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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/76q5s3pw>

ISBN

9781138567306

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Publication Date

2023-06-05

DOI

10.4324/9781315124230-12

Peer reviewed

EXPERIMENTALISM IN PERSIAN POETRY DURING THE 1930S–1950S: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PRACTICE OF POETRY IN THE WORKS OF MOHAMMAD MOGHADDAM, ZABIH BEHRUZ, AND SHIN PARTOW

Farshad Sonboldel

In conventional histories of modern Persian poetry, the role of post-constitutional literary intellectuals has been regarded as a key factor in shaping the conception of the literary revolution which occurred in the first decades of the 20th century. One may recognize two significant elements of literary change, which post-constitutional intellectuals established and passed to the next generation of poets. The first was modern and topical subject matter, which revealed the hidden voice of the lower social classes and reflected the political sentiments of the oppressed. The second was the idea of the reconstruction or modification of formal aspects of classical poetry, such as literary language and poetic forms, in order to revolutionize the very practice of poetry and poets' mentalities. One may argue that even formal innovations of post-constitutional poetry are fundamentally linked to the emancipatory socio-political movements of the period. Because the very act of renewing literary forms, even when the content is not socio-politically engaged, was the space of revelation for the political act of literature. Creating the new is, in many cases, associated with breaking the dominance of the solidified old. Thus, analyzing the works of pioneer poets who experimented with and created new forms of Persian poetry suggests that those attempts were by themselves acts of resistance against the entrenched hierarchies of Iranian culture. By accepting poetic reconstruction as an act of rebellion against the sovereignty of the old, one can offer a framework of categorization within which the analysis of modernity in Persian poetry can be undertaken.

Reconstructing the literary traditions during the first half of the 20th century was undertaken by three main groups. The first of these groups were the modernists, whose followers can be divided into two subgroups: modern poets, who supported a gradual trend of literary modernization, and high modernists, who favored radical amendments in classical poetics. The former group were influenced by the first attempts of Nima Youshij (1897–1960) in neo-romantic

themes and tried to improve the *charpareh* template as an achievement of post-constitutional poets in a way which could contain these themes. The latter, however, were followers of Nima's later works who studied and suggested literary modernism as an alternative version of both classical and neo-romantic poetry. Conventional literary historians name these two subgroups *Charpareh-Sorayan* (four-liners) and Nimaic poets, respectively. The second major group were avant-garde poets who called for the destruction of all dominant, institutionalized literary traditions and the introduction of radical changes in poetic structures and aesthetics to achieve new forms of creativity. The most influential figures of this trend were Tondar Kia (1909–1987) and Houshag Irani (1925–1973). The third group were experimental artists who might not have confronted the literary mainstream directly but who had realized the necessity of change in poetic structures. So they experimented in different ways to achieve a new understanding of poetic form and to suggest new styles to revive poetry for a new age.

This chapter is chiefly to analyze the oeuvre of some significant experimentalist poets of the 1930s–1950s, namely Mohammad Moghaddam (1909–1996), Zabih Behruz (1890–1972), and Shin Partow (1906–1997). This is the first time that the life and works of these poets have been analyzed in independent, academic work. Although there are several references to the practices of Moqaddam as a linguist, no previous study examined his career as an experimentalist poet objectively. Similarly, no exclusive survey of the poetic experiences of Behruz has been carried out prior to this research. Finally, the research to date, due to Partow's close relationship with Nima Yushij, has mostly considered him as a Nimaic poet rather than an independent experimentalist.

After an introductory discussion of the classification of pioneer poets in this era, the chapter reviews some theoretical debates on avant-garde and experimentalism. Then it goes on to analyze the life and career of Mohammad Moqaddam as the leading experimentalist poet of this period. The chapter scrutinizes some of Moqaddam's prose poems to illustrate the quality of his experimentation with the tradition of versification. After analyzing Moqaddam's conception of free verse through phrasal, rhythmical, and metrical analysis, the section will examine Moqaddam's rhetorical movement from dead metaphors and established symbols to private ones.

