 662, 1966.
17. Ishaque, op. cit., pp. 23-35.
18. See Sadjādi, S., and Hedin-Pourghāsemi, M., 'Law and Status of Women in Iran' in United Nations, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, Law and the Status of Women, Columbia, 1977, p. 143. Also Echo of Iran, Iran Almanac 1971, p. 558. This annual publication is a useful secondary source for students of legal and historical issues in Irān.
19. Pahlavi, The White Revolution, p. 92.

20. Sadjādi and Hedin-Pourghāsemi, loc. cit., pp. 150-1.
21. Ārāsteh, op. cit., p. 183.
22. Avery, P., Modern Iran, 1965, p. 290.
23. Ārāsteh, op. cit., pp. 181-2.
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27. Avery, op. cit., p. 292.
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29. United Kingdom, Admiralty, Persia, 1945, p. 347.
30. Avery, op. cit., p. 292.
31. The following figures are taken from Ministry of Interior, Census District Statistics of the First National Census of Iran, 1956, Vol. 2, Tehran Census District.
32. For a full description of these reforms, see Pahlavi, The White Revolution.
33. See Bagley, loc. cit., pp. 57 ff. Also Echo of Iran, op. cit., p. 559, and Sadjādi and Hedin-Pourghāsemi, loc. cit., pp. 146ff.
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39. See Shafaq, S. R., 'Patriotic Poetry in Modern Iran', in Middle East Journal, Autumn 1952, p. 426; also Yār-shāter, loc. cit., p. 301.
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53. Ibid., p. 192.
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CHAPTER THREE

THE POETRY OF FORUGH

CHAPTER THREETHE POETRY OF FORUGH

Although it was the content of Forugh's poetry for which she became most famous, the changing style of her writing is also of interest. As time passed, Forugh experimented with different styles, drawing on her readings of classical and modern Persian poets and poetesses. She is now regarded as one of the leaders of 'new poetry' in Iran, yet much of her writing reflects the classical tradition.

To put the style of her poetry into perspective, it is necessary to start this chapter with a brief description of the main forms of classical poetry, together with some examples which are known, or which I believe, to have influenced Forugh. The reasons for the introduction and spread of new forms of poetry are then discussed, with examples from the work of Nimā-Yushij as well as poets contemporary with Forugh, such as Shāmlu and Nāderpur. Again, an attempt is made to assess their influence on her. This is followed by a discussion of the influence of foreign writers and religious teachings. Forugh's own views on the nature of poetry are then discussed, followed by an account of the changing style of her poetry. The chapter ends with some criticisms of her poetry, based largely on the writings of Iranian poets and intellectuals.

Classical Persian Poetry

Of the many verse-forms in classical Persian poetry, the four most important are the qasideh (elegy), the ghazal (lyric), the robā'i (quatrain), and the masnavi (rhyming couplet).¹ All these verse-forms are based on the beyt (couplet), though the rhyming pattern sometimes refers to the mesra' (line, or hemistich, equivalent to half a beyt).² Each has its own distinguishing features of rhyme, but in addition, the content of the poem, as well as the audience for which it is designed, play a part in determining the verse-form.

The qasideh, of Arabic origin, sometimes has a lyrical introduction, but its main characteristics are that it usually consists of at least 15 beyts, in monorhyme, and that it is a 'poem with a purpose'. This purpose is generally praise of a particular person -- often a king or a nobleman -- but occasionally it is religious or secular teaching or even satire. Before the beginning of the twentieth century the qasideh was, for the most part, the poetry of the court, and since the poets often relied on the patronage of the court, they took pains to ensure that their poems were as 'perfect' as possible. Consequently, the traditional qasideh was often very formal in terms of structure, very flowery in terms of language, and very extravagant in terms of its praise.³

It is no surprise, therefore, that this form of poetry was to have little influence on the free-thinking, down-to-earth Forugh Farrokhzād in the mid-twentieth century. Forugh attributed this lack of influence to the fact that she had not learned her poetry from technical books. "If I had," she said, "I could now write qasidehs." ⁴ Her only long poem, 'Esyān-e Bandegi' ('Revolt Against Obedience'), is not technically a qasideh, but it is in the form of two-beyt stanzas, each with a different rhyme. ⁵

Much more influential on her was the ghazal, which is in monorhyme like the qasideh, but usually contains only five to 15 beyts. The origin of the ghazal, which is used for love and wine poems, is unclear, with some authorities suggesting that it evolved from pre-Islamic Persian verse-forms, about which only fragments of evidence exist, ⁶ some suggesting that it was an Arabic verse-form, and others believing that it derived from the lyrical introduction to the qasideh. ⁷ In any event, there is little dispute that it represents one of the most pleasing forms of lyrical poetry, and compares favourably to the sonnet in English literature. ⁸

The ghazal emerged as a true representation of the cultural life of medieval Persian cities rather than a poem purchased by patronage. Yet it is not always clear who the audience for a particular poem was, nor even whether readers were expected to take concepts of, for example, love and wine at their face value, as metaphors, or as

allegories.⁹ This ambiguous mixture of symbolism and lyricism reached its highest form in the ghazals of Hāfez, the eminent poet of the fourteenth century. Like many others, Forugh recognized a perfection in his work, not only in its linguistic beauty but also in the subtle satire directed at bigots and hypocrites.¹⁰ She said on one occasion: "I wish I could write poems like Hāfez, and like him have so sensitive a touch that they would bring reality into every moment of every life of every person in the future."¹¹

Forugh was so entranced by Hāfez that she used one of his ghazals in place of an introduction to her second collection of poems, 'Divār':

گل در بر و می در کف و معشوق بکامست
سلطان جهانم به چنین روز غلامست
گوشم میارید در این جمع که امشب
در مجلس ما ماه رخ دوست تمامست
در مذهب ما پاده حلاست ولیکن
بی روی تو ای سرو گل اندام حرامست
گوشم همه بر قول نی و نغمه چنگست
چشمم همه بر لعل لب و گردش جامست
در مجلس ما عیار میانیز که ما را
هر لحظه ز گیسوی تو خوشبوی مشامست
«از چاشنی قند مگو هیچ و ز شکر»
«ز آنرو که مرا از لب شیرین تو کامست»
«تا گنج غمت در دل ویرانه مقیمست»

«همواره مرا گوی خرابات مقامست»
 «از ننگ چه گوئی که مرا نام ز ننگست»
 «وز نام چه پرسی که مرا ننگ ز نامست»
 «میںخواره و سرگشته و رندیم و نظر باز»
 «وانکس که چوما نیست در این شهر کدامست؟»
 «با محتسبم دیب مگوئید که او نیز»
 «پیوسته چوما در طلب عیش مدامست»
 «حافظ منشین بی می و معشوق زمانی»
 «کایام گل و یاسمن و عید صیامست»

This ghazal was translated in the late 19th century
 by Herman Bicknell and his translation is used here:

My breast has its flowers, my palm has its cup, and my Loved one smiles and is gay ;
 The Sultan, whose sceptre extends o'er the world, is truly my bondsman to-day.

Bring hither no tapers to burn at our feast, for soon where we revel to-night,
 The face of my Friend, as the moon at its full, shall dart on us brightest of light.

The faith that we follow has constantly held that the wine cup's lawfully used ;
 Yet—rosy-framed Cypress, forbidden its use, if thy presence here is refused.

No essences mix thou to spread through the hall where gathered in friendship we meet ;
 My soul from the points of thy locks is regaled each moment with freshest of sweet.

My ear to the voice of the flute is inclined, and the harp's harmonious sound ;
 My eye to thy rubies is constantly turned, and the goblet speeded around.

Say nought of the lusciousness candy contains, e'en sugar unmentioned may be ;
 For all, save the sugar possessed by thy lips, is wanting in value to me.

Since dolorous love as a treasure has lain in the ruined shrine of my breast,
 The nook of the vintner's apartment alone has yielded me shelter and rest.

Why speak of the shame that may fall to my lot ? it blazons with glory my name :
 Why ask after glory appointed in me to bring but the burden of shame ?

A wine-drinker am I, to giddiness prone, whose glances and manners are free;
And where among those who inhabit this town is one who resembles not me?

Withheld from the Muhtasib's knowledge, I pray, the story of error like mine;
He also with ardour that equals my own unceasingly searches for wine.¹

O HĀFĪZ, where tempts neither goblet nor friend,
Ne'er stay thou one moment for balm;
The time of the rose and the jasmine has come,
And the joyous feast of Šiyām.²

12

Hāfez often uses the terms zāhed (ascetic) to describe a hypocritical religious zealot, and renā (drunkard) to describe the sincere God-worshipper, with the image of the kherge (tattered cloak worn by ascetic darvishes) as a symbol of religious hypocrisy. Forugh uses the metaphors zāhed and kherge very effectively in her poem 'Pāsokh' ('The Answer'),^{*} which she wrote in reply to critics of her frankness, and she ends this poem with a verse quoting a celebrated beyt of Hāfez:

بگذار تا به طمنه بگویند مردمان
در گوش هم حکایت عشق مدام ما
«هرگز نمیرد آنکه دلش زنده شد بعشق
ثبت است در جریده عالم دوام ما»

¹ The "Muhtasib," or Superintendent of Police, inspected weights and measures, and repressed the scandals of wine-drinking and games of chance interdicted by the Koran.

² The feast of "Šiyām" or "Fiṭr," the Feast of the Fast, is the day of rejoicing which follows Ramazān. It is named by the Turks the Little Bairām; the Great Bairām, or Festival of Sacrifice, being celebrated on the 10th of Zū 'l Hijjah.

* 'Pāsokh' appears in Forugh's book Diyār, pp. 113-7.

Let people tell with sarcasm,
 In each other's ears, the story of our everlasting love.
 Those whose heart is brought to life by love
 will never die.
 Our durability is registered in the universe's record."

A popular form of short poem, easier to write than the qasidah or ghazal, is the get'eh or 'fragment' (i.e. fragment of a qasidah). The get'eh, in monorhyme and usually short, together with the robā'i (quatrain) and short masnavi pieces, was much used by classical writers for verses interspersed in prose works, such as Sādi's Golestān.

Stanzas were not used in classical poetry except in the forms called mosammat (stanzas consisting of five rhyming mesra's with a sixth mesra' which has the same rhyme all through the poem). Sometimes at the end of a stanza some words (called mostazād) are added; when these are in a different metre and rhyme, the poem is a tarkib-band, and if identical words (like a refrain) are added after each stanza, the poem is a tarji'-band.¹³

In the robā'i (quatrain), the rhyming mesra's are grouped into fours with a pattern aaba, or sometimes aaaa, in each verse of two bayts.¹⁴ It is composed in special metres and is almost certainly a purely Iranian verse form, and because each verse deals point-

edly, often satirically, with a single thought or event — and ends with an ingenious turn of phrase — it is often known as an epigram. The robā'i, which has frequently been used in popular chanted poetry and which may incorporate almost any subject-matter, is best known through the poetry of Bābā Tāher and Omar Khayyām.¹⁵ Two types of metres are used for quatrains; quatrains in the less common type, as used by Bābā Tāher, are called do bayti.

Forugh recognized the influence of Khayyām on her own writing in the same way as Hāfez by including four of his quatrains in the first part of 'Divār'. These have been translated in various ways in both prose and verse, as Arberry has noted;¹⁶ however, only one of these versions is given here:

گویند که: دوزخی بود، عاشق و مست
 قولیست خلاف، دل در آن نتوان بست
 گر عاشق و مست، دوزخی خواهد بود
 فردا باشد بهشت همچون کف دست
 □
 گویند: بهشت و حور عین، خواهد بود
 و آنجا می ناب و انگبین، خواهد بود
 گر ما می و معشوق گزیدیم چه باک
 چون عاقبت کار همین خواهد بود
 □
 من ظاهر نیستی و هستی دائم،
 من باطن هر فراز و پستی دائم،
 با این همه از دانش خود شرمم باد.
 گر مرتبه ای وزای مستی دائم،

ای صاحب فتوی، ز تو پرکارتریم
 با اینهمه مستی ز تو هشیارتریم؛
 تو خون کسان خوری و ما خون رزان
 انصاف بده: کدام خونخوارتریم؟

'Drunkards are doomed to hell, so men declare,
 Believe it not, 'tis but a foolish scare;
 Heaven will be empty as this hand of mine,
 If none who love good drink find entrance there.'

'In Paradise are Houris, as men know,
 And fountains with pure wine and honey flow;
 If these be lawful in the world to come,
 May I not love the like down here below?'

'Being and Notbeing alike I know,
 Essence of things above and things below,
 But, — shame upon my knowledge! — to be drunk
 Is after all the highest lore I know.'

'O City Mufti, you go more astray
 Than I, although to drinking I give way;
 I drink the blood of grapes, you that of men:
 Which of us is the more bloodthirsty, pray?' 17

Mainly, though not solely, for long narrative poems,
 especially those incorporating heroic, historic or romantic
 epic themes, the masnavi, a series of bayts with the mesra's
 rhyming in pairs, aa, bb, cc, etc., was used. This was ess-
 entially a Persian form of poetry, rarely used by the Arabs. 18

The greatest masnavi writer was Ferdowsi (10th - 11th century), who put the national epic into this form of verse.¹⁹ Other famous users of the masnavi form were the great mystic poets Farid od-Din Attār (12th century) and Jalāl od-Din Rumi (13th century); the witty moralist Sa'di (13th century); Nezāmi, who wrote lyric and romantic epics in the 12th century, and Jāmi, who provided allegorical interpretations of traditional Persian legends in the 15th century.²⁰

As will be seen later, Forugh occasionally used the masnavi verse-form. While she did not openly admit to the influence on her of Rumi, Kasmā'i feels that this influence was tremendous and made itself felt in her own masnavis, such as 'Mordāb', an extract of which was translated in Chapter One.²¹ We certainly know that Forugh had read many of the works of the mystic Sufis, and it is also likely that Jāmi attracted her interest. Jāmi's masnavi, 'Leyli o Mainun', which I believe had a great impact on her, partly because, as Motamen says, it is a classic example of the masnavi technique and partly because it describes graphically the status of Persian women, contains the following lines:²²

بیچاره زنان که بسته بالند	مردان همه جا خجسته حالند
زن مالک کار خویشتن نیست	آمد شد عشق کار زن نیست
از مرد هنر بود ز زن عیب	عشقی که بر آورد سر از جیب
سیراب گلش ز آب آزرم	دختر که بود پیرده شرم
بیرون ز رضایشان چه جوید	با مادر و با پدر چه گوید

'Men everywhere are happy.

It is unfortunate women who have their hands tied.

It is not women's role to concern themselves with love;

A woman is not her own master.

Love which is paid from the pocket is art to a man

But it is disgrace to a woman.

Who is that girl behind the veil of shyness,

Like a flower watered by the sweat of embarrassment?

What can she say to her father and mother?

What can she seek without their permission?²³

The metres of classical Persian poetry, which have elaborate rules with Arabic terminology called 'aruz, have only recently been investigated by scholars. A recent book by L.P. Elwell-Sutton has thrown new light on this difficult subject. His detailed studies show that there have been few significant changes in the metres of classical Persian poetry over the centuries. A major contribution of his work is to move away from the traditional methods of analysing metres, which were designed for Arabic poetry, to a system which is based on the syllable.

Having defined, and described the relationships between, three lengths of syllable -- short (v), long (-) and overlong (v) * -- he shows that most Persian poetry falls into five major

* A short syllable occurs when a consonant is followed by a short vowel; a long syllable either when a consonant is followed by a long vowel, or when a consonant is followed by a short vowel and another consonant; and an overlong syllable when a consonant is followed by a short vowel and two or more consonants, or by a long vowel and one or more consonants. See L.P. Elwell-Sutton, The Persian Metres, pp. 84-5.

metre patterns. These are:

	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1.	∪	-	-	∪	-	-			
2.	∪	-	-	-	∪	-	-	-	
3.	∪	∪	-	-	∪	∪	-	-	
4.	∪	-	∪	-	∪	∪	-	-	
5.	-	-	∪	∪	-	∪	-	∪	

For example, if one takes the lines by Jāmi quoted immediately above, they can be seen to fit into Elwell-Sutton's fifth category.²⁴

Classical Persian poetry is, and has always been, much more than just rhyme, rhythm and content. In many ways it is an innate part of Persian life itself. Persians, irrespective of their social class or their ability to read and write, approach poetry with considerable emotion and enthusiasm. As Rypka says, they love and take pleasure in the euphony of the language, the rhythms, the idioms and the grandeur; and as Elwell-Sutton notes, "It has sometimes been said that every Persian is a poet ... (and)... is familiar with the great poets of his language to a degree that is rare or unknown among peoples of other cultures."²⁵

Before the rise of modern educational facilities, the recital and interpretation of classical Persian poetry was as much an element of a child's upbringing as the recital and interpretation of the Qorān. Indeed, even in the new schools of the 1930s, poetry reading was a daily exercise

in memorizing and word-learning. The nature of the poems themselves, with the sequence of verses not necessarily logical and the imagery not necessarily obvious, provided an intellectual stimulus; the classical formalism and tradition provided a basic framework for expression of thought and feeling; and the strictness and regularity of the rhythms and rhymes made them simpler to learn. ²⁶

At home, too, classical poetry was always in the air. During my own childhood, for example, it was used as an entertainment, particularly when groups of women and girls got together, and it even provided the basis for literary games, such as the one in which each person in turn recites a verse beginning with the last letter of the previously recited verse. At funerals and weddings it supplied advice or sympathy, and it was also used to tell fortunes or to answer urgent questions. In addition, it could be adapted for use as a code language in political conversations. If one examines the work of Parvin E'tesāmi, for example, it can be seen that she was able to turn traditional words and images into vehicles for criticising society. ²⁷

The Spread of Modern Poetry

For about one thousand years, from the ninth to the last half of the nineteenth century, Persian poetry experienced no violent change in style or content. ²⁸ As Prof-

essor Browne notes, classical poetry had become so stereotyped that it was often hardly possible to guess whether any particular poem had been written in the fifteenth or the nineteenth century.²⁹

During this same period also, few changes had taken place in Persia's social institutions or cultural patterns. Consequently, some authorities have suggested that there was a clear connection between the unchanging nature of poetry and the unchanging nature of society. Further evidence towards this connection is that the introduction and spread of modern poetry was accompanied by significant changes in the political, social and economic structure of the country. This argument suggests that as the audience for poetry shifted from the courtly elite and the city philosophers to the man or woman in the street, so did the form and content of the poetry itself.³⁰

Nevertheless, other events also played a part. For example, the writings of the French romantic movement of the nineteenth century gradually found their way into Persia and became popular with the younger generation of Persian writers.³¹ In addition, as Persians travelled, particularly to Turkey and Russia, they learned more about other cultures and heard of changes taking place in Western culture. They realized that to the symphonies and concertos of classical music were being added music of a more popular form; that pamphlets and the press were being used to help social reformers achieve their ends; and that traditional social

relationships were being adapted to sudden and impressive advances in economic well-being.³²

Another related factor was a growing reaction both against the artificiality of classical poetry and the effect it was presumed, by some, to have on its readers. One writer, for example, considers that the panegyric qasideh of court poets contributed to the arrogance and tyranny of shahs and nobles, while Sufi teachings produced pessimism and love poetry corrupted the morals.³³ Sometimes reaction to classical poetry went to extremes, especially when critics formed literary groups to express their views.* As Yār-Shāter records, one semi-religious group even went so far as to hold an annual celebration to burn the classics.³⁴

In any event, it is by no means certain whether it was internal or external factors (or a combination of both) which led to the introduction and spread of modern poetry, or whether the movement towards modernity should be regarded as revolutionary or evolutionary.