Zabih Behruz is the third poet whose works will be examined in a separate section. After reviewing Behruz's early experiments with satirical poems in traditional templates, the section will analyze the quality of free verse in three poetic dramas of Behruz. Finally, a section will be dedicated to the experiments of Shin Partow with prose poetry in three regards: pushing the boundaries of conventional literary language, using modern fictional techniques, and developing a free verse rhythmic system.

Modernism, Experimentalism, and Avant-Garde

The major argument against the previous classification of poetic movements is that one may consider experimentalism a shared approach among all avant-garde groups. In this sense, experimentalism is not a movement but a constant practice in artistic development. According to Chris Baldick, experimentalism is the exploration of new aesthetic conceptions "through methods that go beyond the established conventions of literary tradition." He continues to say that experimentalism is a characteristic of literature in the 20th century, "in which successive avant-garde movements arose in continual reaction against what they regarded as decayed or ossified forms of expression."¹

However, in this conception of experimentalism, one overlooks the role of independent experiential works which did not want to demolish the whole existing aesthetic regime, as avant-gardes do, but whose stylistic innovations played an essential role in setting the stage for

infrastructural changes by avant-gardes. For instance, although Moqaddam's experiments did not confront the accepted conceptions of the new poetry, his experiments with formal properties of Persian poetry paved the way for radical alterations of the next generation of avant-gardes in the 1960s. Besides, Persian experimentalists tended to hide their conflicts with mainstream modernists. Indeed, when comparing their works with those of modernists, they called their own works amateurish and described them as irrelevant experiences. Furthermore, Iranian experimentalists (unlike avant-gardes) experimented with poetry for the sake of experimentation and did not propose an alternative to current literary styles. In other words, experimentalism seems to have always acted as a catalyst for further developments that avant-garde movements create in the body of literature. However, its different corrective approach towards the literary past and its different methods in literary change suggest a separated category in the history of modern Persian poetry.

Another potential argument against such a categorization is that there is no substantial difference between Iranian high modernists, avant-gardes and experimentalists, as the point of departure for all three groups is to change the dominant literary traditions and conventions of the moderate mainstream. One can differentiate between an experimental/avant-garde work and a high-modernist one by highlighting the definition of avant-gardism given by Peter Bürger. He offers a twofold definition in which avant-gardism is described as an attack on institutionalized art and an attempt at "the coming into existence of a nonorganic work of art."² It is true that high modernism, like other pioneer movements, attacked the institutionalized art of the time at some point. However, in contrast with experimentalism and avant-gardism, Persian high modernism has continuously emphasized the organic unity of the poem as one of the main elements of modern work.

In an "organic work of art, the structural principle governs the parts and joins them in a unified whole."³ By contrast, in a non-organic work, the parts are significantly more autonomous vis-à-vis the whole. In other words, in an experimental/avant-garde work, elements which construct a totality of meaning in an organic form are replaced with autonomous signs. Nimaic poets' emphasis on the organic unity and poetic form as a unified whole starkly contrasts with the scrappy poetic pieces of Tondar Kia. Behruz's experimental poetry also appears as arbitrary, autonomous poetic pieces among the dialogues of his plays rather than complete, structured poems.

In addition, as Renato Poggioli argues, different approaches to socio-political engagement of the literary text is another primary element which sets avant-gardism and experimentalism apart from other high-modernist trends. He refers to the earliest text in which avant-garde is used as a term with both aesthetic and political connotations. He states that the earliest definitions of the term "avant-garde" (advance-guard: the front segment of an advancing troop) not only place emphasis on "the idea of the interdependence of art and society" but also propose "the doctrine of art as an instrument for social action and reform, a means of revolutionary propaganda and agitation."⁴ Poggioli digs into Charles Baudelaire's personal notebook in which he refers to "litterateurs d' avant-garde" as "radical writers, writers ideologically on the left."⁵ These so-called literary leftists soon found themselves rebelling against the autocracy of entrenched literary styles, rather than the autocracy of powerholders. The term avant-garde lost its visible political indication later and transformed into a solely artistic term towards the end of the 19th century. Schulte-Sasse mentions the historical avant-garde of the 1920s as the first movement in the history of art that turned against institutionalized art.⁶