From the middle of the nineteenth century some poets such as Sabā tried to produce a literary reversion to the original styles of Persian poetry that had arisen in Khorāsān. As part of this process, several obscure verse-forms were revived.³⁵ However, as Nāderpur has pointed out, this was not so much a renaissance as a step back into the distant past.³⁶ And Ibn Khaldun's doctrine

* The philosophy of these groups was not always clear. Some claimed they were Futurists (i.e. they wanted to ignore the past); some were Dadaists (i.e. they wanted to destroy tradition); and some were Letterists (i.e. they did not want literature to be constrained by technical or moral rules).

that 'the art of composing in verse or prose is concerned only with words, not with ideas' continued to remain in effect. Professor Browne noted that even in the latest (renaissance) poetry of the classical style, seldom was any allusion found to such modern inventions as tea-drinking, tobacco smoking, railways, telegraphs or newspapers.³⁷

It was from the 1880s that Persian poets gradually began to consider methods of breaking away from the constraints placed on them by classical poetry. Some, such as Adib ol-Mamālek Farahāni, tried introducing foreign words:

ئونیورسیتە و فاکولتە در ایران نبود، یارب
 کجا تعلیم دادند این گروه دیپلماس را ؟

'In Persia there were no universities or faculties;
 O Lord, where did they teach this group diplomacy?'³⁸

This type of innovation brought the following poetic reaction from Iraj:

در تجدید و تجدد وا شد ادبیات شلم شوروا شد
 'The door of revision and modernity has opened;
 Literature has become all topsy-turvy.'³⁹

As regards form, poets complained of the tyranny of metre and rhyme of the old classical rules, which prevented them from expressing their thoughts and feelings naturally. The monorhyme of the qasideh and ghazal was felt to be more restrictive than the requirements of metre.

Many poets began to make use of the qet'eh, and they began to experiment with changes in rhyme pattern. Again, Iraj had a critical response in verse:

می‌کنم قافیه‌ها را پس و پیش تا شوم نابغهٔ دورهٔ خویش

'I make the rhymes go forward and back,

So that I shall become the genius of my time.' 40

Nevertheless, many poets, including Forugh in most of her earlier poems, began to make very frequent use of stanzas consisting of two rhyming beyts, with a different rhyme in each stanza, and without any mostazād.

In the main, modern Persian poetry developed from two basic approaches. The first was to retain at least the rhythm and rhyme of classical poetry but to make the content more realistic and the language more down-to-earth; this is defined by Muri-Alā as 'she'r-e jadid' or 'recent poetry'. The second was to break out into entirely new styles of poetry, usually in free or blank verse; this is known as 'she'r-e now' or 'new poetry'. 41 The universally recognized pioneer of 'new poetry' was Nimā Yushij (pen-name of Ali Esfandiāri, 1895-1960), whose role is discussed below. While some modern Persian poets adopted just one of these two ways, others, such as Forugh, were willing and able to use either.

Together, these two major branches of verse-writing constitute what is today known as 'modern Persian poetry'. 42

It is, of course, possible to make further distinctions. For example, Hoquqi examines seven different groups of poets, the major element distinguishing these groups being the impact which Nimā Yushij had on them. He starts by explaining that one of the simplest ways to tell classical poetry from new poetry is that in the latter the hemistiches may not be of regular length. Then he states that Group One consists of

those who show a fanatical opposition to any changes in the form and content of classical poetry -- the 'Adherents to the Old Style'. Group Two includes those who claimed to write new poetry, but who really only made additions to the regular hemistiches in their poems -- 'Mostazād Sāzān' -- or used long metres -- 'Bahr-e Tavil Guyān'. The third group changed the length of their hemistiches but did not otherwise follow the rules and way of thinking of Nimā; this group is called 'Writers of Rhythmical Prose'. A fourth group contains those who were strict followers of Nimā in the beginning but who later changed their style because they did not have enough ability to adhere to what they had started -- the 'Chahār pāreh Sarāyān' or 'Four-line Versifiers'. Group Five, the 'Pretender Poets', rejected classical poetry as well as the new groundrules laid down by Nimā. They rejected the notion that Nimā was the father of new poetry, and they themselves wrote only 'Shapeless Verse'. They were not, however, as far out on a limb as those in Group Six, the 'Mowj-e Now', or 'New Wave' poets, whose work is an ultimate form of blank verse, containing neither rhyme nor rhythm nor poetic content. Group Seven are the 'Nimā'i Poets', or those whose work by and large reflects the thought and style of Nimā, even though individual style may shine through. Other commentators use different classifications, some calling the followers of the Nimā'i style 'Mystic Poets' ('Erfān Guyān') and 'Poets only concerned with Content' ('Mohtavī Gerāyān') and introducing a further category, 'Miāneh Row', a 'half-way' or immature type of new poetry. However, such distinctions tend to become extremely blurred. 43

The subjects of early modern poems, such as those by Adib Pishavāri (by some regarded as the first modern Persian poet⁴⁴), Iraj, Āref, Farrokhi, Eshqi, and Bahār, varied widely, but were centred around socio-political and patriotic themes.⁴⁵ One such theme was strong criticism of the way in which the government (in the last two decades of the nineteenth century) was selling concessions to foreigners to develop the country's natural resources. By the turn of the century, pressure had built up so much that the shāh was obliged to sign a decree establishing a constitutional government.⁴⁶

The unexpected success of the constitutional reform movement provided a tremendous boost to both popular journalism and popular poetry; indeed, many of the earliest modern poems first appeared in the newly created pamphlets and magazines.⁴⁷ The link between poetry and journalism was so great that Nāderpur suggests that the poems should really be regarded as editorial commentaries rather than pure literature.⁴⁸

Some examples of poems urging social reform, particularly with respect to women's rights, were given in Chapter Two. However, the daring political nature of this type of poetry also deserves to be illustrated. Shafaq, for example, quotes E.G. Browne's translation of Āref's critique of the way the U.S. adviser Morgan Shuster was forced out in 1911 as follows:

'Should Shuster fare from Persia forth,

Persia is lost in sooth;
 O let not Persia thus be lost,
 If ye be men of truth.'

Similarly, he quotes Bahār's opposition to the British-Russian Agreement of 1907 which divided Persia into two spheres of influence:

"'Russia her pact will keep', you answer me.

Not I, but human nature tells you plain,

That pacts weight naught compared with present gain." 49

A pioneer among those who wrote 'new poetry' was Nimā Yushij, a writer of considerable originality whose poems were of a very personal nature. Most modern poets and poetesses, including Forugh, regard Nimā as the one poet above all others who persuaded Persians that poetical expression of ideas should not necessarily be constrained by strict metre or orthodox rhyme, and that instead of metaphors and allusions a spade should be called a spade.

"For me," said Forugh in a now famous interview, "Nimā was the beginning. Nimā was a poet in whose work for the first time I found thought, not just emotion. I felt I was facing a human being rather than a handful of useless feelings." He described everyday problems in his poems and he produced solutions for them. He was able to describe important matters in a very simple manner. This simplicity surprised me, especially when I looked behind it and I saw all the deep and difficult questions he raised

about life." ⁵⁰

In his book 'Ta'ārif va Tabsereh', Nimā provided a brilliant exposition of the philosophy behind new poetry. He did not dispute the important contributions of classical poetry, nor did he suggest that a complete break from it or disregard of it was necessary. "Classical poetry did not happen by accident," he said, "and it will not die by accident." Nevertheless, he argued that a poem was not just rhythm and rhyme; these were simply the tools of the poet. Neither was it the organization of idioms or the listing of well-known concepts; these techniques were more suitable for business accounting.⁵¹ In his view, poems were a means of talking to the man-in-the-street, and the traditional rhythms of poetry, often forced or exaggerated by those who recite this poetry, just did not fit into everyday speech patterns. This is not to say that he considered rhythm and rhyme unimportant, but he insisted that the rhythm of poetry should be the rhythm of speech, and that this depended on the particular content of the poem.⁵² In the same way that one could answer a lengthy question with a brief response, it was quite feasible to lengthen or shorten lines of poetry without upsetting the flow. However, he said that in his 'free poetry' ('she'r-e āzād'), the length of a hemistich was not just a matter of fantasy or imagination. There had to be discipline even in apparent disorder.⁵³

Nimā explained that the most important element in any poem was the way it expresses the feelings of the poet. "My poetry," he said,

"comes from the pain I feel." He was very critical of those modern poets whose work appeared to be in the style of new poetry, but which, when closely examined, had neither emotional content nor harmonious rhythm. In addition, he suggested that because of the down-to-earth nature of good modern poetry it is not really possible to compare it with the mystical poetry of the classical writers. Consequently, he believed that the arguments of those traditionalists who criticised new poetry on comparative grounds were irrelevant.⁵⁴

Nimā's poems varied widely in content. The example given here, 'Rirā', is written in the style of new poetry and it was one of ten of Nimā's poems chosen by Forugh for a collection of new poetry edited by Majid Rowshangar:⁵⁵

ری را ... ' صدای آید امشب
از پشت کاج ، که بند آب ،
برق سیاهتابش ، تصویرری از خراب
در چشم می کشاند .
گویا کسی است که میخواند .
یک شب ، درون قایق ، دلتنگ
خواندند آنچه آنچنان
که من هنوز همیت دریا را
در خواب
می بینم

اما صدای آدمی ، این نیست :
با نظم هوشربائی ، من
آوازه های آدمیان را شنیده ام
در گردش شبانی سنگین
- زانده های من
سنگین تر -
و آوازه های آدمیان را یکسر
من دارم ازیر :

ری را ! ... ری را
دارد هوای آن که بخواند
درین شب سیا .
او نیست با خودش
او رفته با صدایش ، اما
خواندن نمی تواند !

'Rirā ... a sound is heard tonight
 From behind the pinetree*, where the stream is dammed;
 A light so shining and black that a vision of
 Destruction hits the eyes.
 Perhaps it is someone singing.

But it is not a human voice:
 By listening carefully, I
 Have heard human voices
 During unpleasant nights
 -- More unpleasant than my sorrows --
 And I know by heart
 Each and every human song.

One night, in that boat, upset,
 They sang in such a way
 That I still dream of
 The horror of
 The sea.

Rirā! Rirā
 Wants to sing
 In this black night.
 She is not here herself,
 She has gone with her voice, so
 She cannot sing! '

* There is some doubt about the actual word used
 by Kimā in this poem, though this is a correct
 translation of the word used in the above version.

Poets Contemporary with Forugh

As will be seen later, Forugh's views on poetry owed much to Nimā. However, it is not easy to separate the influence he had on her from the influence of more recent poets who followed Nimā's approach or were, in fact, his disciples. Moreover, the fact that Forugh had personal relationships with some of these poets biased, to some extent, her assessment of their influence on her.

Forugh, it will be recalled, was brought up in a restricted family environment and was then thrust first into new surroundings and then into life on her own. She said: "'Divār' and 'Esyān' were really hopeless attempts at survival the last gasps before freedom. When you are young, feelings are like roots which have been dug up. If they are not treated carefully, the plant will die." 57

Forugh went on to say that she had to discover the world for herself, even though she had read Nimā. "If I had not read him," she said, "I would not understand how he reached his conclusions. ... (But) there were others apart from Nimā who caught my interest. One of these was Shāmlu, because with his poetry and feeling he was the closest to my own views. And when I read his poem 'She'ri keh zendegist' I realized that the Persian language has many possibilities and it is possible to express thoughts very simply." 58

Ahmad Shāmlu (who usually writes under the name of A. Bāmdād) had been a close friend of Nimā when he was young. He had defended Nimā's approach to poetry in those times when Nimā had faced strong criticism from the traditionalists.⁵⁹ As was mentioned in Chapter One, he also had great respect for Forugh's poems, particularly those in the new style. His poem 'She'ri keh zendegist' is really a guide to modern poetry; the message conveyed by its title 'The Poetry which is Life' is simple, and the style sets an example to all writers of new poetry. Since Forugh mentioned it on several occasions, and was clearly impressed with its message, the whole poem is given here: 60

موضوع شعر شاعر پیشین
از زندگی نبود .
ذرا آسمان خشک خیالتش ، او
جز با شراب و یار نمی کرد گفتگو .
او در خیال بود شب و روز
در دام گیس مضحك معشوقه پای بند ،
حال آنکه دیگران
دستی به جام باده و دستی به زلف یار
مستانه در زمین خدا نعره می زدند !

همدوش شاعر چون غیر ازین نبود
تأثیر شعر او نیز چیزی جز این نبود :
آنها به جای مته نمیشد بکار زد
در راههای رزم
با دستکار شعر

هر دیو لایخ را
از پیش راه خلق نمیشد کنار زد .
یعنی اثر نداشت وجودش
آنها بجای دار نمیشد بکار برد .
حال آنکه من بشخصه ، زمانی
همراه شعر خویش
یکبار هم حمیدی شاعر را
در چند سال پیش
بردار شعر خویشتن آونگ کرده ام

موضوع شعر

امروز

موضوع دیگریست ...

«همراه من بیایید ، همشهری عزیز!

دنبالتان سادروز تمام است

در بدر

«همه جا سرکشیدام !»

امروز ، شعر ، حربۀ خلق است

زیرا که شاعران

خود شاخه‌ئی ز جنگل خلفند

نه یاسمین و سنبل گلخانه فلان .

بیگانه نیست شاعر امروز

با دردهای مشترک خلق :

او با لبان مردم

لبخند می‌زند ،

درد و امید مردم را

با استخوان خویش

پیوند می‌زند .

«دنبال من ؟

عجیب است !

آقا ، مرا شما

شاید بجای يك کس دیگر گرفته‌اید ؟»

«نه جانم ، این مجال است .

من وزن شعر تازه خود را

از دور می‌شناسم.»

«گفتی چه ؟

وزن شعر ؟»

«تأمل بکن رفیق ...

وزن و لغات و قافیه‌ها را

همیشه من

در کوچه جست‌ام .

آحاد شعر من ، همه افراد مردند .

از «زندگی» (که بیشتر «مضمون‌قطعه» است)

تا «لغز» و «وزن» و «قافیه‌شعر» ، جمله را

من در میان مردم می‌جویم ...

این طریق

بهبتر به شعر ، زندگی و روح میدهد ...»

اکنون

هنگام آن رسیده که عابر را

شاعر کند مجاب

(با منطقی که خاصه شعر است)

تا بارضا و رغبت گردن نهد بکار ،

ورنه تمام زحمت او میرود زدست ...

امروز

شاعر

باید لباس خوب بپوشد

کفش تمیز واکس زده باید بپا کند ،

آنگاه در شلوغ‌ترین نقطه‌های شهر

موضوع و وزن و قافیه‌اش را

(یکی یکی)

با دقتی که خاص خود اوست)

از بین عابرین خیابان جدا کند :

خوب ...

حالا که وزن یافته آمد

هنگام جستجوی لغات است :

هم ضربه‌های شاد را

هم شعر بی ثمر شد و مه‌دل

هم خسته کرد بی سببی استاد را !

هر لغت

(چندانکه برمیایدش از نام)

دوشیزه‌ئیس است شوخ و دلارام ...

باری سخن دراز شد

وین زخم دردناک را

خونابه باز شد

باید برای وزن که جست‌ست

شاعر لغات درخور آن جستجو کند .

این کار ، مشکل است و تحمل سوز

لیکن گریز نیست :

آقای وزن و خانم ایشان لغت ، اگر

همتا و هم‌طراز نباشند ، لاجرم

محصول زندگانیشان دلپذیر نیست .

مثل من و ... زخم ! - :

من وزن بودم ، او کلمات (آسدهای وزن)

موضوع شعر نیز

پیوند جاودانه لبهای مهر بود ...

الگوی شعر شاعر امروز

تقسیم

زندگیست !

از روی زندگیست که شاعر

با آب و رنگ شعر

نقشی بروی نقشه دیگر

تصویر می‌کند :

او شعر می‌نویسد ،

یعنی

او دست مینهد به جراحات شهرپیر

یعنی

اوقصه میکند به شب ، از صبح دلپذیر

با آنکه شادمانه در این شعر می‌نشست

لیکن کودکان ما (این ضربه‌های شاد) ،

لیکن چه سود ! چون ، کلمات سیادوسرد

احساس شوم مرثیه‌واری به شعر داد :

هم وزن را شکست

او شعر می نویسد :

یعنی

او دردهای شهر و دیارش را

فریاد میکند

یعنی

او با سرود خویش ، روان‌های خسته را

آباد میکند .

او شعر می نویسد ،

یعنی

او قلب‌های سرد و تنه‌ی مانده را ، زشوق

سرشار می‌کند

یعنی

او روبه صبح طالع ، چشمان خفته را

بیدار میکند .

او شعر می‌نویسد،

یعنی

او افتخار نامهٔ انسان عصر را

تفسیر میکند

یعنی

او فتح‌نامه‌های زمانش را

تقریر میکند ...

این بحث خشک معنی الفاظ خاص نیز

در کار شعر نیست ...

اگر شعر زنده‌گی است ،

ما در تک سیاهترین آیه‌های آن

گرمای آفتابی عشق و امید را

احساس میکنیم :

این يك ، سرود زندگى اش را
 درخون سروده است
 وان يك ، غريو زندگى اش را
 در قالب سكوت !
 اما ... اگر چه قانيه زندگى
 در آن
 چيزى بغير ضربه كشدار مرگ نيست ،
 در هر دو شعر
 معنى هر مرگ
 زندگى است !

'The subject of poetry of an old-style poet
 Was not from life.

In the dry sky of his thought he would not talk
 Except about wine and lovers.
 He daydreamed day and night,
 Trapped by the silly images of a lover's hair
 At the time when others had one hand on their goblet
 And the other on their lover's hair,
 And were roaring drunkenly in the World of God.

Since the subject of the poet's verse was no more than this,
 The impact of his poetry could be no more.
 It couldn't be used in place of a drill,
 Or for fighting.
 With the tools of poetry
 No demon could be pushed out of the people's way.
 That is, it had no use;

You could not use it for hanging.

Meanwhile, I myself, using my poetry,

Fought alongside the Korean Shen Chou,

And once, also, a few years ago,

Hanged Hamidi the poet on the gallows of his ^{*}own verses.

The subject of today's poetry is a different subject...

Today poetry is the weapon of the people,

Because poets are a branch in the human jungle

Not a jasmine or hyacinth in someone's greenhouse.

Today's poet is no stranger

To the same pains felt by ordinary people.

He smiles with the people's lips;

He grafts the pains and hopes of the people

To his own bones.

Today poets must wear good clothes.

They must wear clean, polished shoes.