Similarly, in Iran, constitutional and post-constitutional poets (particularly *Tajaddod* poets) had a strong tendency to turn modern Persian poetry as a medium in which one could express the most topical issues. However, subsequent generations of pioneer poets were inclined to

attack traditional literature as a product of the hierarchical socio-political regime rather than launching an attack on the regime itself. For pioneer poets of the 1930s to 1950s, even modern poetry, when it became the literary mainstream, could be interpreted as the institutionalized art against which experimentalism (and then avant-garde) began to rebel. During the 1950s and 1960s, when Nimaic poetry became dominant in literary journals and forums, the advocates of this movement used their influence to suppress the works of other poets who were simultaneously fighting against neo-romantic/modern poets and traditionalists. In addition to criticizing the unfamiliar aesthetics of experimentalist and avant-garde works, they mainly challenged the approach of these works towards the political engagement of poetry. Indeed, the poetry of high modernists was primarily more directly political in the social sense of the term whilst the subject matter in experimentalists and avant-gardes was not directly political as such.

Bürger argues that avant-garde art suggests a new type of socio-political engagement in which the old dichotomy between pure and committed art becomes irrelevant. Borrowing an idea from Adorno, he writes “the structural principle of the non-organic is emancipatory in itself.” He argues that a non-organic structure leads the work to break free from the solidified ideology of the system. In other words, a non-organic structure, because of the autonomy of its parts, permits political and non-political ideas and motifs to exist in a single work.⁷

In fact, one may argue that the concept of political engagement prior to and subsequent to the experimental and avant-garde movements should not be seen as the same. That is to say, the political act of Persian avant-garde and experimental poetry is internal rather than external. Modernist and high-modernist poets consider the political engagement of poetry as an external element suggested by both the content and the paratext.⁸ In contrast, the political act of experimental and avant-garde poets lies in their violation of accepted undemocratic conventions in both literary and social discourse. Working on neglected and in some cases, forbidden subject matter, as well as disturbing the traditional orders of literary properties, is, in fact, an act of political resistance within the literary works. Indeed, the political engagement of experimental and avant-garde works depends on the newness of the alternative system which they offer for replacing the hierarchical regime of aesthetics.

The definition of newness in the realm of aesthetics varies between different groups of artists. Renato Poggioli states that avant-garde artists see the new “in terms of a birth rather than a rebirth, not a restoration but an *instauratio ab imis fundamentis*, a construction of the present and future not on the foundations of the past but on the ruins of time.”⁹ For Iranian avant-gardes also, newness does not indicate refreshing the old but rather suggests creation. In the case of Persian experimentalists, however, Bürger’s definition might be more relevant, wherein he describes newness as “variation within the very narrow, defined limits of a genre.”¹⁰ Indeed, Iranian experimentalists tended to experiment with the style of writing rather than constructing a new poetic regime.

On the other hand, traditionalist scholars, such as Hassan Vahid Dastgerdi, argue that legitimate newness can only happen within the realm of content. He states that classical poetics guarantee the quality of work and must remain untouched:

Prompting a new style in literature has been applied to a situation where a pioneer poet, in response to the conditions of society and era, finds a new way to guide and enlighten people. Thus, the poet establishes the values of the nation in the minds of his audiences employing fresh content and subtle techniques.¹¹

Dastgerdi’s statement loosely defines a well-composed classical work which is a new combination of old elements rather than an entirely new style for poetry. Limiting newness, by proposing

new subjects and new ways of applying the solidified rules of classical literature, does not allow the poet to make any infrastructural change in the body of literature.