Then, from those passing by in the street,

In the most crowded part of town,

He separates out the subject, the rhyme and the rhythm

(one by one, with special care).

"Come with me, fellow citizens!

I have been looking for you for three whole days,

Here and there, everywhere!"

"Looking for me? Very strange!

Sir, perhaps you have mistaken me for someone else?"

* This could also be translated as '...my own verses'. Dr. Mehdi Hamidi is a professor and poet hostile to modern poetry.

"No, my friend, that is not possible.

I recognize from afar the rhythm of my own poem."

"What did you say? The rhythm of a poem?"

"Wait a moment, friend.....

Rhythm and words and rhymes I always found in the street.

The unit of my poem all members of society.

From 'life' (which is really the 'subject of the piece')

To 'pronunciation' and 'rhythm' and 'poetic rhyme'

I will find the phrases from among the people

This way gives better life and spirit to a poem."

Now the time has come

For a poet to force the passer-by to understand

(With reasoning that is special to poetry)

So that he starts to accept it with satisfaction

And desire.

Otherwise all of his hard work will be wasted.....

Well.... Now that the rhythm has been found

It is time to look for the words.

Each word (as is shown by its name)

Is a beautiful and charming virgin.....

A poet should search for suitable words

For the rhythm he has found.

This task is hard and it tries one's patience,

But there is no escape from it.

Mr. Rhythm and his wife, Mrs. Word --
If not suited and well-balanced --
Will never live happily like me and my wife!
I was the rhythm, she the words (on the axle of rhythm).
And the subject of the poem, too, was
'The Eternal Bond of Loving Lips'.....

Although the smile of our children (these chords of joy)
Would fit this poem very nicely,
What is the use?
Because black and cold words gave a feeling
Of doom and sadness to the poem.
It saddened the rhythm as well as those happy chords.
The poem also becomes useless and meaningless
As well as tiring the master-poet unnecessarily.

Anyway, the discussion has become lengthy
And this painful wound has started to bleed.....

The design of today's poets' poems, we said, is life.
It is from life that a poet, with the water and
Colour of a poem,
Weaves one pattern over another.

He writes poetry. That is
He puts his hand on the wounds of the old town.
That is, he tells a story to the night
About the pleasant morning.

He writes poetry. That is
 He shouts out the pain of his city and his district.
 That is, he revives tired spirits with his song.
 He writes poetry. That is
 He fills up cold and empty hearts with happiness.
 That is, He opens up sleeping eyes to the lucky morning.
 He writes poetry. That is
 He explains the certificate of merit of today's people.
 That is, he writes the victory speeches of his time....
 Those dry arguments about the meaning of certain words
 Have nothing to do with poetry if poetry is life.
 We should feel the warmth of the sun of love and hope
 In the depth of the darkest phrases.

This one recited the song of his life in blood,
 And that one the din of his life in a mould of silence.
 But.... although in that rhyme of life
 There is nothing but the long drawn-out blow of death;
 In both poems the meaning of each death is life!

Forugh's admiration for Shāmlu has been shared by other
 modern poets. Nāderpur, for example, regards him as a
 very serious contributor to modern poetry, with great con-
 cern for poetic content. He suggests that Shāmlu, together
 with Akhavān-e-Sāles, are among the best contemporary poets. ⁶¹

Nāder Nāderpur himself is a very well-read and cultured
 poet. He has studied classical poetry in great detail
 and has made a point of understanding all changes in style

over the years and the reasons for them. His sustained poetic activity for the past 30 years has placed him, as Yār-Shāber says, among the leading poets of contemporary Persia.⁶² Nāderpur is a lyric poet; he does not consider it the poet's business to fight the wrongs of society or use his poems for political purposes. He is a master of words, and his language has its roots in the classics; indeed some critics suggest that he does little more than to put the wine of Hāfez and Khayyām into new bottles.⁶³

Fough's views on Nāderpur's work changed over time, for reasons that are not entirely separated from changes in the personal relationship between them. For example, when she was assisting Majid Rowshangar to produce an anthology of new poetry, her first suggestion was that the quality of Nāderpur's poems meant that they should be clearly distinguished from the work of other poets. Then, just before the collection was published, she expressed doubts that Nāderpur's poems were suitable for inclusion in the collection. On another occasion she criticises Nāderpur, not because of his own poems, but because he had suggested that a particular poem by Shāmlu had neither technique nor beauty.⁶⁴

In any event, there is documentary evidence of those of Nāderpur's poems which she felt were of high quality. One of these is 'Desires' (Havashā), a poem not in the new style, which she selected for Rowshangar's collection just before she died:⁶⁵

چو باز آید شبانگهان آبی
 من و این بام سبز آسمانها
 من و این کوهساران مه آلود
 من و این ابرها ، این سایبانها

دَوم دریشزاران چون مه سبز
 وزم در کوهساران چون دم باد
 بلغم در نشیب دره‌ی ژرف
 بیوی صبح ، چون خورشید مرداد

برقص آرم چوموجی خرمن زرد
 چو بادی خوشدها گیرم در آغوش
 روم پای تهی در کشتزاران
 بنوشم عطر جنگلهای خاموش

سرایم با غریب آبخاران
 شبانگهان ، سرودی آسمانی
 فهم دل بر طنین نغمه‌ی خویش
 چو لغزد در سکوت جاودانی

شوم مهتاب و پرگیرم شبانگاه
 بر آن دریای ژرف آسمان رنگ
 بر آن امواج خشم آلود ساحل
 که سرکوبند چون ذی‌بانه برسنگ

شوم عطری گریزان و سبکروح
 در آمیزم بیاد شامگاهی
 بیچم در مشام اختر و ماه
 بکنجم در جهان مرغ و ماهی

شوم در جام ظلمت ، باده‌ی صبح
 بتابم گوندی شب زنده داران
 چو برگ مرده‌ای ، افتان و خیزان
 برقص آیم کنار جویباران

جهان مانده‌ست و این زیبا هوسها
 که هر دم میکشاندم بد ببال
 چنانم در دل انگیزند غوغا
 که با مهتابها گیرم پرربال

ازین پس ، این من و این شادی عمر
 من و این دشتها ، این بوستانها
 چو باز آید شبانگهان آبی
 من و این بام سبز آسمانها :

'When the blue nights fall again,
I am (alone) under this green ceiling of the sky;
I and these misty mountains;
I and these clouds, these shades;
I run away to the forest like a green mist
And I blow in the mountains like a wind.
I slide on the slope of a deep gorge
With the smell of morning like the summer sun.
I make the yellow crop dance like a wave
And like the wind I embrace the ears of corn.
I go barefoot in the fields, I drink
The perfume of the silent forest.
I sing with the roar of the waterfalls
A heavenly song at nightfall.
I put my heart into my singing
When it slips away in the eternal silence.
I become the moonlight and fly at night
Over that deep sea which has the colour of the sky;
Over those angry waves at the shore
Which hit their heads like madmen on the stones.
I become like a perfume, volatile and light-spirited.
I mix with the nightfall's wind.
I waft into the nostrils of the stars and the moon.
I place myself in the world of birds and fish.

I become the wine of the morning in the goblet
of darkness,

So I touch the cheeks of the night vigil keepers
Like a dead leaf falling and swaying,
I start to dance on the banks of the streams.

The world is behind me and these beautiful desires
Which pull me every moment after them
Start to make so much noise in my heart
That I can fly with the moonlight.

From now on I am (alone) with this joy of life;
I and these fields and these flower-gardens.
When the blue nights fall again,
I am (alone) under this green ceiling of the sky.'

The last of the three modern Persian poets who had an influence on Forugh was Mehdi Akhavān-e Sāles (who usually writes under the name M. Omid). As Yār-Shāter explains, he combines lyric and epic styles, but in a more narrative than pictorial manner. Although trained in traditional poetry and, in his early writings, strongly critical of Nimā, he gradually began to appreciate his work and eventually achieved a leading status among the modernists. Akhavān-e Sāles still retains parts of classical poetry in his own poems, however. He has explained that like some of the early modern poets he wished to use the traditional Khorāsānī style as a bridge between

the old and the new. Furthermore, his poetry has often a sardonic or ironic touch, closely related to his own personality, which, as Yār-Shāter points out, is not frequently found in the work of modern Persian poets, particularly those who are committed to achieving social change.⁶⁶ He also knew Forugh personally, having originally met her at a literary group arranged by Ebrāhīm Golestān in the mid-1950s.

Forugh often said that apart from Shāmlu, Nāderpur, and Akhavān-e Sāles, all other modern poets were just imitators. "They think their work is very good," she said, "and even comparable with Western poetry, but for the most part it is empty and without feeling."⁶⁷

Like Nimā and Shāmlu, Forugh thought that being a poet or poetess was part of living. Consequently, she wrote harsh words about 'pseudo-poets'. "Some poets," she said, "are separate from their poetry. They write verse, but when you examine them closely they are mean, low-minded, jealous, and hard-hearted persons. When I see these people, who make so much noise in their poems and articles, I feel hatred for them, and I just cannot believe their writing." She also criticised their commercialism: "Perhaps it is just for a plate of rice that they are making all this noise!"⁶⁸

Influence of Foreign Writers

After Forugh's death, some writers suggested that she had been strongly influenced by certain foreign literary figures. However, from what we know of her upbringing, it is highly unlikely that she had studied any major foreign writer by the time she had completed her first three collections of poems. This is despite the fact that in the introduction to 'Divān' she quotes part of a Persian translation of Milton's 'Paradise Lost'. Her association with Ebrāhim Golestān led to a broader, though still superficial, knowledge of European, especially French, writers. Golestān encouraged her to read more widely and even suggested appropriate books. In addition, the cultured circle of friends and acquaintances into which he directed Forugh rubbed off a little onto her thinking. Consequently, by the time 'Tavallodi Digar' was published, a greater influence of foreign writings becomes apparent. 69

Forugh herself made two statements towards the end of her life which imply that she was fairly clear on the issue. On one occasion she said, "I try to think independently; foreign writers have not had much influence on me." On another she said, "I have neither drowned myself in the classical literature of my own country nor become too fond of foreign literature." Yet she admitted that

having read some of the work of T.S.Eliot and Saint-John Perse she realized that there was such a thing as 'thinking poetry'. This mention of Saint-John Perse is particularly strange, since he is generally known as a writer of epics and long, impersonal poems, a poetic exile with no attachment to modern poetry. It suggests that she was basing her views on second or third-hand information.⁷⁰

Abdol-Ali Dastgheyb said that he knew Forugh had read Franz Kafka's 'Metamorphosis' and that this had influenced her. In evidence, he quoted lines from her poem 'Daryāft' (see Chapter One). Again, however, as Dastgheyb notes, this extract could equally well be explained by her knowledge of the writings of Sādeq Hedāyat, particularly 'The Blind Owl'.⁷¹

T.S. Eliot's name is mentioned by many commentators on Forugh's work. M. Āzād is probably closest to the mark, however, when he suggests that although Forugh admired and wanted to be like Eliot, she did not fully understand his use of English and was therefore obliged to return to a more Eastern style of writing. He also suggested that although she understood little French, she was able to learn from the style of French poets such as Jacques Prévert and Paul Eluard when their poems were read to her by her friends, and presumably were translated into Persian for her benefit.⁷² One can understand the impact of Prévert, a Dadaist poet who strongly criticised both

church and state and used the language of the common man. Less explicable is that of Eluard, who generally preferred to use mysterious images and flowery language.⁷³ M. Āzād also mentioned that Forugh had learned techniques from what she knew of the writings of Albert Camus, Jean Cocteau, and others who fantasized in their poems, but it is difficult to find concrete evidence of this in her own work.⁷⁴

Some have compared Forugh with foreign writers. M. Āzād once suggested to Forugh that her work was similar to that of Anne Sexton, the American poetess who won the Pulitzer Prize. Forugh was heard to reply: "What delightful people these Americans are!"⁷⁵ Others suggest her writing is much nearer that of Lamartine, the post-Revolutionary French poet who, like Forugh, was sent away from home (to avoid a socially impossible marriage) and who then had a 'spiritual rebirth'. His writing reflects, as does Forugh's, the various phases of his life -- despair, pessimism, death -- and he also wrote intimate poetry of the heart.⁷⁶

In general, it is highly unlikely that Forugh's poetry was influenced by foreign writers, even though some of it bore a superficial resemblance to works known abroad. Her later work did include Western ideas which she had, perhaps, heard about from others, but the direct impact on her art and thought was minimal.

Influence of Religion

Some of Forugh's work was influenced by what she had been taught about religion, but in different ways at different times. As a child she had read, and perhaps even been forced to learn by heart, various parts of the Qorān, and later she also read the Old Testament of the Bible. Among the poems in her first collection 'Asir' was 'Gonah' (see Chapter One), in which it is clear that she felt she had broken the rules imposed by religion and was therefore guilty of a 'sin'. By the time she started on her third collection of poems, however, she had changed her position and now criticised God for many of His decrees.

Forugh introduced her book 'Esyān' with quotations from the Old Testament as well as an excerpt from the Qorān. The first extract was Psalm 90 (A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God), which starts :

'Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all
generations

and contains the lines :

'The days of our years are threescore years and ten;
And if by reason of strength they be fourscore years,
Yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it
Is soon cut off, and we fly away' 77

The second extract is from Lamentations 3, which begins:

'I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod
of His wrath .

He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but
not into light.

Surely against me He is turned, He turneth His hand
against me all the day

Also when I cry and shout, He shutteth out my prayer.' 78

A further indication of the way her mind was working is
given by the extract from the Qorān -- the chapter 'Moon'.

This chapter begins: "The Hour of Doom is drawing near
and the moon is cleft in two. Yet when they see a sign,
the unbelievers turn their backs and say 'Ingenious magic!'"⁷⁹

From this starting point, Forugh presents one of the
strongest criticisms of religion to be found in Persian
poetry of any time. These are the first three poems of
'Esyān', namely 'Esyān-e Bandegi', 'Esyān-e Khodā'i', and
'Esyān-e Khodā'. She starts 'Esyān-e Bandegi' by saying
that everything she has heard in the name of religion has
no real meaning, and she asks God to listen to her even
though she is supposed to have done wrong in His eyes.
She claims that she has been brought into the world without
anyone asking her permission, unknown to everyone, even to
God. Then she has been warned constantly that if she does
not behave in certain ways, she will go to hell. Now that
she has grown up and married and seen many of life's prob-
lems, she feels that she has the right to question God about
the teachings of some of His prophets. In a sense, she
puts God on trial.

After this beginning, she responds to specific verses

of the Qorān. One example takes verses from the chapter
'Resurrection':

'Then We said to the angels: Prostrate yourselves
before Adam. They all prostrated themselves except
Satan, who refused.

"Why did you not prostrate yourself?" Allah asked.
"I am nobler than Adam," he replied. "You created me
of fire and him of clay."

He said: "Begone from Paradise! This is no place
for your contemptuous pride. Away with you.

Henceforth you shall be humble."

Satan replied: "Reprieve me till the Day of Resurrection."

"You are reprieved," said He. ' 80

Forugh counters this by saying that it is therefore God's
fault that Satan is among the people and God's fault if
people go to hell: 81

آفریدی خود تو این شیطان ملعون را
عاصیش کردی و او را سوی ما راندی
این تو بودی، این تو بودی، کز یکی شعله
دیوی اینسان ساختی، در راه بنشاندی

مهلتش دادی که تا دنیا بجا باشد
باسرانگشتان شومش آتش افروزد
لذتی وحشی شود در بستری خاموش
بوسه گردد بر لبانی کز عطش سوزد

هرچه زیبا بود، بیرحمانه بخشیدیش:
 شعر شد، فریاد شد، عشق و جوانی شد
 عطر گلها شد، بروی دشتها پاشید
 رنگ دنیا شد، فریب زندگانی شد

'You yourself created cursed Satan;
 You made him sinful and sent him to us.
 It was you, it was you, who from one flame
 Made this devil and set him in our path.
 You reprieved him for as long as the world exists,
 To make fire with the tips of his sinister fingers,
 To take wild pleasure in a silent bed,
 To kiss lips burning with thirst.
 Whatever was beautiful you gave him without remorse.
 He became poems, cries, love and youth,
 The perfume of flowers scattered over the fields,
 The colour of the world, the deception of life.'

82

Forugh's reproaches to God resemble those which through
 the centuries have been made by many Persian poets and
 thinkers, and never better than by Omar Khayyām:

Oh Thou who didst with Pitfall and with Gin
 Beset the Road I was to wander in,
 Thou wilt not with Predestination round
 Enmesh me, and impute my Fall to Sin?

FitzGerald

بر بگذرم حسنه از جادام نهی
 گوئی که بگیرت اگر کام نهی
 بیک ذره ز حکم تو جهان خالی نیست
 حکم تو کنی و عاصم نام نهی

Forugh even took the example of Hāfez, who had once

written:

پدرم روضه رضوان بدو گندم بفروخت
 ناخلف باشم اگر من بجوی نغوشم:

'My father sold the Garden of Paradise for two grains of wheat.

I will not be a good son unless I sell it for one
of barley.'

She wrote:

«حافظ، آن پیری که دریا بود و دنیا بود
بر «جوی» بفروخت این باغ بهشتی را
من که باشم تا بجامی نگذرم از آن؟
تو بزنی، بز نام شومم داغ زشتی را

'Hāfēz, that old man who was the ocean and the land,
Sold the Garden of Paradise for barley.

Who am I not to sell it for a goblet?

Yet you mark on my unfortunate name the brand of shame.⁸³

As Forugh grew older, she thought more about religion.

She gradually saw the futility of revolt and became less
critical of God and the holy scriptures.³⁴ At the same time,

she grew more critical of the way people in society were
losing their faith. By the time she wrote many of the

poems which appeared in her fourth collection, her views

had matured to such an extent that she returned to the

theme of faith in the famous and powerful 'Terrestrial

Verses' (Āvehhā-ye-Zamini), a scathing criticism of society:³⁵

آنگاه

خورشید سرد شد

و برکت از زمینها رفت

و سبزهها به صحراها خشکیدند

و ماهیان به دریاها خشکیدند

و خاک مردگان را

زان پس به خود نپذیرفت

شب در تمام پنجره‌های پریده رنگ
مانند يك تصور مشكوك
پیوسته در تراکم و طغیان بود
و راهها ادامه خود را
در تیرگی زها کردند

دیگر کسی به عشق نیندیشید
دیگر کسی به فتح نیندیشید
و هیچکس
دیگر به هیچ چیز نیندیشید

در غارهای تنهائی
بیهودگی به دنیا آمد
خون بوی بنگ و افیون میداد
زنهای باردار
نوزادهای بی سرزائیدند
و گاهواره‌ها از شرم
به گورها پناه آوردند

چه روزگار تلخ و سیاهی
نان، نیروی شگفت رسالت را
مغلوب کرده بود
پیغمبران گرسنه و مفلوک
از وعده گاههای الهی گریختند
و بره‌های گمشده
دیگر صدای هی‌هی چوپانی را
در بهت دشتها نشنیدند

در دیدگان آیندها گوئی
حرکات و رنگها و تصاویر
وارونه منعکس میگشت
و بر فراز سردلقکان پست
و چهره وقیح فواحش
يك هاله مقدس نورانی
مانند چتر مشتعلی میسوخت

مرداب‌های الکلی
با آن بخارهای گس مسموم
انبوه بی تحرك روشنگران را
به ژرفنای خویش کشیدند
و موشهای موزی
اوراق زرنگار کتب را
در گنجه‌های کهنه جویدند

خورشید مرده بود
خورشید مرده بود، و فردا
در ذهن کودکان
مفهوم گنگ گمشده‌ای داشت
آنها غرابت این لفظ کهنه‌را
در مشق‌های خود
با لکه درشت سیاهی
تصویر مینمودند

آنها به خود فرو میرفتند،
و از تصور شهوتناکی
اعصاب پیر و خسته‌شان تیر میکشید.

اما همیشه در حواشی میدان‌ها
این جانیان کوچک را میدیدی
که ایستاده‌اند
و خیره گشته‌اند
به ریزش مداوم فواره‌های آب

* *

شاید هنوز هم
در پشت چشم‌های له‌شده، در عمق انجماد
يك چیز نیم زنده مغشوش
بر جای مانده بود
که در تلاش بی‌رمقش میخواست
ایمان بیاورد به پاکی آواز آنها
شاید، ولی چه‌خالی بی‌پایانی
خورشید مرده بود
و هیچکس نمیدانست
که نام آن کبوتر غمگین
کز قلبها گریخته، ایمانست

* *

آه، ای صدای زندانی
آیا شکوه یأس تو هرگز
از هیچ سوی این شب منقور
نقیی بسوی نور نخواهد زد؟
آه، ای صدای زندانی
ای آخرین صدای صداها...

مردم،
گروه ساقط مردم
دلمرده و تکیده و مبهوت
در زیر بار شوم جسدهاشان
از غربتی به‌غربت دیگر میرفتند
و میل دردناک جنایت
در دستهایشان متورم میشد

گاهی جرقه‌های، جرقه ناچیزی
این اجتماع ساکت بیجان را
یکباره از درون متلاشی میکرد
آنها به‌هم هجوم می‌آوردند
مردان گلوی یکدیگر را
با کارد میدزدیدند
و در میان بستری از خون
با دختران نابالغ
همخوا به میشدند

آنها غریب و وحشت خود بودند
و حس ترسناک گنهکاری
ارواح کور و کودنشان را
مفلوج کرده بود

پیوسته در مراسم اعدام
وقتی طناب‌دار
چشمان پرتشنج محکومی را
از کاسه با فشار به بیرون میریخت

'And then the sun became cold
 And prosperity left the land.
 And the grass dried up in the fields
 And the fish died in the seas
 And the earth itself no longer took in corpses.
 Night in all the pale windows
 Was like an uncertain fantasy
 Continuously in rebellion and ferment,
 And the roads continued only into darkness.
 No-one thought of love any more
 No-one thought of victory any more
 And no-one thought of anything any more.
 In the lonely caves, futility was born;
 Flood smelt of bhang and opium,
 Pregnant mothers gave birth to headless babies*
 And the cradles, from shame, hid in graves.
 What bitter and black times!
 Bread had overcome the miraculous power of prophecy;
 Hungry and poor prophets
 Ran away from their meeting places with God,
 And lost lambs, to their consternation,
 No longer heard the shepherd's calls in the plains.
 In the eyes of mirrors, you could say,
 Movements and colours and images
 Were reflected upside down,

* This could also be translated as 'mindless babies'.

And over the heads of low jesters
And over the shameless faces of harlots
A holy bright halo was burning like a flaming parasol.
Swamps of alcohol, with poisoned, acrid fumes,
Pulled into their depths
The stagnant crowd of intellectuals.
And crafty mice chewed the gilded pages of books
In old bookcases.
The sun was dead; the sun was dead and tomorrow,
In the minds of children,
Had a dumb, lost feel.
They pictured the strangeness of this old word
In their homework with a big black blot.
People, groups of good-for-nothing people,
Depressed, weak and dumbfounded
Under the grim burden of their bodies
Wandered from one exile to another,
And the painful desire to commit crime
Was swelling in their hands.
Occasionally a spark, an insignificant spark,
Would suddenly explode from within
This silent, lifeless society.
Then they would rush upon each other,
Men would cut each other's throats with knives,
And among the beds of blood
They would sleep with under-aged girls.

They were drowned in their own fear
And the terror-filled feeling of sin
Paralysed their blind and dumb spirits.

Always at the time of a hanging,
When the rope of the gallows caused the eyes
Of the hanging man to bulge out of their sockets,
They would turn deeply within themselves,
And from their lusty imagination
Their old and tired nerves would feel a pain.

But always, around the public squares,
You could see these petty criminals
Standing and staring
At the continuous play of the fountains.

Perhaps, behind those battered eyes,
In the depth of the frozen waste,
Something half-alive and confused still remained,
Which in its final agony
Wanted to start to believe
In the purity of the sound of water.

Perhaps, but what an endless emptiness.
The sun was dead, and no-one knew
That the name of that sad dove
Which had abandoned all hearts
Was faith.

Oh, you imprisoned voice,
 Will the magnitude of your despair
 Never, from any part of this hated night,
 Tunnel towards the light?
 Oh, you imprisoned voice,
 Oh, you last voice of all.' 35

Towards the end of her short life, therefore, Forugh began to understand the meaning of faith and to recognize the importance of religion, even though she still found it difficult to explain. Once she said: "Religion is something beautiful you wish to worship, such as a painting by Leonardo da Vinci in the National Gallery which I saw on my last visit to London." 37 In another statement she said that she had as much respect for poetry as a religious person respects religion. 38

In summary, therefore, some of Forugh's work was affected by religious teaching, even though religion itself -- and particularly the outward signs -- did not play a role in her life. Her poems criticising religion are as strong and as full of personal feelings as her poems criticising society and the status of women. Indeed, she seemed to regard religious teaching as little more than another series of rules which had to be questioned. Her interest in the concept of faith towards the end of her life was only a small part of her explorations into human feelings.

Forugh's Views on Poetry

During the last few years of her life, Forugh made a number of observations on poetry, on its style and content,

its rhythm and rhyme. Many of these observations were similar to those of Nimā and Shāmlu, but she added her own personal way of expressing them and, in some respects, went further, particularly where the difference between **men's and women's feelings** was being discussed. Forugh maintained a reasonably consistent viewpoint about the nature of poetry itself, as well as the language of poetry. About rhythm, however, her views were somewhat less clear.

"Poetry," said Forugh, "comes out of life. It is not limited to any special subject; there is poetry in everything." ⁸⁹ She believed that much of Persian poetry had been too limited in its subject-matter. She said that most volumes of poetry either dealt with spiritual matters, often at a level so high that most humans could not really understand them, or with advice, eulogy or facetious criticism. ⁹⁰

Forugh accepted that this was similar to Nimā's view, but she added that since **every poet has a different character, their poetry will differ.** For example, she was a woman and therefore saw things in a different light. "I see what Nimā saw, but through my own window." She also had a much closer attachment to her poems than many other poets. She once said that her poems were like her friends, friends who made her into a complete person. ⁹¹

From the philosophy that poems are an integral part of life, it was logical to stress that the language of poetry

should be the language of life. "We can't always write poetry about love and sadness and pain," she said. "We live in a different world. We are going to the moon. Why shouldn't poems be about rockets?" She argued that if poetry is to be alive and strong, it is necessary to use the words of today. "For example, if I see that no poet has ever used the word 'explosion', I should not think that I must not use it. If it is the right word to use, I must use it." 92

On many occasions she used the example of her poem 'Ey Marz-e porqohar' to illustrate this point.* She said that this poem was about present-day society, her society, and that this could not be described by flowery language. "When I describe a street which is full of the smell of urine," she said, "I cannot possibly pretend that it has the fragrance of an expensive perfume! This would be cheating, and anyone who does it lies not only to himself but to everyone else." 93

فاتح شدم

خود را به ثبت رساندم

خود را به نامی، در يك شناسنامه. مزین کردم

و هستیم به يك شماره مشخص شد

پس زنده باد ۶۷۸ صادره از بخش ۵ ساکن تهران

* This poem has also been translated by Massud Farzan. See his 'Two Poems by Forugh Farrokhzad', Iranian Studies, Winter 1973, pp. 52-4. The title, 'O Bejeweled Land', is from a national song sung at schools in the morning and therefore well-known to all Iranians of Forugh's age-group.

دیگر خیالم از همه سو راحتست
 آغوش مهر بان‌مام وطن
 پستانك سوابق پرافتخار تاریخی
 لائئى تمدن و فرهنگ
 وجق وجق جججه قانون ...
 آه
 دیگر خیالم از همه سو راحتست

از فرط شادمانی
 رفتم کنار پنجره، با اشتیاق، ششصد و هفتاد و هشت
 بار هوا را که از غبار پهن
 و بوی خاک و بدوادرار، متقبض شده بود
 درون سیند فرودادم
 و زیر ششصد و هفتاد و هشت قبض بدهکاری
 و روی ششصد و هفتاد و هشت تقاضای کار نوشتم
 فروغ فرخزاد

در سرزمین شعر و گل بلبل
 موهبتیست زیستن، آنهم
 وقتی که واقعیت موجود بودن تو پس از سال‌های
 سال پذیرفته میشود

جائی کہ من

با اولین نگاه رسمیم از لای پرده، ششصد و هفتاد و

هشت شاعر را می بینم

که، حقه بازدها، همه در هیئت غریب گدایان

در لای خا کروبه، به دنبال وزن و قافیه میگردند

واصدای او این قدم رسمیم

یکباره، از میان لجن زارهای تیره، ششصد و هفتاد و

هشت بلبل مرموز

که از سر تفتن

خود را بشکل ششصد و هفتاد و هشت کلاغ سیاه

پیر در آورده اند

با تنبلی بسوی حاشیه روز میپزند

و اولین نفس زدن رسمیم

آغشته میشود به بوی ششصد و هفتاد و هشت شاخه

گل سرخ

محصول کار-خانجات عظیم پلاسکو

موهبتیست زیستن، آری

در زادگاه شیخ ابودلّك کمانچه کش فوری

و شیخ ای دل ای دل تنبک تیار تنبوری

شهرستارگان گران وزن ساق و باسن و پستان و

پشت جلد هنر

گهواره مؤلفان فلسفه «ای بابا به من چه ولش کن»

مهد مسابقات المپیک هوش - وای!

جائی که دست به هر دستگاه نقلی تصویر و صوت

میزنی، از آن

بوق. نبوغ نابغه ای تازه سال میآید

و برگزیدگان فکری ملت

وقتی که در کلاس اکابر حضور مییابند
 هر يك به روی سینه، ششصد و هفتاد و هشت کباب پز
 برقی
 و بردو دست، ششصد و هفتاد و هشت ساعت ناوزر ردیف
 کرده و میدانند
 که ناتوانی از خواص تهی کیسه بودنست، نه نادانی

فاتح شدم بله فاتح شدم
 اکنون به شادمانی این فتح
 در پای آینه، با افتخار، ششصد و هفتاد و هشت شمع
 نسیه میافروزم
 و میبرم به روی طاقچه تا با اجازه چند کلامی
 درباره فواید قانونی حیات به عرض حضورتان برسانم
 و اولین کلنگ ساختمان رفیع زندگیم را
 همراه باطنین کف، زدنی پرشور
 بر فرق فرق خویش بکوبم
 من زنده‌ام، بله، مانند زنده رود، که یکروز زنده بود
 و از تمام آنچه که در انحصار مردم زنده‌ست، بهره
 خواهم برد

من میتوانم از فردا
 در کجوه‌های شهر، که سرش از آسمان مواهب ملیست
 و در میان سایه‌های سبکبار تیرهای تلگراف
 گردش کنان قدم بردارم
 و با غرور، ششصد و هفتاد و هشت بار، به دیوار مستراح
 های عمومی بنویسم
 خط نوشتنم که خر کند خنده

من میتوانم از فردا

همچون وطن پرست غیوری
 سهمتی از ایده آل عظیمی که اجتماع
 هوچارشنبه بعد از ظهر، آنرا
 با اشتیاق و دلهره دنبال می کند
 در قلب و مغز خویش داشته باشم
 سهمی از آن هزارهوس پرور هزارریالی
 که میتوان به مصرف یخچال و مبل و پرده رساندش
 یا آنکه در ازای ششصد و هفتاد و هشت رأی طبیعی
 آنرا شبی به ششصد و هفتاد و هشت مرد وطن بخشید

من میتوانم از فردا

در پستوی منازة خاجیک
 بعد از فرو کشیدن چندین نفس، ز چند گرم جنس
 دست اول خالص
 و صرف چند بادیه پرسی کولای ناخالص
 و پنخس چند یا حق و یا هو و غوغ و هو هو
 رسماً به مجمع فضالی فکور و فضله های فاجچیل
 روشنفکر
 و پیروان مکتب داخ داخ تاراخ تاراخ پیوندم
 و طرح اولین رمان بزرگم را
 که در حوالی سنه یکمزار و ششصد و هفتاد و هشت
 شمسی تبریزی
 رسماً به زیر دستگاه تهی دست چاپ خواهد رفت
 بر هر دو پشت ششصد و هفتاد و هشت پاکت
 اشنوی اصل ویژه بریزم

من میتوانم از فردا

با اعتماد کامل

خود را برای ششصد و هفتاد و هشت دوره به یک

دستگاه مسند مخمل پوش

در مجلس تجمع و تأمین آتیه

در مجلس سیاس و ثنا میهمان کنم

زیرا که من تمام مندرجات مجله هنر و دانش - و

تملق و کرنش رامیخوانم

و شیوه «درست نوشتن» را میدانم

من در میان توده سازنده‌ای قدم به عرصه هستی

نهادم

که گرچه نان ندارد، اما بجای آن

میدان دید باز و وسیعی دارد

که مرزهای فعلی جغرافیائیش

از جانب شمال، به میدان پرتراوت و سبز تیر

و از جنوب، به میدان باستانی اعدام

و در مناطق پرازدحام، به میدان توپخانه رسیده است

و در پناه آسمان درخشان و امن امنیتش

از صبح تا غروب، ششصد و هفتاد و هشت قوی قوی

هیكل گچی

به اتفاق ششصد و هفتاد و هشت فرشته

— آنهم فرشته از خاک و گل سرشته —

به تبلیغ طرحهای سکون و سکوت مشغولند

* *

فاتح شدم - بله فاتح شدم
 پس زنده باد ۶۷۸ صادره از بخش ۵ ساکن تهران
 که در پناه پشتکار و اراده
 به آنچنان مقام رفیعی رسیده است، که در چارچوب
 پنجره‌ای
 در ارتفاع ششصد و هفتاد و هشت متری سطح زمین
 قرار گرفته است

و افتخار این را دارد
 که میتواند از همان دریچه - نه از راه پلکان -
 خود را
 دیوانه‌وار به دامان مهر بان مام وطن سرنگون کند

و آخرین وصیتش اینست
 که در ازای ششصد و هفتاد و هشت سکه، حضرت
 استاد آبراهام صهبا
 مرثیهای به قافیه کشک دررثای حیاتش رقم زند

I have won a victory.

I registered myself.

I adorned myself with a name in an identity card,

And my existence was designated by a number.

So Long Live 678, issued from the Fifth District,

Resident of Tehrān.

At last I have no more worries.

The bosom of the mother land;

The nipple of glories and historical past;
 The lullaby of civilization and culture;
 The noise of the rattle of law.

Ah, At last I have no more worries.

In ecstasy, I went near the window,
 Eagerly.

I inhaled, 678 times, the air polluted by the dust of dung,
 The smell of garbage and urine.

And under 678 bills, and on 678 work applications,
 I signed 'Forugh Farrokhzād'.

Living in the land of poetry and flowers and nightingales
 Is a great privilege,
 Especially when the fact of your existence
 Is finally accepted after many many years.

The place where I see,
 With my first official look through the curtain,
 673 poets, who, charlatans all, seem like strange beggars
 Looking for rhythm and rhyme among the garbage.

And from the sound of my first official step,
 Suddenly, from among the dismal swamps (of the streets)
 678 mysterious nightingales who, to amuse themselves,
 Have turned themselves into 678 old black crows, (and)
 Fly lazily towards the break of day.

And my first official breath,
 Smearred with the smell of 678 red roses,
 Products of the great Plasco Company.*

*Manufacturer of plastic products.

Living is a great privilege indeed
 In the birthplace of Sheykh Abu-dalqak,
 Who plays the kamancheh* and smokes opium
 And Sheykh Aydel Aydel, from the family of drummers,
 Who is a lute player. **
 The city of superstars, with their legs, hips and bosoms
 On the cover of 'Honar' magazine;
 The cradle of the author of the philosophy of
 'Oh, so what? It's not my concern!'
 The cradle of the Olympic Games of wit;
 A place where, when you touch any instrument
 That gives picture or sound,
 The noise of fame of a young genius comes out,
 The intellectual elite of the nation.

 When they attend adult education classes,
 Each one has put in a row on his chest 678
 Electric kabab-cookers
 And on their two hands 678 Nauzer watches,
 And they know that weakness is one of the benefits
 Of empty pockets, not ignorance.

 I have won a victory, indeed a victory.
 Now in the joy of this victory,
 In front of the mirror, with glory,
 I light 678 candles bought on credit.

* A musical instrument of the guitar family.

** The names of these two 'Sheykhs' are imaginary and
 are intended to make fun of the world of popular music.

And I jump on the mantlepiece so that,
 With your permission, I may tell you a few words
 About the legal advantages of being alive;
 So that, with the first blow of the pickaxe
 I may, to your fervent applause, knock down
 The lofty edifice of my skyscraper life
 Onto the top of my own head.
 I am living, yes, like the Zendeh-rud, *
 Which one day was alive,
 And I will benefit from all that is in the monopoly
 Of living people.
 I can, from tomorrow, stroll among the thin shadows
 Of the telegraph poles in the streets of the city,
 Which are so full of national talent,
 And, with pride, write 678 times:
 On the walls of the public lavatories
 'I wrote this line for fools to laugh at'.
 I can, from tomorrow, like a proud nationalist,
 Share in the great ideal of society
 Which, every Wednesday afternoon,
 Is followed with much joy and excitement. **
 A share of that thousand desirable one thousand rials,
 Which can be used for a refrigerator, furniture or curtains.
 Or, instead of 678 true votes, can,
 On one night, buy votes from 678 fellow-countrymen.

* The river of Esfahān, about which there are many legends.