Both Iranian gradualist modernists and high-modernists developed their definition of newness through antithetically completing the approach of traditionalists such as Dastgerdi. Although Nima Yushij's *she'r-e now* (new poetry) suggests a new regime of aesthetics, it does not entirely reject traditional poetics. Indeed, for Nima and his followers, *she'r-e now* is to refashion Persian poetry in both poetic forms and subject matter based on the legacies of classical literature. Nimai's doctrine is to change the classical poetic orders in a way that creates conformity between the old and the new. In this sense, literary newness for Iranian modernists is, at most, the renewal of mechanical literary techniques. According to Bürger, the classical poetics is a series of mechanical techniques which are "no longer perceived as form, and that therefore no longer conveys a new view of reality." Hence, the modernists substitute them for a new technique. This new technique may accomplish the form "until it too becomes mechanical and must be replaced in turn."¹²

Mohammad Moqaddam, Prose Poet: Introducing Free Verse Into Persian Poetry

Mohammad E'temad Moqaddam Bahman was born in September 1908 in Tehran and passed away on 30 July 1996. He studied in an American college in Tehran before he moved to the United States to pursue his studies in New York. However, he could not finish a bachelor's degree and returned to Tehran in 1929, where he served the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a translator for two years. In 1931 he went to the United States for the second time and completed his degree in linguistics. Then, he attended a PhD program in Oriental culture and literature at Princeton. During his studies and as a PhD student, he published his first collection of poetry, *Raz-e Nime Shab; Rahi Chand Biroun Az Pardeh* (The Mystery of the Midnight; A Few Paths out of the Scene) in 1934. Seyf al-din Najmabadi states that all poems of this collection were composed in a single night following a conversation with a friend about experiential means of expressing thoughts through poetry.¹³ A few months later, he printed 150 copies of his second collection of poetry, entitled *Bang-e Khorous* (The Roar of the Rooster).¹⁴ In May 1935 he published his final attempt at Persian poetry in the form of a dramatic poem with the title *Bazgasht be Alamout; Pish-daramad va Nameh-ye Yekom* (Returning to Alamout; the Introduction, and the First Letter). This 40-page collection was printed in just 40 copies, with an imprint saying "this is not for sale."

After his graduation in 1938, he returned to Iran at a time when modernist poets were fighting to establish their manifestos as the correct path of literary modernism. However, Moqaddam, showing no interest in the upheavals of Persian poetry, started his job as a lecturer in ancient Iranian languages at the University of Tehran. In the early 1960s, he worked in the University of Utah, the United States, before founding the Department of Ancient Languages at the University of Tehran in 1963.

In addition to his academic career, establishing academic studies of ancient Iranian languages as well as extensive studies of Persian accents and dialects, Moqaddam played a significant role in introducing Iranians to prose poetry. This new poetic style was rooted both in modern Persian prose and a Western-style of poetry known as blank verse. After publishing three collections of poetry between 1934–1935, he never again published a poem or any kind of creative literary work himself. However, his experiments in prose poetry and unconventional poetic language broadened the borders of literary innovation in this era.

The majority of critics accused Moqaddam of imitating American poetry, particularly Walt Whitman, blindly. Mohammad Reza Shafiei Kadkani also argued that Moqaddam's poems could

have been influenced by the prose translations of western poetry in Iranian journals of the first half of the 20th century.¹⁵ These translations, which were the only means by which several generations of Persian poets familiarized themselves with modern western literature, appeared in literary journals such as *Bahar* (1910–1922), years before Moqaddam started his journey as a poet.

A significant problem with this argument is that reducing the experiments of a poet who studied linguistics and literature in the United States to merely an imitation of translated poetry is too simplistic if not intentionally disparaging. Studying at one of the leading American universities of the time required proficiency in English, meaning Moqaddam was potentially self-sufficient enough to avoid being influenced by early Persian translations of western poetry. In addition, one may question the degree of impact of Walt Whitman's poetic practice on Moqaddam's work. Moqaddam himself states that if he wanted to admit any relation between his poetry and a western model, he would name another American poet, Vincent Miller, as a source of inspiration.¹⁶ Here, Moqaddam probably attempts to misdirect critics from their focus on a leading poet, Whitman, to a less-known American poet for Iranians readers. That is, he endeavors to show that the relationship between his works and American poets is one of dialogue between peers, rather than of his work being influenced by the legacy of American masters. Moqaddam improvises and indigenizes poetic forms such as free verse and blank verse to appropriate Persian poetry for more experiential subject matters and forms.