** Refers to the weekly National Lottery.

I can, from tomorrow,
 In the back room of Khachik's shop,^{*}
 After inhaling a few breaths from a few grams
 Of first-hand, pure quality (heroin),
 And drinking a few bowls of not-so-pure Pepsi Cola,
 And spreading a few 'O Gods, O Gods,'
 And 'vagh, vaghs' and 'Ho, Hos',^{**}
 Officially join the group of academic thinkers,
 The enlightened intellectual dirt
 And followers of the school of 'dākh, dākh, tarākh, tarākh'.^{***}
 And make the draft of my first long novel,
 Which, more or less, in the year 1678 'Shamsi-ye Tabrizi',^{****}
 Will officially go to the poor printing press,
 And will be printed on both sides of 678 packets
 Of Special Quality Oshnu.[†]

 I can, from tomorrow, with complete confidence,
 Invite myself to 678 sessions
 In one velvet-covered chair
 In the parliamentary assembly for planning the future,
 Or the parliament of thanks and praise
 Because I read all the articles in Honar and Dānesh magazines
 And 'Flattery' and 'Bowing'^{††}
 And I know the ways of 'good writing'.

* Armenian drink shop frequented
by 'intellectuals'.

** Dervish-like words.

*** Words used to represent
sound of pompous conversation.

**** A joke mixing the Islamic calendar 'Shamsi-ye Qamari'
and the famous spiritual guide of the poet Rumi.

+Make of cigarette

†† Made-up names of
magazines to rhyme
with Honar & Dānesh

I stepped into the world in the midst of the creative people,
 Who, although they have no bread,
 Have instead a big and wide horizon
 Whose present geographical borders
 Have reached in the north to the
 Green and fresh Tir Square,
 And in the south to the historical E'dam Square,
 And in the crowded areas to Tupkhāneh Square.*

 And in the shelter of the shining sky
 And the safe environment,
 From morning till evening
 673 strong swans made of chalk,
 Together with 678 angels made of mud and dust,
 Are busy planning programs of stillness and quiet

 I have won a victory, yes, a victory.
 So Long Live 678, issued from the Fifth District,
 Resident of Tehrān,
 Who, thanks to diligence and willingness,
 Has reached such a high level as to be placed
 In the frame of a window, at the height of
 673 meters above the ground.

 And has the pleasure of being able to throw herself
 Madly down into the skirt of the loving motherland,
 Not from the stairway but from that same window.

* These are all places in Tehrān.

And her last will is this:

That in return for 673 coins

(Honourable Professor Abrāhām Sahbā *

Will write an elegy with a nonsensical rhyme

Lamenting her (lost) existence.' 94

Forugh, in recommending the use of everyday language, suggested that it was not necessary to follow strict rules in writing poetry. She said that the rhythm of a poem is like a string which holds the words together, and that use of the wrong word, which forces a hesitation in the rhythm, is like a knot in the string. "We should not sacrifice the meaning just to be polite to the rhythm," she said. "If necessary, a new rhythm should be created." 95

To illustrate this point, she referred to the poem

'Ay Vāy Mādaram' by Mohamed Hoseyn Shahriār. She explained that in this poem, which is not in traditional form (since the length of lines and stanzas are irregular as are the rhymes), this famous and respected master of ghazals expresses his feelings in his own words and still combines rhythm and language perfectly. 96 Some typical lines of this poem (which is translated in full in Appendix 1 on page 232) and which recounts Shahriār's feelings after the death of his mother) are as follows:

* A humorous reference to one of Irān's most famous poets, Ebrāhīm Sahbā, who writes in the classical style. According to the International Who's Who, he was born in Torbat-Heydarieh in 1915. His best known works are 'Sahbā's Notebook' (Daftar-e Sahbā) and 'Humans, Poetry and the Moon' (Ānsān, She'r va Māh).

با چه نام نمرده می شنوم من صدای او
 با چه نام نوز سر و کله میزند
 نامید . لال شو
 بیژن برو کنار
 گفتگر بی صدا
 دارد برای ناخوش خود آتش می بزد.

'No, she is not dead. I can hear her voice.

She is still telling off the children:

'Be quiet, Nahid!'

'Bijān, get out of my way!'

With a quiet ladle

She cooks soup for her sick boy.' 97

In a letter to Ahmad Rezā Ahmadi, one of the leading figures in the shapeless 'new wave' poetry, Forugh insisted on the importance of matching rhythm and language. 98 She wrote:

"Don't forget the rhythm of poetry. A thousand times I repeat, don't forget the rhythm. Look around you and wherever you look you will see the rhythm of nature. The leaves on the trees fluttering in the wind; the rapid flapping of wings by birds as they ascend and the steady beating when they fly; or the movement of water in a still pool when you throw in a stone." To stress the point further, and indicate her opposition to 'new wave' poetry, she added: "destruction for reasons other than reconstruction is of no use." 99

M. Āzād, writing after her death, said that the secret of Forugh's poems is that they are like ordinary conversation. The grammar of her speech is the grammar of everyday Tehrān; the words are simple and the construction natural. ¹⁰⁰ With this in mind, we can turn to the changing style of Forugh's poetry as it developed over her lifetime.

The Style of Forugh's Poetry

I have already indicated that the style of Forugh's poetry does not fall into any standard mould. There is, however, a reasonably clear distinction between the generally classical form of the poetry in her first three collections and much of the 'new poetry' to be found in her fourth and fifth collections.

Since Forugh was openly and strongly critical of her own work, we have some idea of how her thinking changed as the years went by. In Chapter One it was noted that she had written many ghazals by the time she was 13 or 14. On another occasion she wrote: "I have written a large number of very bad poems. These poems came from within me naturally. I used to recite two or three each day in the kitchen or behind the sewing machine. I did not know whether I was reciting real poetry or not. All I knew was that they were simple and sincere poems. At that time I was not mature. I had not found my true shape, my language, or the world of my thoughts." ¹⁰¹

Although Forugh, by her own admission, did not study 'aruz, or prosody, she had, like many Persians, acquired a feeling for the classical Persian metres by ear, and she had clearly been attracted to the modern popular stanzaic verse forms from reading the works of contemporary poets.

In her first volume, 'Asir', her 44 poems generally conform to the traditional Persian metres. (In terms of Elwell-Sutton's five major metre patterns, 22 poems have metres in pattern 3, 12 in pattern 5, 4 in pattern 4, 5 in pattern 2 and 3 in pattern 1). In a few of these poems Forugh has shortened or added to the number of syllables in the mesra', as in 'Sabr-e Sang' and 'Halqeh' (see Chapter One). In the poem 'Khwāb', she introduces mesra's or lines of varying and irregular length:

شب بروی شیشه‌های تاز
 می‌نشست آرام چون خاکستری تپ‌دار
 باد نقش سایه‌ها را در حیاط خانه مردم‌زیر و رومیکرد

This is a characteristic of Hoquqi's second group of modern poets, the 'Mostazād Sāzān' or 'Bahr-e Tavil Guyān' (see above). One poem in this collection, 'Sedā'i dar Shab', is a mosammat with traditional metres. With the exceptions of 'Khwāb' and 'Sedā'i dar Shab', all the poems in this book are in two-beyt stanzas, with different rhymes in each stanza.

As Shafā says in his introduction to 'Asir', the main contribution of Forugh in the collection was the

dynamism and artistic dimension of her personal confessions, and the skilful and sincere portrayal of her feelings. It was the content that was new, not the form.¹⁰²

In 'Divār', Forugh begins to experiment with free verse. Out of 25 poems in this collection, seven are irregular, while 18 have conventional metres. (Nine in Elwell-Sutton's pattern 4, five in pattern 3, 2 in pattern 5, and one each in patterns 1 and 2). In seven poems, she shortens or lengthens some of the lines while keeping the conventional feet of the metre (in Elwell-Sutton's patterns 3 and 4), and she uses rhyme, though sometimes without a regular rhyme-scheme. In two poems the lines differ very greatly in length, though metrical feet are recognizable, while rhymes, when they appear, do so sporadically. These two poems are 'Tashneh' and 'Donyā-ye Sāyeh-hā' (from which the following lines are taken):

- - - - -
 من نمیخواهم
 سایه‌ام را لحظه‌ای از خود جدا سازم
 - - - - -
 من نمیخواهم
 او بلفزد دور از من روی معبرها
 - - - - -
 یابیفند خسته و سنگین
 - - - - -
 زیر پای رهگذرها

Some authorities consider that Forugh copied the form of some of the poems in 'Divār' from the work of contemporary poets, but it is difficult to substantiate this. Esmā'il

Nuri-Alā classifies the seven irregular poems as belonging to the style of 'she'r-e now-e miāneh row' ('intermediate new poetry'), but in my view they are really just an immature form of her later work. A more important point is that the content of the poems in this second collection is much more personal and emotional than in the first collection. In some instances it is almost salacious. 103

Forūgh's third collection, 'Esvān', consists of 17 poems, including her long poem 'Esvān-e Bandegi', which has been discussed above. Of these 17 poems, 13 are in stanzas of two rhyming beyts with regular metres (5 in Elwell-Sutton's pattern 3, 7 in pattern 4 and 1 in pattern 2). In one poem, 'Puch', she splits some of the mesra's into short lines of one foot each (of pattern 3). In the poems 'Zolmat' and 'Sorud-e Zibā'i', she lengthens some mesra's and shortens others, but keeps to the metre (pattern 3) and to the rhyme-scheme of pairs of rhyming beyts. In 'Rahgozar', there is no stanzaic arrangement; the lines are of varying length, but mostly consist of metric feet (pattern 2) and some of the short lines are printed as if they were mostazād. The rhymes are erratic, but for the most are in pairs (abcb, defe) although the poem is not printed in the form of two-beyt stanzas.

The emphasis in all the poems in 'Esvān' is still on a simple expression of innermost personal feelings, especially in the three major revolutionary poems against religion, and

the form of poetry is secondary. Indeed, Yadollāh Ro'yāyi, writing after her death, said that before her fourth book, 'Tavallodi Digar', the style of poetry was of little importance to Forugh. She was happy to be able to express her thoughts and feelings in lyrical stanzas of two beyts, and thought little of the constraints which might be imposed on her by this style.¹⁰⁴ Fereydun Rahmāma goes further and says that only in writing the poems which appeared in 'Tavallodi Digar' did Forugh actually appreciate the style in which she was writing.¹⁰⁵ This view is certainly correct, since we have Forugh's own assessment that in her first three books she was, in effect, writing by instinct.¹⁰⁶ Thus, any appraisal of Forugh's style based only on the poems in her first three books would be inadequate and misleading.

There is little doubt that a turning point in Forugh's thinking about poetic style came when she drifted away from her restricted, middle-class upbringing and her family problems and was taken under the wing of Ebrāhim Golestān. By introducing her to a wider, more intellectual group of friends, and to a greater variety of literary styles, he provoked her into thinking about form as well as content, and by providing financial and moral support he gave her the confidence to try out new styles of writing.¹⁰⁷ It was from this time, we may be sure, that she read the teachings of Nimā, heard the poems of Shāmlu, Nāderpur, and Akhavān-e Sāles, and read, or heard recitals and explanations of, works by foreign poets.

By the time 'Tavallodi Digar' was published, therefore, Forugh had gained considerable insight into both traditional and modern styles of poetry. Kasmā'i suggests, rightly, that if Forugh happened to write a poem in modern form it was not because she did not know the classical form or was unable to use it.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, on the basis of what we know about Forugh's character, it seems that once she had understood the principles behind any particular style she resolved to prove that she could use it as well as any other poet, living or dead. Because of this, and because she wrote in classical form during the same period that she wrote modern poetry, it is difficult to categorize her as belonging to any particular group of poets.

As has been mentioned before, Forugh spent some time absorbing the teachings and poetry of Nimā. "Nimā influenced me for quite a while," she said, "but I tried to stop this. There was a time when I thought I was drowning in Nimā's style, but now I am safe."¹⁰⁹ Not only did Forugh wish to protect herself from being monopolised by the influence of any one writer, but she also realized that such influence was no guarantee of success. "Though I have read Nimā," she said, "I have still written poor poems." She explained that she needed to mature in her own way and that this took time. "If I see people fall over stones and hurt themselves, that doesn't prevent me from treading the same path."¹¹⁰

'Tavallodi Digar' is a collection of 35 poems, all of which except four are in free verse. Of the four exceptions, one, 'Ghazal', is a ghazal in perfect form (metre pattern 4). Two, namely 'Āsheqāneh' and 'Mordāb' (see Chapter One), are masnavis, which, as Kasmā'i puts it, are as technically competent as any from Rumi.¹¹¹ Both are in a metre of Elwell-Sutton's pattern 3, one having 38 beyts and the other 26 beyts. The fourth exception, 'She'r-e Safar', is not printed in stanzas, but it rhymes for the most in pairs of beyts, though sometimes irregularly, and is in metre pattern 4.

In many of the free verse poems, feet and sometimes whole mesra's from a classical metre appear. Elwell-Sutton quotes some lines from the poem 'Tavallodi Digar' which have something of his pattern 3 rhythm,¹¹² a pattern which appears in a further 8 poems in the book, while traces of pattern 4 appear in 14 of the poems. In eight poems no trace of any traditional metrical element can be discerned. One of these is a poem in phonetically spelt language, 'Be-Ali Goft Mādaresh Ruzi', which is discussed below. Except in the four metrical poems, rhyme is abandoned altogether, though occasionally casual rhymes appear in the midst of an otherwise unrhymed poem.

Forugh, in the metrical poems of her first three collections, speaks almost entirely of her own feelings and sufferings. In 'Tavallodi Digar', having come to see

herself in a broader environment, she also touches on social and philosophical themes as well as on folklore and everyday life. The use of free verse gave her an additional freedom of expression which she might never have found if she had clung to conventional metre and rhyme. Some of these free verse poems are very forceful, for example, 'Ey Marz-e Porgohar', which has been discussed above. Forugh herself considered them to be her best and so do most of her admirers today. On the other hand, the simple beauty of her rhymed and metrical poems has a charm for lovers of Persian poetry which is likely to ensure that some of them will long be remembered.

The posthumously published collection, 'Imān Beyāvarim be-Āghāz-e Fasl-e Sard', comprises the poem of this name (which has been mentioned previously) and five others. All are without rhyme, and although traces of traditional metre (pattern 4) can be found in the title poem and two others, this book must be described as a collection of free verse. It shows that Forugh cherished this form of expression up to the time of her death.

Since some of Forugh's last poems were much like stories in verse, Nuri-Alā suggests that they should be put into the category of 'manzumeh', which is a general description of all versified story-telling (a genre which in Irān probably dates back to the time of Zoroaster). He cites 'Imān Beyāvarim ...' as one in this type. 113

However, it is not easy to make distinctions between this narrative type and other types of new poetry. A somewhat similar situation arises with two other poems, 'Ey Marz-e Pargohar' and 'Be-Ali Goft Mādaresh Ruzi', which some classify as being in the style of 'tanz', a genre of satire in verse which makes the fullest use of everyday colloquial language and sayings. The second of these is, in fact, based on a popular verse giving advice to naughty children. Originally from a poem by Iraj, it is one of my own favourites, partly because it reminds me of my schooldays, partly because it is full of folklore and partly because of its vividness of description. 114

(Because this is a lengthy poem I have included its translation in an appendix to this chapter).

In this section I have traced the way in which the style of Forugh's poetry developed. She started her poetic career at a very young age by writing two-beyt stanzas, with only occasional excursions into new poetry, and when she first started to write new poetry her poems appeared as a pale shadow of Nimā's works. At this stage it was the revolutionary content of her poetry, particularly the increasing expression of a woman's innermost thoughts and feelings, that by far outweighed the form in which it was written.

By the time her fourth collection was published, Forugh was paying much more attention to style in her

writing, while at the same time raising the quality of her expression and content. Her new poetry undoubtedly moves into the category of 'She'r-e Now-e Nimā'i'; in this respect I agree with the conclusions of Hoquqi and Nuri-Alā. However, since she also wrote highly competent ghazals and masnavis, and experimented with manzumah and tanz, her work goes further than this single category. One must turn again to the content of her poetry to appreciate the distinctive nature of her work in her last two collections. She could, perhaps, be classified among those poets called 'Erfān Guyān' -- Mystic Poets -- or 'Mohtavi Gerāyān' -- those who concentrate on the content of poetry. However, this would detract from her achievements because she differed from many others of her contemporaries not only by writing from the viewpoint of a woman, but by using simple, everyday language to express herself. Thus one is left with the conclusion that Forugh's poetry must either be categorized, in terms of style, on a poem-by-poem basis, or that she must simply be regarded as unique.

Some Criticisms of Forugh

Much of the censure which Forugh faced when she was alive subsided after her death. There were two major reasons for this. One is that a great part of this censure was aimed at the content of her poems, particularly

the earlier ones, rather than the style. It was therefore a form of personal censure, and, in the Persian custom, it is not usual to speak badly of the dead. The other is that, as we have seen, the style of her work showed a distinct change as she grew older. It became more varied and technically better, whether it was in the traditional or new style.

Apart from the objections of her family, including her husband, there were many people in Tehrān society who objected to a woman expressing her personal thoughts so openly. The opportunity for Forugh to do this had been provided by the establishment of a number of new literary magazines in the 1950s.* However, rival magazines, which were more traditionally oriented, were very critical of this approach.** I have not been able to trace many of the written criticisms of Forugh, since many of the magazines have closed, but Nāderpur recounted to me how authors such as Jalāl Āl-e Ahmad, Parviz Dāryush, and Khalil Maleki wrote or spoke harsh words about Forugh's early work. 115

Some critics suggested that her early work was pornographic and therefore went against all the morals of a Moslem society. Others said that as a child she had read erotic books by such authors as Mosta'ān and Hejāzi which had corrupted her. 116 A third group, including the poetess, Parvin Bāmdād, felt that the problem was the immaturity of her early poems. "They were like the jottings of a sixth-

* Such as Ferdowsi and Negin.

** Such as Āresh and Yaghma.

form student," she told me. A fourth group classified her simply as a revolutionary who wanted to break tradition and try to copy the more outrageous actions of European women.¹¹⁷ Indeed, Forugh herself had reportedly once written some newspaper articles under the heading 'iconoclasm'.¹¹⁸ A fifth group thought that she was just so involved with her own personal problems, and had such a great desire to shout them out, that she cared nothing for the etiquette of society.¹¹⁹ The fact is, as Nāderpur points out, that Forugh did not really know what she wanted from life except to try new things, and it just so happened that some of these shocked the more staid members of society.¹²⁰

Not all comments on her early work were critical. Some reviewers, such as Shojā' ol-Din Shafā, saw it as part of the general changes taking place in society; others, such as Golestān, recognized in it a potential for greatness. Elāhi feels that her first poems, particularly those in 'Asir' should be criticised on the grounds that many of her ideas, and even phrases, were simply copied from other writers.* For example, he quotes a verse from 'Bāzu' by Mohamad Ali Eslāmi Nadushāni which he thinks is very close to one in Forugh's 'Shab va havas', and other verses by the poets Fereyduṅ Tavalloli and Abu'l-Hasan Varzi which he also thinks are close to Forugh's writings. Mehdi Hamidi, while calling some of her poems 'jewels' in his book 'Daryā-ye Gohar' ('Sea of Jewels'), cannot resist also saying that she had 'taken'

*In fact the technique of elaborating a theme expressed by another poet is fairly common in Persian poetry.

the titles of many of her poems, such as 'Esyān' and 'Āyeneh Shekasteh', from him. However, one cannot take these criticisms very seriously since the majority of Forugh's work clearly comes from her own imagination and nowhere else. ¹²¹

With the exception of those traditionalists who regard all new poetry (even 'recent poetry') as going against the true spirit of Persian culture, ¹²² most critics were looking more dispassionately at Forugh's work by the time her fourth book was published. Her membership of Tehrān's literary world had given her greater academic respectability, while the social changes which had taken place in the 1950s and 1960s made her behaviour and her writing less shocking than it had been before. Rezā Barāheni, for example, suggests that even her new poems could not really be compared to those of Nimā and Shāmlu. She had her own original style 'which takes from others perhaps one line or one verse but which goes on to produce a whole new construction.' ¹²³ M. Āzād makes a similar point: "She was able to learn from others, including foreign writers, but still write independently, taking advantage of what she had learned." ¹²⁴

In the end, the greatest critic of Forugh's work was Forugh herself. She always said that she was never satisfied with her previous poems and only retained an affection for the latest one until an idea for a new one came along.

She said once in an interview: "I am 30 years old and 30 is a mature age, but still my poems are not mature. This is the worst fault of my writing."¹²⁵

As we saw in Chapter One, her death elicited many eulogies. Mohammad Hoquqi, for example, ranks Forugh among the leading poets of the mid-twentieth century on the basis of her imagery, style, social relevance, and literary success. Masud Farzād goes even further and compares Forugh favourably with Rudaki, the first really great poet of Persia and a master of all forms of verse, especially the qasideh. "If she had lived," wrote Farzād, "she would have been a second Rudaki."¹²⁶

If she had lived. But she died at such an early age that it is quite impossible to say what she might have achieved. In a few short years she had risen rapidly up the ranks of Persia's modern poets and poetesses; but we do not know whether she had reached the peak of her poetic potential or not. Consequently, it is not easy to assess her contribution even to new poetry. When, as Elāhi reminds us, there is over 1100 years of Persian literature behind us, it is by no means easy to decide even whether to use the adjective 'great' for Forugh Farrokhzād.¹²⁷

Nevertheless, my own view is that Forugh had shown enough in her writing to be put into the same category as Shāmlu, Nāderpur, and Akhavān-e Sāles as one of Irān's leading modern poets. She did not keep to any one style, but her later

poems in particular took on a style of their own, with imagery, as has been seen from the translations in this work, bordering on the brilliant. She was not a disciple of other writers, Iranian or foreign, but she had the ability to absorb the quality of their work and reflect it in her own. Finally, as a sensitive, outspoken, and socially-conscious woman of her time, she complemented other writers by adding a strong feminist element to modern Persian poetry.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. One of the best descriptions of all the various verse-forms in classical Persian poetry is found in Mo'tamen, Z.A., Tahavvol-e she'r-e Fārsi, Tehrān, 1973.
2. In most classical poetry, the two lines which make up the couplet are separated by a break.
3. For further discussion of the qasidoh, see Elwell-Sutton, L.P., A Guide to Iranian Area Study, pp. 93-4, and The Persian Metres, Appendix II, pp.243 ff; and Rypka, J., History of Iranian Literature, pp.91-5.
4. See 'Gofteh-hā'i az Forugh', an article printed in Arush, Summer 1343, reprinted in Jāvedāne-ye Forugh Farrokhzād, (henceforth Jāvedāneh), p. 172.
5. See the section on the influence of religion, below.
6. Rypka, op. cit., p.95.
7. Elwell Sutton, op. cit., p.94; Rypka, op. cit., p.95.
8. Browne, op.cit., p.224 . It should be noted here that a feature of the ghazal was often that the author would 'sign' his name at the end of it in the form of a 'takhallos'; see Rypka, op. cit., p.99.
9. Rypka, op. cit., p.82
10. Browne, op. cit., pp.271-313; also American Universities, Area Handbook for Iran, p. 139.
11. See extracts from Forugh's letters to Ebrāhim Golestān in Jāvedāneh, p. 17.
12. Bicknell, Herman, Hafiz of Shiraz. Selections from his Poems, translated from the Persian, pp.53-4.
13. See Mo'tamen, op. cit., pp. 42-3.
14. Rypka, op. cit., p.96.
15. Rypka, op. cit., p.96, notes that the robā'i is to be found in the work of the earliest Persian poets, such as Shahid, Rudaki and Abu Shakur of Balkh.
16. See Arberry, A.J., The Rubā'iyāt of Omar Khayvām, London, 1949, for variations in translations.

17. The translations given here are those by E.H. Whinfield. Only one third of these quatrains was translated by Edward Fitzgerald. See Arberry, op. cit., pages 33, 75, 124 and 128.
18. American Universities, op. cit., p.186 and Rypka, op. cit., p. 93.
19. Mo'tamen, op. cit., pp. 105-6.
20. See Nicholson, R.A., Rumi, Poet and Mystic, London, 1900; also Browne, E.G., Literary History of Persia, Vol. 3, pp. 515 ff., and Elwell Sutton, op. cit., pp. 94-5.
21. See the articles in Ferdowsi, No. 804, Esfand 2, 1345 by Esjām Kāzemieh and Ali Akbar Kasā'ī, which are reprinted in Jāvedāneh, pp. 36 and 47.
22. Mo'tamen, op. cit., pp. 109-10.
23. The extract is from Jāmi's 'Leyli o Majnun'. The translation is mine.
24. Elwell-Sutton, L.P., The Persian Metres, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 84-5.
25. Rypka, op. cit., p. 80; Elwell-Sutton, A Guide..., p.92.
26. See Ārāsteh, R., Education and Social Awakening in Iran, p.8.
27. See Ārāsteh, op. cit., pp. 140, 153; also Browne, op. cit., pp. 311-2 for an account of fortune-telling by the verses of Hāfez.
28. Yār-Shāter, E., 'Persian Letters in the Last Fifty Years', p. 293.
29. Browne, op. cit., p.162. He mentions, of course, that it was sometimes possible to tell when a poem was written if it mentioned certain names or events.
30. See Yār-Shāter, E., 'The Modern Literary Idiom', p. 288; also Frye, R.N., Persia, p. 50.
31. American Universities, op. cit., p.190. This was also given as a reason by Professor Mohit Tabātabā'ī in my interview with him in June 1975.
32. In both Turkey and Russia literary societies were in existence, and although the purpose of most Persians in travelling to these countries was not cultural -- it was often concerned with commerce or diplomacy -- many attended meetings of these societies.

33. Frye, op. cit., p. 51; Elwell Sutton, op. cit., p.95.
34. Yar-Shater, 'Persian Letters....', loc. cit., p.305; In his interview with me, Professor Tabātabā'i particularly stressed the Dadaist groups. The 'semi-religious group' were the followers of Kasravi.
35. Browne, op. cit., pp. 162-3.
36. From my interview with Nāder Nāderpur, Tehrān, June 1975.
37. Browne, op. cit., p. 162. The reference to Ibn Khaldun's doctrine is quoted in this source.
38. I am grateful to Nāder Nāderpur for quoting this poem of Farahāni to me.
39. Again, it was Nāderpur who pointed this out.
40. Āryanpur, Y., Az Sabā ta Nimā, Vol. 2, p. 435.
41. Nuri-Alā, E., Sovar va Asbāb dar She'r-e Emruz-e Irān, pp. 110-40. This work contains many examples of new poetry.
42. Some prefer to define 'modern Persian poetry' more generally as 20th century poetry; others like to restrict it to mean only 'new poetry'. Nāderpur uses the term 'She'r-e Emruz' (Today's Poetry) to describe poems written after the 1940s.
43. See Nuri-Alā, op. cit., pp. 110-40; Yār-Shāter, 'The Modern ...' loc. cit., pp. 300-2; Hoquqi, M., She'r-e Now az Āghāz ta Emruz, pp.6 ff.
44. See Tikku, G., 'Furugh-i Farrukhsād: A New Direction in Persian Poetry', p. 150.
45. Elwell-Sutton, A Guide..., p. 96.
46. See my husband's book, Bharier, J., Economic Development in Iran, 1900-1970, Chapter 1 and p. 84.
47. Yār-Shāter, 'Persian letters ...', loc. cit., pp. 298-9.
48. Based on Nāderpur's comments in our interview.
49. Shafaq, S.R., 'Patriotic Poetry in Modern Iran', pp. 425-6.
50. See Jāvedāneh, p. 164. This is the same source as Note 4.
51. Nimā-Yushij, Ta'ārif va Tabsereh, p. 15; see also Tikku, loc. cit., p. 151.

- 52. Yār-Shāter, 'The Modern...', loc. cit., pp. 292-3.
- 53. Nimā-Yushij, op. cit., pp. 35-6.
- 54. Ibid., p. 35.
- 55. Rowshangar, M., Az Nimā tā Ba'd, p. 3. Forugh had marked this poem with an asterisk when she drew up the provisional contents for the book in her own handwriting.
- 56. A footnote to this poem explains that the title, 'Rirā', has the same rhythm as the name Nimā and in the Tabari dialect of Mazandārān is a woman's name.
- 57. See Jāvedāneh, pp. 163ff.
- 58. Farrokhzād, F., Bargozide-ve Ashār-e Forugh Farrokhzād, pp. 7-8.
- 59. See the article by Janet Lazarian, 'Pillar of New Poetry', in Tehran Journal, May 30, 1972.
- 60. This poem appears in Rowshangar, op. cit., pp. 42-50. and was chosen by Forugh for this collection.
- 61. Based on my interview with Nader Nāderpur; See also Yār-Shāter, 'The Modern ...', loc. cit., p. 306.
- 62. Ibid., p. 299.
- 63. This is the view of Parvin Bāmdād, expressed in an interview with me. See also Yār-Shāter, 'The Modern ...', loc. cit., p. 299.
- 64. See Rowshangar, op. cit., pp. 3-4, and also article by 'P.L.' in Sepid o Siāh, No. 751, Bahman 24, 1346 which is reprinted in Jāvedāneh, p. 191.
- 65. Rowshangar, op. cit., pp. 339 ff. Also the introduction to this collection. It is the content of this poem, I feel, that Forugh was attracted to.
- 66. Yār-Shāter, 'The Modern ...', loc. cit., p. 299 and my own interview with Mehdi Akhavān-e Sāles in Tehrān in June 1975.
- 67. Jāvedāneh, p. 193. See Note 64.
- 68. Ibid., p. 193.

69. Ibid., p. 196. Also various interviews in Tehrān. It should be noted that in my interview with Ebrāhīm Golestān, he strongly denied that he had been a major influence in her life. He said that Forugh possessed all the talent. However, most other observers saw his assistance as helping Forugh to settle down in her life and her work.
70. See extract from interview with S. Elāhi in Sepid o Siāh, No. 701, Esfand 5, 1345, reprinted in Jāvedāneh, p. 114; The information in this section about foreign writers is taken from Thorlby, A., (ed.), The Penguin Companion to Literature, 2, European Literature.
71. See article by Abdol Ali Dastgheyb in Khusheh, No. 51, Bahman 22, 1346, reprinted in Jāvedāneh, p. 181.
72. See article by M. Āzād in Ferdowsi, No. 849, Esfand 8, 1346, reprinted in Jāvedāneh, p. 260.
73. See relevant sections in Thorlby, op. cit.
74. Jāvedāneh, pp. 260-1; same source as Note 72.
75. Ibid., pp. 260-1.
76. See relevant section in Thorlby, op. cit.
77. The Layman's Parallel Bible, 1973, pp. 1456-8.
78. Ibid., p. 1934.
79. Dawood, N.J., The Koran, p. 110, (translation).
80. Ibid., pp. 239-40.
81. See also Tikku, loc. cit., p. 170.
82. Farrokhzād, F., Esyān, pp. 19-20.
83. Ibid., p. 34.
84. Tikku, loc. cit., p. 154.
85. Farrokhzād, F., Tavallodi Digar, pp. 93 ff.
86. See also the translation by Kamāl Fahim in Kayhan International, February 13, 1974. Fahim's article is called 'Forugh Farrokhzād: From Rebellion to Social Love'.
87. Jāvedāneh, p. 195; same source as Note 64.
88. Ibid., p. 172.

89. Ibid., p. 164.
90. Ibid., p. 164 ff.
91. Ibid., pp. 164 ff.
92. Based on a recording by Forugh which is presented on Caspian cassette tape no. 826 issued in Tehrān.
93. Jāvedāneh, p. 164.
94. Farrokhzād, F., Tavallodi Digar, pp. 143 ff.
95. Jāvedāneh, p. 167.
96. Āryanpur, Y., op. cit., p. 480. Āryanpur confirms Forugh's view of Shahriār. He also says that some believe that Shahriār was influenced by Nimā's work, particularly in his poems 'Afsāneh-ye Shab' and 'Do Mor-e Beheshti'.
97. Shāhin, D., Rāhān-e She'r-e Emruz, p. 185.
98. See Yār-Shāter, 'The Modern', loc. cit., pp. 300-1 for more information on Ahmadi.
99. See letters from Forugh to Ahmad Rezā Ahmadi which originally appeared in Daftarhā'i Zamāneh, No. 1, Bahman 1346 and are reprinted in Jāvedāneh, p. 270.
100. Article by M. Āzād in Jāvedāneh, p. 268.
101. Article by S. Elāhi in Sepid o Siāh, Bahman 29, 1345, reprinted in Jāvedāneh, p. 74.
102. See the introduction to Farrokhzād, F., Asir.
103. Nuri-Alā, op. cit., pp. 110-40.
104. Article by Yadollāh Royāyi, 'Form dar She'r-e Forugh Farrokhzād', in Jāvedāneh, p. 245.
105. Article by Esmā'il Nuri-Alā in Ferdowsi, No. 848, Esfand 1, 1346, reprinted in Jāvedāneh, p. 226.
106. Jāvedāneh, pp. 164 ff. Same source as Note 4.
107. Ibid., pp. 196-7. See Note 64.
108. Ibid., p. 47. Same source as Note 21.
109. Ibid., p. 114. Same source as Note 70.

110. Ibid., pp. 164 ff. Same source as Note 4.
111. Same source as Note 108.
112. Elwell-Sutton, The Persian Metres, p. 191.
113. Nuri-Alā, op. cit., pp. 342-3.
114. Farrukhzād, F., Tavallodi Digar, pp. 132 ff.
115. Interview with Nāder Nāderpur in Tehrān, June 1975.
116. Nuri-Alā, op. cit., pp. 204-5.
117. Interviews with Parvin Bāmdād and Professor Mohit Tabtabā'i in Tehrān, June 1975
118. Jāvedāneh, p. 37.
119. Ibid., pp. 177 ff.
120. Interview with Nāderpur.
121. See Jāvedāneh, pp. 106 ff.
122. See, for example, the article by Professor Amiri Firuzkuhi in Yaghmā, No. 304, Dey 1352, pp. 597 ff.
123. Barāheni, R., Telā dar Mes, p. 39.
124. Jāvedāneh, p. 261.
125. Ibid., p. 24.
126. Ibid., pp. 194-5. Also Hoquqi, Mohammad, She'r-e Now az Āghāz tā Enruz, Tehrān, 1974, pp. 54-9.
127. Jāvedāneh, p. 38.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN ASSESSMENT OF FORUGH,

FEMINIST AND POETESS.

CHAPTER FOURAN ASSESSMENT OF FORUGH, FEMINISTAND POETESS

Forugh's untimely death at the age of 32 left many questions unanswered, questions which will never be fully resolved. I have traced her life story, read her work as well as her own and other's comments on it, spoken to many people who knew her personally, and even listened to some of her own thoughts and poetry recitals which were recorded before her death. Nevertheless, it is clearly not possible to know what was actually in Forugh's mind during different periods of her life. So many things which are difficult to explain in retrospect may have been easy to understand at the actual time they happened, particularly if Forugh had been asked her reasons for the way she acted or the words she wrote. There is a danger that those who try to analyse Forugh will be biased by the many rapid changes which have occurred in Persian society since the year she died. My findings, as presented in the first three chapters of this thesis, will hopefully help readers to obtain a balanced picture of her life and her background, her personal and social problems, and the value of her contributions to Persian literature and social advancement for Persian women.

Even so, after all my research, I do not think it is possible to judge what her future might have been had she lived. Perhaps this is inevitable. It will be recalled that Forugh ended her

now famous poem 'Ey Marz-e Porgohar' with the wish that when she died an elegy with a nonsensical rhyme would be written about her (see Chapter Three). She possibly foresaw that she would remain as much or more of an enigma after her death as she had been before it.

Although Forugh eventually became both popular and influential in poetry and feminism in Irān, there is no evidence that she sought either popularity or influence in either field. One is left to ask how anyone so enigmatic and unsure of what she wanted out of life could have achieved what she did.

The Way She Lived

The answer must lie partly in the way that she lived her life. She came from a secluded, middle-class, Tehrān family -- the type of family in which daughters grew up to be mothers, and social contact beyond the confines of the extended family was extremely limited. She went to a local school, where she did not achieve anything better than average results, and having left school at 15, she went to study dressmaking for a while, a fairly conventional occupation for girls who left school before the twelfth form.

The breakup of her parent's marriage, together with her growing interest in boys, forced her into a marriage which, if not 'arranged', was certainly rushed. She moved with her husband to a house in the provinces and bore him a son. To all

intents and purposes she had been locked in to a fairly typical life for a girl of her background. Although we can now look back (as I have done in Chapter One) at various influences of her childhood upbringing on her later adult life, there was no clear indication to her family or friends during this period of what she was to become.

Yet she found the way to escape from this conventional existence. The key was poetry and all she needed to be able to turn it was her determination to live an independent life. Such determination to break away from tradition is seen not only in the emerging style of her poetry but also in its content, which rarely refers to her background or such obvious poetic subjects as parental love, etc. Even so, life was not easy for Forugh. She and her husband undoubtedly loved each other at first, but tradition and society forced him to oppose her independent actions and words. Had they been married today, the outcome might well have been very different. Having left her husband, Forugh then had to put up with the taunts of those who considered her to be a social outcast, and battle to earn an income in an environment in which very few women had jobs which were not menial.

Her great good fortune in meeting Ebrāhīm Golestān opened new doors for her. She could engage professionally in a variety of cultural activities, such as film-making, and she could begin to meet socially a much wider range of people. Furthermore, by speaking her mind and expressing her feelings freely and openly, both in her poetry and in her everyday conversations,

she attracted love, hate, envy, or censure in almost every-one she met, as well as in others who had only heard about her.

Nevertheless, the total number of people who knew her, or knew of her, while she was alive, was relatively small, and there was very little indication, except from a small circle of literary figures, that she was held in high esteem as a contributor to Irān's literature. The vast majority of literate Persians never heard of Forugh, and never read her poetry, until after her death.

Her death at a young age, under strange circumstances, aroused a great deal of public interest, particularly when her vagabond reputation was suddenly elevated at the time of her funeral by the government, the press and the Persian literary world to that of a heroine.

People began to wonder how a girl, so obviously doomed to one type of existence, had managed to break free; how a girl so young had, out of sheer interest, immersed herself in books and written publishable poetry; how a young woman who was neither beautiful nor well-dressed had attracted the attention of many well-connected men; and how criticism of her life and work could suddenly change into praise.