Dialogue with his contemporary Persian prose is the second element which shaped the notion of literary change in Moqaddam's experiments with prose poetry. One may argue that Moqaddam's personal interests in linguistics, ancient languages, and modern literature were all reflected in modern Persian stories written between the early 1930s to the 1950s, particularly in the works of Sadeq Hedayat (1903–1951). Similar to these contemporary writers, Moqaddam's poetic experiments are inclined towards archaic lexicon, themes, and even ancient literary forms.

As to the use of archaic language, one can detect a considerable number of middle Persian words used in the literary language of this era. This development was the direct result of what some essayists and scholars refer to as the “purification movement,” which encouraged Persian speakers to replace middle Persian words or even new words based on old Persian morphophonemics for words of Arabic, Turkic and more recently French origin. This trend became evident in Moqaddam's poetry too, as he himself was a linguist who specialized in ancient languages and was a leading supporter of this trend. Besides, Moqaddam's engagement with the purification movement may have derived from his relationship with Zabih Behruz another essayist, dramatist, and poet who was a leading figure of this movement.

Thematically, also, there were several short stories, novels, and plays which were reformulated versions of the historical events, particularly from pre-Islamic era, and folk stories which were written at approximately the time that Moqaddam composed his first collection of poetry. These include some celebrated works such as Hedayat's plays *Parvin Dokhtar-e Sasan* (Parvin, Sasan's Daughter, 1930) and *Maziar* (1933) set in ancient Iran and a collection of short-stories named *Aniran* (non-Iranian, 1931) by Shin Partow, Bozorg Alavi, and Sadeq Hedayat.¹⁷ Some of the most famous novels of this period also set in a pre-Islamic Iran, such as *Shahrbanu* (1931) by Ali-Asghar Rahimzadeh Safavi (1895–1959) and *Lazika* by Heydar-Ali Kamali (1869–1936).¹⁸ Authors of this period also focused on the structural potential of folklore stories and poems. As a result, using the structural elements of folk poetry, such as syllabic verses, into modern works became popular.

The popularity of folklore and pre-Islamic Iranian language and literature was a consequence of several important events. First of all, scholarly or creative studies in folk literature, particularly *Osane* (Fairy Tales, 1931), *Neyrangestan* (Trickland, 1933) by Sadeq Hedayat, and *Vág Vág Sahab* (Mister Bow Wow, 1934) by Masoud Farzad and Sadeq Hedayat, became a model for further

studies and the practice of reformulating folk heritage within modern literary works.¹⁹ Second, the celebration of Ferdowsi's millennium, which included an international conference in 1934, was conducive to a wave of new editions and translations of Pahlavi texts. Moreover, certain academic endeavors such as *Irankudeh* (1943–1984), a journal of the *Iranvich* forum at the University of Tehran, affected the literary environment; pioneer writers and poets of the era used the popularity of this retrospective trend as a means of breaking away from literary clichés and experimenting with new aesthetic systems.²⁰

Attaining this unconventional, democratic aesthetic regime, Moqaddam experimented with various aspects of Persian poetics in three different realms: rhyme scheme, rhythmical system, and diction. In all these aspects Moqaddam attempts to distance his poetry from the accepted tradition of versification. In terms of the first realm, his poetry tends to use scattered rhyme patterns in which rhymes appear at the end and in the middle of verses. Freestyle rhyme, unlike classical rhyme patterns, does not use a template to hold the whole poem together and thus breaks the monotonous beat of the poem. It was the use of freestyle rhyme that in time altered the entire narrative system of Persian poetry and gave distinctive voices to different elements within the poem. Moqaddam uses freestyle rhyme to create a democratic collection of poetry in which various characters with distinguishable voices narrate their story in a personalized tone. For instance, in the following stanza, the semi-alternate recurrence of rhymes at the end and in the middle of the hemistichs represents the melodic voice of the bird in a playful tone:

من مرغ شباویزم
تاریک چو شد بیرون پرّم و خوانم²¹

A scope owl I am
When it is dark, I fly, I sing

Derek Attridge proposes three interrelated analytical methods to measure rhyme scheme in free verse poetry. The first is “phrasing analysis,” a term which refers to the significance of phrasing in the formation of syntax, meaning and dynamic movement within the poem. Attridge writes “a poem’s phrasing is an important part of its varying sense of pace and onward impetus, and of its different degrees and types of pause and closure.”²² The second is “rhythmic analysis,” which examines the rhythmic quality of components of the non-metrical verse particularly its syllables. The final tool is “metrical analysis,” in which “the verse, stanza, or the poem as a whole approximates a material order.”²³ One may argue that Moqaddam’s poems with shuffled metrical and non-metrical verses can be studied phrasally and rhythmically. Additionally, Moqaddam’s experiments with pseudo-prosodic rhythms can be examined through metrical analysis.

Moqaddam joins metrical and non-metrical stanzas to create poems with diverse rhythms highlighting different tones within a poem. Moreover, on some occasions, he composes stanzas which consist of blended rhythmic systems. That is, these stanzas may contain combined metrical and non-metrical hemistichs. Wherever the overtone of the stanza requires, the poet modifies the syntax with the meaning by changing the disposition of phrases and rhythmic arrangement. In the following example, the narrator merges the conventional prosodic meter of the first two lines into a blended meter to simulate the movement of the bird among the trees.

در باغ های تنها
افراز درختان بلند پر برگ می پرّم و میخوانم²⁴

In deserted gardens
Above all tall leafy trees I fly, I sing

In this example, the combination of the first two hemistiches forms a conventional prosodic meter called *Mozare' Mosaman-e Akhrab* (- - u - /u - -I - - u - /u - -). However, despite the traditional rhythmic system, the metrical arrangement does not repeat in all the hemistiches of the stanza. Indeed, the third hemistich starts with a similar metrical foot as the first two; however, its second and third foot are turned to (- - u). The last line also starts with the same foot as the third hemistich, but it turns into an entirely different and arbitrary pattern (- - - u/u - -/- - -/- - u u /- - u /u - -). One may consider the last hemistich non-metrical, as the pattern does not even approximate any of the distinguishable metrical patterns in Persian poetry.

Another remarkable experiment Moqaddam conducts with the traditional prosodic system is his inconsistent use of final metrical feet in uneven verses of a stanza. In the following example, the first two hemistichs start with (- - u/u - - u/u - -), which is a rather odd variation of *Hazaj* meter. The last (fourth) foot in the first and the second hemistich, however, is scanned (- -) and (- - - u), respectively. The third hemistich is shorter and responds to the first three feet in the previous hemistichs. The last hemistich also is scanned as (- - u /- - - u/u - -), which follows the same metrical arrangement as the third one with a minimal difference in the second foot.

چون نیمه‌ی شب گشت یکی پروانه
سوزی ز درون من بر آورد.²⁵

At the midnight, from afar
...
My fire flamed that made me glum

The technique of making metrical and non-metrical or even prosaic lines collaborate, if done skillfully, allows the poet to decline the dominance of the limited prosodic meter in all aspects of a poem. In traditional poetics, the prosodic meter is considered one of the intrinsic elements which differentiate between poetry and prose. Thus, generating non-metrical lines in a poem questions the traditional significance of prosody. Almost all pioneer poets of the time saw traditional prosody as a representation of elitist and hierarchical, classical aesthetics. Thus, they attempted to invent new rhythmic systems in which the hegemony of classical prosodic meters is broken. These poets either tried to reform the traditional conception of meter by relaxing the quantity of feet in the hemistich or by mixing metrical and non-metrical rhythms. In fact, Moqaddam tried to replace the notion of rhythm with the prosodic meter as a vital component of poetry. Moqaddam's simplified the notion of rhythm to one which is defined by regularity, repetition, and expectations. According to Roi Tartakovsky "when the recurrence is palpable and recognisable enough, we would probably place the line within metricity, and therefore certainly within rhythmicity."²⁶