More than that, people became puzzled with the fact that Forugh herself had gained neither wealth nor psychological satisfaction out of her writing and other activities. At the time of her death she was still dressing in the simplest style

and was financially supported by Golestān. Moreover, from her poem 'Imān Beyāvarim' we can gather that she still felt she was a lonely woman. The whole story of her life, as it gradually emerged, was quite different from either that of the ordinary, middle-class Tehrāni girl or that of the 'rags-to-riches' heroine imagined by the masses.

The Time in which She Lived

Another part of the answer to the question lies in the time in which Forugh lived and died. She provided a strong and timely stimulus to the many movements which were trying to advance the status of women in Irān. These movements comprised, on the one hand, literary figures such as Parvin E'tesāmi, who approached women's social problems in a genteel way as part of her production of classical-type poetry, and on the other hand, women who pressed the case for feminism through their organizations, their positions or their achievements, again by and large in restrained fashion.

Forugh differed from these feminists. Not only did she come from a much more restricted background than most of them, but she appeared to have no desire for political influence or personal position. Indeed, she despised women who worked for these 'benefits'. More important, she did not hide behind the veil of false pretense or flowery language. She expressed her views that sex discrimination did not apply to art or literature,

and therefore should not apply in ordinary life, in clear, frank terms, using everyday language and expressing her feelings openly. Whereas, for example, Parvin used various imagery to make a point, Forugh makes this point by talking about herself.

For this reason, it has often been suggested that Forugh was more interested in her own problems than in those of Iranian women in general. Yet this in itself had a tremendous impact simply because it led to a sympathetic reaction among a growing number of young women during the 1950s and 1960s who could relate their problems to hers. These young women needed a heroine with whom they could identify, and Forugh provided them with one.

Although there had been a number of changes in the law to provide a stronger legal basis for greater freedom of action by women, it was not until the 1960s that significant progress was made. This culminated in the Family Protection Law of 1967, the year of Forugh's death. Although these two events are not obviously linked, one can appreciate how people perceived that the problems which had faced Forugh throughout her life as a result of law and tradition underlined the necessity for changes in the law.

Her Literary Contribution

The final part of the answer lies in Forugh's literary contribution. In her short life, she was a woman in a hurry. She wanted to have new experiences and to try new vehicles for

her talents, even though she remained unsure of what she really wanted out of life. In her poetry, as I have shown in this thesis, she wanted to experiment. Most writers and artists pass through stages of development before they achieve a stable and characteristic manner of expression. Forugh, in her brief career, used many styles. To her, poetry was like music learned by ear. She did not have any formal training in the rules of metre or rhyme, but she showed on occasion that she could write as if she had spent many years learning the classical rules. In her later phase, she broadened and deepened the content of her themes. Some of her poems are outstanding and are likely to be long remembered for their deep feeling, their vivid expression and their melodious beauty. It cannot be said, however, that Forugh had acquired a definite literary identity before her premature and tragic death.

Some try to classify her as one of the leading writers of new poetry, following closely in the footsteps of Nimā Yushij. We may also include her among the 'Mystic Poets' or those who are more concerned with content than with form. Yet she also proved that she could write with the strict classical rhyme and structure and rhythm, even though the content was new. Again, as in her life and her impact on feminism, she falls into a class of her own. It is this which has contributed to her reputation.

Conclusion

No-one knows whether Forugh, had she lived, could have

climbed higher peaks in either poetry or other cultural activities, or whether her ideas and imagination were nearly burned out. Nor can we know whether she would have continued her gradual broadening of knowledge which had been encouraged by Ebrāhim Golestān, or even whether she would have married again.

In so many ways Forugh was unique. It is because of this uniqueness — her enigmatic, erratic, brave, imaginative, and uncertain approach to her life and work — that Forugh will remain an important figure in Persia's recent history and culture.

THE END

APPENDIX 1'Ay Vāy Mādaram'

by

Mohamed Hoseyn Shahriār

(translated by Mehri Bharier)

ای وای مادرم

آهسته باز از بغل پله‌ها گذشت
 در فکر آتش و سبزی بیمار خویش بود
 اما گرفته دور و برش هاله سیاه
 او مرده است و باز پرستار حال ماست
 در زندگی ما همه جا و دل میخورد
 هر کنج خانه صحنه‌ای از داستان اوست
 در ختم خویش هم بسز کار خویش بود
 بیچاره مادرم

*

وزپی هنوز قافله‌های ددای خیر
این مادر از چنان پدری، یادگار بود
تنها نه مادر من و درماندگان خیل
او یک چراغ روشن ایل : قبیله بود
خاموش شد در بیغ

نه او نمرده می‌شنوم من صدای او
با بیچه‌ها هنوز سرو کله می‌رند
ناهیده لال شو
بیژن برو کنار
کفگیر بی صدا
دارد برای ناخوش خود آتش می‌پزد.

او مرد و در کنار پدر زیر خاک رفت
اقوامش آمدند بی سر سلامتی
یک ختم هم گرفته شد و پر بدک نبود
بسیار تسلیمت که بماعرته داشتند
لطف شما زیاد
امان‌دای قلب بگوشم همیشه گفت :
این حرفها برای تو مادر نمیشود

پس این که بود ؟
دیشب لحاف رد شده بر روی من کشید
لیوان آب از بفل من کنار زد
در نصفه‌های شب
یک خواب سهمناک و پریدم بحال تب
نزدیکهای صبح
او باز زیر پای من اینجا نشسته بود
آهسته با خدا
راز و نیاز داشت
نه ، او نمرده است

نه او نمرده است که من زنده‌ام هنوز
او زنده است در غم و شمر و خیال من
میراث شاعرانه من هر چه هست از اوست
کانون مهر و ماه مگر میشود خاموش
آن شیرزن بمیرد ؟ او شهریار زاد
و هرگز نمیرد آنکه دلش زنده شد به شق ؟

هر روز می‌گذشت از این زیر پله‌ها
آهسته تا بهم نزند خواب نازم
امروز هم گذشت
در بازو بسته شد
با پشت خم از این بفل کوچه می‌رود
چادر نماز فلکی اندخته بسر
کنش چروک خورده و جوراب وصله‌دار
او فکر بچه‌هاست
هر جاشده هویج هم امروز می‌خورد
بیچاره پیرزن همه برف است کوچه‌ها

او از میان کلفت و نوکر ز شهر خویش
آمد بجستوی من و سر نوشت من
آمد چهار طفل دگر هم بزرگ کرد
آمد که بیت نفت گرفته بزیر بال
هر شب در آید از در یک خانه فقیر
روشن کند چراغ یکی عشق نیمه‌جان

او را گذشته‌ایست ، سزاوار احترام :
تبریز ما ، بدو در نمای قدیم شهر
در «باغ پیشه» خانه مردی است با خدا
هر صحن و هر سراچه یکی داد گستری است
اینجا بداد ناله مظلوم می‌رسند
اینجا کفیل خرج موکل بود و کیل
مزد و در آمدش همه صرف زفاه خلق
در ، باز و سفره پهن
بر سفره اش چه گرسنه‌ها سیر میشوند
یک زن مدیر گردش این چرخ دستگاه
او مادر من است.

انصاف میدهم که پدر را مرد بود
با آن همه در آمد سرشار از حلال
روزی که مرد روزی یکسال خود نداشت
اما قطارهای پراز زاد آخرت

اما خلاص میشود از سر نوشت، من
مادر بخواب، خوش
منزل مبارکت .

آینده بود وقصه بیمادری من
ناگاه ضجه‌ئی که بهم زد سکوت مرک
من میدویدم از وسط قبرها برون
از بود و سربتاله بر آورده از منگ
خود را بضمف از پی من باز میکشید
دیوانه‌ور میده دویدم بایستگاه
خود را فشرده خزیدم میان جمع
ترسان ز پشت شیشه در ؛ آخرین نگاه
باز آن سفید پوش و همان کوشش و تلاش
چشمان نیمه باز :
از من جدا مشو .

می‌آمدم و کله‌ی من گیج و منگ بود
انگار جیوه در دل من آب میکنند
پیچیده صحنه‌های زمین و زمان بهم
خاموش و خوفناک همه میگوییختند
میگشت آسمان که بگوید بمنز من
دنیا به پیش چشم گهنگار من سیاه
وزهر شکاف رخنه ماشین زریوباد
یک ناله‌ی ضعیف هم از پی دوان دوان
می‌آمد و بمنز من آهسته میخیلید :
تنها شدی پسر .

باز آمد بخانه چه حالی ؛ نگفتمی
دیدم نشسته مثل همیشه کنار حوض
پراهن پلید مرا باز شسته بود
انگار خنده کرد ولی دلشکسته بود :
بردی مرا بخاک سپری و آمدی ؟
تنها نمیگذارمت ای بینوا پسر
میخواستم بخنده در آیم ز اشتباه
اما خیال بود
ای وای مادرم !

او با ترانه‌های محلی که میسرود
باقصه‌های دلکش و زیبا که یادداشت
از عهد گاهواره که بندش کشید و بست
اعصاب من بسازد و نواکوک کرده بود
از شعر و نغمه در دل و جانم بخنده کاشت
وانگه باشکهای خود آن کشته آب داد
لر زید و برق زد بمن آن اهتزاز روح
وز اهتزاز روح گرفتم هوای ناز
تاساختم برای خود از عشق عالمی .

او پنجسال کرد پرستاری مریض
در اشک و خون نشست و پسرها نجات داد
اما پسر چه کرد برای تو ؟ هیچ هیچ
تنها مریضخانه با امید دیگران
بگروز هم خبر ؛ که بیا او تمام کرد

در راه تم بهر چه گذشتم عبوس بود
پیچیده کوه و فحش بمن داد و دور شد
صحرا همه خطوط کج و کوله و سیاه
طوبار سر نوشت و خبرهای تپه‌نشین
در پاچه هم بحال من از دور میگریست
تنها طواف دور ضریح و یکی نماز
یک اشک هم بسوروی «باسین» من چکید
مادر بخاک رفت .

آنشب پدر بخواب من آمد . صدایش کرد
او هم جواب داد
یک دودهم گرفت بدور چراغ ماه
معلوم شد که مادری از دست رفتنی است
اما پدر بفرقه‌ی باغی نشسته است
شاید که جان او به جهان بلند بزد
آنجا که زندگی، ستم و درد ورنج نیست
این هم پسر که بدرقه‌اش میکند بگور
یک قطره اشک ؛ مزد همه زجرهای او

Quietly, again she passed beside the stairs.

She was thinking of her patient's hot soup,

But she was shrouded by a black mist.

She is dead but is still taking care of us

In our lives she moves everywhere.

Each corner of the house is a scene of her story;

Even in the mourning for her she was at work,

My poor mother.

Every day she passed under these stairs,

Quietly so she would not disturb my sweet sleep.

Today has passed like any other;

The door opened and closed.

With hunched back she walks on this side of the street,

Her grey-coloured chadur over her head;

Wrinkled shoes and darned stockings.

She is thinking about her children.

Wherever she is she will buy carrots today.

Poor old lady, the streets are full of snow.

She left her men and maidservants in her town

To help me and my future.

She came and brought up another four children.

She came to carry a can of kerosene under her arm.

Every night she comes out of a poor man's house

To light the lamp of a half-dead love.

She had a past worthy of respect.

Our Tabriz! In the panorama of the old town,

In Bāgh-e Bisheh is the house of a religious man,

Where every open space and every room is a court of justice,

Here they listen to the complaints of the meek;
Here the lawyer stands bail for his clients;
His salary and earnings are all spent on the comfort
of others.

The door is always open, his table laid.
How many hungry people are fed at his table?
One woman is responsible for running this place.
She is my mother.

I agree that my father was a fine man
And all his money was obtained honestly.
For on the day he died, he had not enough savings
to last for one year,
But he had caravan loads of savings for the world to come,
And behind him filed many mourners.
This mother was a reminder of that father,
Not only a mother to me and to an army of the poor,
But also a shining light for the (whole) clan and tribe.
Sadly that light no longer shines.

No, she is not dead. I can hear her voice.
She is still telling off the children:

'Be quiet, Nāhid!'

'Bijan, get out of my way!'

With a quiet ladle
She cooks soup for her sick boy.

She died and she was buried next to my father.
Her family came to pay their respects.

A memorial service was held; it wasn't too bad.

Many words of sympathy were spoken.

Thank you very much.

But my heart told my ears that such words

would not replace my mother.

So who was it

That last night pulled the blanket over me when it

had slipped off?

Who took away the glass of water from beside me

In the middle of the night?

After a bad nightmare I woke up with a fever;

Towards morning she was still sitting on the bed,

Lovingly talking with God.

No, she is not dead.

No, she is not dead if I am still alive.

She is alive in my sadness, in my poetry and in my thoughts.

Whatever my poetical inheritance, it is from her.

Can kindness and moon ever be darkened?

Can that brave woman die? She gave birth to Shahriār;

'No person dies whose heart beats with love'.*

She, with her singing of folk songs,

With those lovable and beautiful stories from memory,

Soothed my nerves with music and song

From the time she pulled and knotted the rope of the cradle.

She planted poems and songs in my heart and soul

with her laughter,

* A line from the poetry of Hāfez.

And then she watered them with her tears;
 That vibrant spirit throbbed and electrified me.
 From that spiritual vibration I gained a sense of entrancement
 Until I made myself a world of love.
 She nursed a sick person for five years;
 With bitter tears she sat and saved her son.
 But what did the son do for you? Nothing! Not a thing!
 Only (put her) in hospital, in the trust of others.
 And one day came the word to pass on; she has died.
 On the way to Qom,* everything I passed was austere.
 The mountains turned and swore at me and passed on.
 The whole desert was filled with dark, unshapely lines;
 A scroll of fate and dire news.
 The salt lake, too, wept for me from a distance.
 With one walk around the tomb, one prayer for the dead,
 And one tear which fell when the chapter 'Yasin' was read,**
 Mother was buried.
 That night my father came to my dreams and called her.
 She also answered.
 Smoke covered the light of the moon;
 It showed that mother had to die.
 But father was sitting in the summerhouse in the garden;
 Perhaps he took her soul to the other world,
 That place where there is no pain, horror or misery.
 Here is the son who escorts her to her grave,
 One teardrop is (all he gives in) payment for all her sufferings.

*A city 150 km south of Tehrān where the shrine of Fāte-me-ye Ma'sumeh (sister of the Emām Rezā) is located. The main cemeteries for the Tehrān area are also near Qom.

** The 36th chapter of the Qor'ān, read at times of adversity and bereavement.

But she will be saved from my destiny.

Mother, sleep happily.

Congratulations on your new home!

It was the future, and the story of me without my mother.

Suddenly there was a cry which broke the silence of death.

I ran out from among the tombstones.

It was she! Lamenting, she had raised her head from the grave.

She was dragging herself weakly behind me.

Like a madman I shied away and ran towards the bus-stop.

I squeezed myself into the crowd,

Frightened. From behind the door-pane a last look.

Again that white dress, the same effort and toil,

Her eyes half-open:

'Don't leave me!'

We returned, and my head was spinning and confused;

Inside me was like boiling mercury.

The two spheres of space and time were intertwined,

And both were running away, silent and frightened.

The sky was turning and about to fall on my head;

The world was black in front of my guilty eyes.

And from every crack and hole in the bus, the rush of the wind

Ran in and in with its weak moan

And crept slowly into my head.

Now, son, you are alone.

How I returned to the house is impossible to say.

I saw her sitting beside the pool as usual;

She had washed my dirty shirt again.

She seemed to smile but she was heartbroken.

'You took me and buried me and returned;

I wont leave you alone, my helpless son.'

I wanted to laugh in the belief I had made a mistake,

But it was in the mind.

Alas, my dear mother!'

APPENDIX 2

'Be-Ali Goft Mādaresh Ruzi'

by

Forugh Farrokhzād

(translated by Mehri Bharier)

انگار تو آب، گوهر شب چراغ میرفت
انگار که دختر کوچیکه شاپریون
تو به کجاوه بلور

به سیر باغ و راغ میرفت
دور و ورش گل ریزون
بالای سرش نور بارون
شاید که از طایفه جز و پری بود ماهیه
شاید که از اون ماهیای ددری بود ماهیه
شاید که به خیال تند سرسری بود ماهیه
هر چی که بود
هر کی که بود

علی کوچیکه
محو تماشاش شده بود
واله شیداش شده بود

همچی که دس برد که به اون

رنگ روون

نور جوون

نقره نشون

دس بز نه

برق زدو بارون زد و آب سیا شد

شیکم زمین زیر بن ماهی و ا شد

دسه گلا دور شدن و دود شدن

شمشای نور سوختن و نابود شدن

باز مٹ هر شب رو سر علی کوچیکه

دسمال آسمون پر از گلابی

نه چشمه ای نه ماهی نه خوابی

علی کوچیکه

علی بونه گیز

نصف شب از خواب پرید

چشماشو هی فالید با دس

سه چار تا خمیازه کشید

پا شد نشس

چی دیدد بود؟

چی دیده بود؟

خواب یه ماهی دیده بود

یه ماهی، انگار که یه کپه دو زاری

انگار که یه طاقه حریر

با حاشیه منجوق کاری

انگار که رو بر گ گل لال عباسی

خامه دوزیش کرده بودن

قایم موشک بازی میکردن تو چشاش

دوتا نگین گرد صاف الماسی

همچی یواش

همچی یواش

خودشو رو آب دراز میکرد

که بادبزن فرنگیاش

صورت آ بو ناز میکرد

بوی تنش، بوی کتابچه های نو

بوی یه صفر گنده و پهلوش یه دو

بوی شبای عید و آشپز خونه و نذری پزون

شمردن ستاره ها، تو رخت خواب. رو پشت بون

ریختن بارون رو آجر فرش حیاط

بوی لواشك، بوی شو کولات

باد توی باد گیرا نفس نفس میزد
 زلفای بیدو میکشید
 از روی لنگای دراز گل آغا
 چادر نماز کودریشو پس میزد

رو بند رخت

پیر من زیر او عرق گیرا
 دس میکشیدن به تن همدیگه و حالی بحالی میشدن
 انار که از فکر ای بد
 هی پر و خالی میشدن

سیر سیر کا

سازارو کوک کرده بودن و ساز میزدن
 همچی که باد آروم میشد
 قور باغه‌ها از ته پاتچه زیر آواز میزدن
 شب مٹ هر شب بودن و چن شب پیش و شبهای دیگه
 امو علی
 تو نخ یه دنیای دیگه

علی کوچیکه

سحر شده بود

قره نابش رو میخواست
 ماهی خوابش رو میخواست
 راه آب بود و قرقر آب
 علی کوچیکه و حوض پر آب

علی کوچیکه

علی کوچیکه

نکنه توجات وول بخوری

حرفای ننه قمر خانم

یادت بره گول بخوری

تو خواب، اگه ماهی دیدی خیر باشه

خواب کجا حوض پر از آب کجا

کازی نکنی که اسمتو

توی کتابا بنویسن

سیا کنن طلسمتو

آب مٹ خواب نیس که آدم

از این سرش فرو بره

از اون سرش بیرون بیاد

تو چار راهاش رقت خطر

صدای سوت سوتک پاسون بیاد

شکر خدا پات روز زمین محکمه

کور و کچل نیسی علی، سلامتی! چی چیت کمه

میتونی بری شابدو العظیم

ماشین دودی سوار بشی

قد بکشی، خال بکوبی، جاهل پا منار بشی

حیفه آدم اینهمه چیزای قشنگو نبینه

الاکلنگ سوار نشه

شهر فرنگو نبینه

فصل، حالا فصل گوجه و سیب و خیار و بستنی

چن روز دیگه، تو تکیه، سینه زنیس

ای علی ای علی دیوونه

تخت فزری بهتره، یا تخته مرده شور خونه؟

گیرم تو هم خودتو به آب شور زدی
 رفتی ز اون کولی خانومو به تور زدی
 ماهی چیه؟ ماهی که ایمون نمیشه، نون نمیشه
 اون به وجب پوست تنش واسه فاطی تنبون نمیشه
 دس که به ماهی بزنی
 از سرتا پات بو میگیره
 بوت تو دماغا میپیچه
 دنیا ازت رو میگیره
 بگیر بخواب، بگیر بخواب
 که کار باطل نکنی
 با فکرای صدتا یه غاز
 حل مسائل نکنی

سرتو بذار رونا ز بالش، بذار بهم بیاد چشت
 قاچ زینو محکم چنگ بزنی که اسب سواری
 پیشکشت.

حوصله آب دیگه داشت سرمیرفت
 خودشو میریخت تو پاشوره، در میرفت
 انگار میخواست تو تار یکی
 داد بکشه: «آهای زکی!»
 این حرفا، حرف اون کسو نیس که اگه
 یه بار تو عمرشون زد و یه خواب دیدن
 خواب پیاز و ترشی و دوغ و چلو کباب دیدن
 ماهی چیکار به کار یه خیک شیکم تغار داره
 ماهی که سهله. سگشم
 از این تغارا عار داره
 ماهی تو آب میچرخه و ستاره دس چین میکنه
 اونوخ به خواب هر کی رفت
 خوابشو از ستاره سنگین مپکنه

میرتش، میرتش
 از توی این دنیای دلمرده چار دیوار یا
 نق نق نحس ساعت، خستگیا، بیکاری
 دنیای آش رشته و وراجی و شلختگی
 درد قولنج و درد پر خوردن و درد اختگی
 دنیای بشکن زدن و لوس بازی
 عروس دوماذ بازی و ناموس بازی
 دنیای هی خیابونارو الکی گز کردن
 از عربی خوندن یه لچک بسر حظ کردن
 دنیای صبح سحرا

تو تو پخنه

تو پاشای دار زدن

نصف شب

رو قصه آقا بالاخان زار زدن

دنیائی که هر وخت خداهش

تو کوچدهاش پا میداره

یه دسه خاله خانجی از عقب سرش

یه دسه قداره کش از جلوش میاد

دنیائی که هر جا میری

صدای رادیوش میاد

میرتش، میرتش، از توی این همبونه کرم و کثافت

و مرم

به آبیای پاک و صاف آسمون میرتش

به سادگی کهکشون میرتش.

ای علی، من بچه دریا، تقسم پا که، علی
 دریا همونجاس که همونجا آخر خاکه، علی
 هر کی که دریارو به عدرش ندیده
 از زندگیش چی فهمیده؟

خسته شدم، حالم بهم خورده از این بوی لجن
 انقده پا بپا نکن که دو تایی
 تا خرخره فرو بریم توی لجن
 پریا، و گر نه ای علی کوچیکه
 هجبور میشم بهت بگم ز، تو، نه من.»

آب یهو بالا اومد و هلن کرد و تو کشید
 انگار که آب چفتشو جست و تو خودش فرو کشید
 دایره های نقره ای
 توی خودشون

چرخیدن و چرخیدن و خسته شدن
 موجا کشاله کردن و از سر نو
 به زنجیرای ته حوض بسته شدن
 قل قل قل تالاپ تالاپ
 قل قل قل تالاپ تالاپ

چرخ میزدن رو سطح آب
 تو تاریکی، چند تا حباب

«علی کجاس؟»

«تو باغچه»

«چی میچینه؟»

«آلوچه.»

آلوچه باغ بالا

جرئت داری؟ بسم الله.

آب، از سر یه شاپرک گذشته بود و داشت حالا
 فروش میداد

علی کوچیکه

نشسته بود کنار حوض

حرفای آبو گوش میداد

انگار که از اون ته تهها

از پشت گلکاری نورا، یه کسی صداش میزد

آه میکشید

دس عرق کرده و سردش رو یواش به پاش میزد

انگار میگفت: «تک دو سه

نپریدی؟ هه هه هه

من توی اون تاریکیای ته آبم بخدا

حرفمو باور کن، علی

ماهی خوابم بخدا

دادم تمام سرسرا رو آب و جارو بکنن

پرده های مروازی رو

این رو و آن رو بکنن

به نو کران با وفام سپردم

که جاوه بلورم آوردم

سه چار تا منزل که از اینجا دور بشیم

به سیره زارای همیشه سبز دریا میرسیم

به گله های کف که چوپون ندارن

به دالونای نور که پایون ندارن

به قصرای صدف که پایون ندارن

یادت باشه از سر راه

هفت هشت تا دونه مروازی

جمع کنی که بعد باهاشون تو بیکاری

یه قل دو قل بازی کنیم

'Little Ali, spoilt Ali,
 Woke up in the middle of the night,
 Rubbed his eyes with his hands,
 Yawned three or four times,
 Sat up.

What did he see? What did he see?
 A dream about a fish,
 A fish shining like a heap of two-rial pieces,
 Just like a piece of chiffon
 With a beaded hem;
 As if sewn on the petal of a tulip.*
 Its eyes playing hide and seek,
 Two round smooth brilliant diamonds,
 Slowly, slowly, moving across the water
 With the fan-like fins caressing its surface.

The smell of his body;
 The smell of new notebooks;
 The smell of a big zero and a 2 beside it;
 The smell of New Year's Eves; the kitchen and
 cooking for charity;
 In bed, counting the stars, on the roof;
 Rain pattering on the brick tiles in the yard;
 The smell of lavāshak,** the smell of chocolate.

* The actual word used by Forugh is 'Marvel of Peru'.
 **thin cakes of dried fruit juice, eaten as a sweet.

Just like a glowing jewel afloat on water at night;
Just like the Fairy King's youngest daughter
In a crystal carriage
Going around the gardens and fields,
Blossoms pouring around her,
A halo of light over her head.
Perhaps the fish was from the family of genies and fairies;
Perhaps it was one of those fishes that always go out;
Perhaps it was a flash of imagination.
Whatever it was, Whoever it was,
Little Ali was stunned watching it.
Love-sick over it.

As soon as he put his hand out to touch
That clear colour, that new light, that silvery thing,
Lightening flashed and rain fell and the water turned black.
The bowels of the earth opened under the fish,
The flowers withered and turned to smoke,
The orbs of light burned out and were destroyed.
Again as on every night, over little Ali's head,
The cloth of sky, full of pears,
No spring, no water, no dream.

The wind in the chimney was blowing.
It was tugging the hair of the willow.
Blowing the pleated prayer-cloak off Gol-Aghā's* long legs.

* The maid-servant.

On the clothes-line, men and women's underwear
Touched each other and raised emotions,
As if they were filling and emptying
With sinful thoughts.

The crickets
Wound up their instruments and played them
As soon as the wind died down.
The frogs at the bottom of the garden started to sing.
The night was like every other night;
Like the few nights before and other nights;
But Ali was thinking about another world.

Little Ali. It was dawn.
He wanted his pure silver.
He wanted the fish of his dreams.
There was the ditch and the bubbling of the water.
Little Ali and a pool full of water.
Little Ali, Little Ali,
I hope you don't toss in your bed.
Forget what Manny Qamar Khānon told you and don't
be misled.

If you saw a fish in your dream it's a sign of good luck.
Where is the dream and where is the pool full of water?
Don't do anything which will let them put your name in books,
Which will let them blacken your future!
Water is not a dream that people can go into on one side
and come out of on the other.

At its crossroads at a time of danger
 The sound of a policeman's whistle is heard.
 Thank God your feet are on solid ground.
 You are not blind or bald, Ali.
 You are healthy. What are you short of?
 You can go to Shāh Abdol Azim,
 Ride on the steam-train,
 Become tall, get tattooed, be a brave guy in Pāmenār. *
 It's a pity that a person shouldn't see all these good things.
 Shouldn't ride a see-saw,
 Shouldn't see a peep-show.
 Seasons, now is the season for plums, apples, cucumbers
 and ice-cream,
 In a few days time, in the passion plays,** they will
 beat their chests.
 Oh Ali, Oh crazy Ali,
 Which is better, a sprung bed or a mortuary table?
 Let's pretend you did dive into the salt water;
 You went in and netted that cheeky thing.
 What is a fish? A fish cannot be a faith.
 It cannot be bread.
 Those few inches (of goldfish) won't make a pair of trousers
 for Fātemeh.
 When you touch the fish,
 You will smell from head to toe.
 Your smell will fill everyone's nose.
 The world will turn its back on you.
 Go to sleep, go to sleep,
 So that you won't do silly things.

* Street in the old part of Tehrān.

** Street plays dramatizing the religious battle between
 Emām Hoseyn (grandson of the Prophet Mohammad) and the gov-
 ernor of Iraq, in which Emām Hoseyn and his sons were slain.

Don't try to solve problems

With thoughts worth only a hundred to a penny.

Put your head on the pillow, let your eyes close.

If you can hold the pommel tight, you are not expected to ride.

The water was becoming impatient.

It spilt itself over into the feet-wash channels and

ran away,

As if it wanted to scream in the dark, 'What nonsense!'

This talk is the talk of people

Who if, for once in their life, they happened to dream,

Dreamt of onions, pickles, yogurt and Chelo Kabāb. *

What has a fish to do with a stomach as fat as a barrel?

Not only a fish, a dog would be ashamed of this barrel.

The fish swims round in the water

And catches the stars with its hands.

Then if it comes into anyone's dream

It will make the dream heavy with stars.

It will take him, take him

From inside this unhappy world of four walls,

Or from the ticking of clocks, tiredness, unemployment,

Or from the world of thick soup, gossip and slovenliness,

The pain of colic, of overeating, of being a eunuch,

The world of finger-snapping and silly games,

The play of bride and groom and pretence of chastity;

The world of aimless pacing in the streets,

Feeling happy when a young girl learns to read Arabic,

* Barbecued meat and rice -- the national dish of Iran.

The world of early mornings in Tūpkhāneh,*
 Watching a hanging;
 Crying over the story of Āqā Bālā Khān**
 In the middle of the night
 A world where if ever you step into the streets
 There are gossiping women behind you and others holding
 knives in front;
 A world in which, wherever you go, you hear radios playing;
 It's taking him, taking him,
 From down inside this sack of worms and dirt and disease
 To the clean and smooth water of the skies,
 Taking him to the simplicity of the Milky Way.
 The water passed over the head of a butterfly and
 swallowed it.
 Little Ali was sitting beside the pool
 Listening to the sound of the water
 Just as if from the very depths,
 From behind the flower-beds of light,
 Someone was calling him.
 He was sighing;
 His cold and sweating hands gently touched his legs
 As if he was saying, One Two Three! ***
 You didn't jump, Ha, Ha, Ha.
 I am in that darkness at the bottom of the water, I swear.
 Believe what I say, Ali,
 I am the fish of your dreams, I swear.

* Square in Tehrān. **An army hero who had a love-affair.
 *** A children's game.

I ordered all the hallways to be swept and washed,
All the pearly curtains to be shaken.

I told my faithful servants

And I brought my crystal carriage also:

Three or four stops from here

We shall reach the evergreen land of the sea,

The flocks of foam which have no shepherd,

The corridors of light which are never-ending,

The pearly palaces which never cease.

Remember, on your way collect seven or eight pieces
of pearl,

So that after, when you are not busy, you can play

yak-gol do-gol* with them.

Oh, Ali! I am the child of the sea.

My breath is clean, Ali.

The sea is there, there at the end of the land, Ali.

Those who have never in their life seen the sea,

What do they understand of life?

I am tired.

I am sick of the smell of this slime on the pool bottom.

Don't wait too long before the two of us

Go down into the slime up to our necks.

Jump and come. Otherwise, Oh Little Ali,

I shall be forced to say to you

That there will no longer be anything between us.

* Game played with stones

The water came up suddenly
And made a sound and pulled him inside
As if the water found its partner and took him to itself.
The silver ripples in a circle
Inside each other, went round, went round,
And became tired.
The waves took shape and started again
And became tied to the bottom of the pool,
Qol, qol, qol, tālāp, tālāp*
Going round on the surface of the water
A few bubbles in the darkness.

"Where is Ali?"

"In the garden."

"What is he picking up?"

"Plums."

The plums of the heavenly garden.

Are you brave enough?

Help yourself.'

* Sound of water.

APPENDIX 3

'Hoquq-e Zan o Mard'

by Zhāleh

(translated by Mehri Bharier)

حقوق زن و مرد

مرد اگر مجنون شود از شور عشق زن رواست
 زانکه او مردست و کارش برتر از چون و چراست
 لیک اگر اندک هوائی در سر زن راه یافت
 قتل او شرعاً هم از جایز نشد عرفاً رواست
 بر برادر، بر پدر، بر شوست رجم او از آنک'
 عشق دختر، عشق زن بر مرد تا محرم خطاست
 همسر یاران رها کن، زن برادر زن پدر
 مرد را شاید، ورش فرمان حرمت زانیاست
 لیک زن گر یک نظر بر شوهر خواهر میکند
 خون او در مذهب مردان غیرت ور هبست

کار بد ، بد باشد اما پسر زن کتر بهر مرد
زشت ، زیبا ، ناروا ، جایز ، خطا کاری ، سزااست

کار مردان را قیاس از خویشتن ای زن مکیر
در نوشتن شیر شیر و در نیستان ازدهاست^۱

ز اتحاد جان زنهای خدا گفتار نیست
بس سخنها ز اتحاد جان مردان خداست^۱

نیست زن در کار بد بی باک و خود علش
ترس شو یا باس دین یا نقش عفت یا حیاست^۲

لیک مرد از کار بد نه شرم دارد نه هراس
زانکه خود خواهیش حاکم شهوتش فرمانرواست

مرد پندارد که میل زن فزون از اوست لیک
اتهامش بی اساس و ادعایش نا بیجاست

بشنو از من جنس زن را زن شناسد مرد نه
وانچه می بندند بر زن اتهامی ناسزااست

مرد غیرت دارد و بر طبع مردان غیور
سخت باشد گرزش چون ماه نو ابرونماست

آنکه زن را «بیجه ها» یا «خانۀ ما» داده نام
چون تواند دیدگان عورت بمردی آشناست

خاص مردانست این حقایق از مذهب جدا
مذهب ما گر چه اکنون در کف زور آزماست

این کتاب آسمانی وین تو ، آخر شرم دار
این تو این آئین اسلام آنچه میگوئی کجاست؟

کسی خدا پروانه بیداد را توشیح کرد
کی پیمبر جنس زن را اینچنین بیچاره خواست

کسر محمد بود جنت را بزیر بسای زن
 هشت و با این گفته مقداری ز جنس مرد کاست
 گر پیمبر بود زترا همطراز مرد کت
 وی بسا حقها که او را داد و اکنون زیر پاست
 خود طلاق ما بدست تست اما آن طلاق
 گر ز دین، داری خیر؟ مردود ذات کبریاست
 آیت «مثنی ثلاث» ار هست و «ان خقتم» ز بی
 آیت «لن تستطیعوا» نیز فرمان خداست
 چون تواند مرد عادل زیست با زنه‌های خویش
 کاین یکی زشت است و پیر آن یک جوان و دلرباست
 آیت مثنی ثلاث از جزئی از حقهای تست
 آیت «لن تستطیعوا» نیز از حقهای ماست
 رو بدین فرمان نظر کن تا بدانی کان جواز
 تابع امری محال است از ترا عقل و دهاست

'If a man becomes smitten with love for a woman, it is
 permissible, because he is a man and his actions are
 not to be questioned;

But if even a faint desire appears in a woman's mind,
 she can be killed under customary law, even if under
 Islamic law this is not permissible.

A brother, a father, a husband can stone her, because a
 girl's love, a woman's love, for a strange man is wrong.

Apart from wives of friends, (seeing) a sister-in-law or a step-mother is allowed to men, even if forbidden by the prophets;

But if a wife looks just once at her brother-in-law, her blood may be shed in the name of the religion of the jealous men.

Wrongdoing is wrong, but only for women, because for men ugly is beautiful, illegal is legal, sin is right.

O women, do not measure men's actions by your own! In writing the word 'shir' * has many meanings; in the reed-bed, the 'shir' (lion) is as dangerous as a python.

There is no discussion about the union of God's female creatures, but plenty of talk about the union of God's creatures if they are men.

Woman is not bold in doing wrong because she is afraid of her husband or frightened of the religion or because she is pure or shy.

But man has no shame or fear of doing wrong, because his selfishness is his commander, his desire his ruler.

Man thinks that woman's desire is greater than his own, but his accusation is groundless and his claim unjustified.

Listen to me. Women, not men, know the characteristics of women. All the accusations men make about women are unjust.

Man is jealous, and for a jealous man it is difficult to see his wife shining like the new moon.

How can those, who call women 'children' or 'our house' see that women have understanding like men?

The word 'shir' can mean lion, milk or tap.

Men gave themselves these privileges, which have nothing to do with religion, even though our religion is now in the hands of potentates.

Here is the Holy Book and here are you, shame on you; here are you and here are the precepts of Islām. Where in them can all this talk of yours be found?

How could God create a cruel butterfly? How could God's prophet have wanted such misery for women?

For it was Mohammad who said that paradise lies beneath women's feet, and by saying this lessened men's power.

For it was the Prophet who said that the woman is equal to the man, who gave her many rights which are now trampled underfoot.

Divorcing us at your discretion; but divorce, if you know about religion, is disapproved by God.

If the verse of 'muthanna thalāth' exists, and 'Inkhiftum' follows it, then 'lan tastati'u' is also God's order.*

How can a man live justly with more than one wife when this one is old and ugly and that one is young and beautiful?

If the verse of 'muthanna thalāth' is part of your rights, then also the verse 'lan tastati'u' is part of our rights.

Go and study these Divine commands. If you have any intelligence and common-sense, you will know that it is impossible to justify such actions under God's commands.

* Qor'ān, Surat al Nisa, Verse 3 and 129.

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Note to Bibliography: Although I spent considerable time tracing many of the articles which have been written about Forugh Farrokhzād in magazines, journals and newspapers, I would like to express my gratitude to Messrs. Esmā'ili and Sedārat, who have collected many of these in one volume, Jāvedāneh-ye Forugh Farrokhzād (henceforth Jāvedāneh). I have, in general, quoted the reference to this volume as well as the full reference to the original source so that readers can more easily trace them. In addition, some untitled articles reprinted in Jāvedāneh are referred to in the Chapter notes.

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