Moqaddam also tried to invent metrical patterns which do not precisely adhere to the standards of traditional prosody. However, one can clearly detect recurring prosodic feet in these lines. Attridge states that this kind of free verse should be studied through metrical analysis:

Metrical analysis can reveal the way in which some free verse poems maintain a relation to metrical verse, approaching and deviating from regular metrical patterns. In passages where a metrical pattern is fully realised, the reader perceives beats, and variations such as demotion and promotion are possible. In other passages, there is only a slight feeling of metrical regularity.²⁷

Such lines in Moqaddam's poetry neither consist of certain metrical feet, nor are they as rhythmless as regular prose. Indeed, one may find rhythmicity in verses, but it is not possible to fit them in standard prosodic meters. Khanlari says the rhythm of Moqaddam's poetry is, at most, a "rhythm-like" beat which, unlike, conventional meters is not based on the quality and quantity of syllables or feet in each verse.²⁸ One may call this form "rhythmic prose," whose tone may remind the reader of pre-Islamic poetic orisons:

اکنون نیمی ز شب تیره گذشته
یا سوخته گردد یا نه.²⁹

Now half of the dark night's passed
May burn May not.

Having analyzed Moqaddam's techniques in arranging new rhyme and rhythm patterns, one cannot detect any specific musical system in his poetry. Moqaddam says he had no specific model in mind when breaking his lines, so he cut the line where he "felt it had reached a kind of rhythm."³⁰ By declining to follow any kind of musical meter, Moqaddam, like other pioneers of the time highlights the significance of the natural tone of the speech in a poem.

It seems that Moqaddam was the first Persian poet who sought to achieve the natural tone of speech in the realm of prose poetry instead of conventional prosodic poetry. In this way, Moqaddam uses techniques which could be considered language errors in traditional literary discourse. He frees his language from standard form of syntax in Persian to highlight the natural rhythm of the prose. In the following example, he lets the speech to expand in the stanza through enjambment. Indeed, he builds the stanza upon partial hemistichs, in terms of syntax. Then, he allows the meaning to run over from one hemistich to another without completion. This technique enables the poet to harmonize the length of the hemistich with the natural tone of the speech instead of confining it in the restricted unites of traditional versification. Besides, the rhythm of the stanza is partly a result of overloading the sentence with complemental, prepositional phrases and relative clauses:

برای دوری از مردم از کار هایشان از اندیشه هایشان
حسن آرام گرفته بود.³¹

To keep himself away from people their work their thoughts
Hasan had settled down

Moqaddam breaks each hemistich into two or three segments by placing pauses among phrasal groups and clauses. One may argue that this technique is a form of "caesura," a pause between two phrases in a line of verse. Roger Mitchell, who analyses caesura in the poetry of Walt Whitman as a rhythmical element, writes:

He uses the caesura to break the line into groups of various grammatical types. Though the grammatical nature of the groups varies, the principle by which the line is broken by the caesura is a single one. Whitman breaks the line for rhetorical emphasis. The resulting groups, as we will see, also have meaning rhythmically or prosodically.³²

Similarly, Moqaddam tries to make a pattern out of pauses by placing them in specific parts of the sentence. Indeed, he activates the musical quality of prosaic lines by fracturing them into

smaller chunks containing rhythmic similarities. The caesura in some poems breaks the lines unevenly to characterize different voices. In *Atash-e Nimshab* (Midnight Fire) the composure of the narrator has been illustrated through longer hemistichs with fewer breaks while recurring breaks indicate the enthusiastic tone of the Fire angel and fairies in other parts:

آتش بلند میشود پاره های آن بالا می‌جهند
چکیدن سرشگ آتش و ناله‌ی آن شنیده می‌شود
این اشک فرشته‌ی آذر است
که از شادی و رنج بیرون می‌آید
[. . .]
فرشته آذر می‌خواند
از نو از نو
روشنیم تازه و
گرمیم سوزان
از نو
پریان با هم
از نو.³³

The fire rises its pieces jump up
one can hear the fire dripping and moaning
These are the tears of the angel of Azar
Which comes out of joy and suffering
[. . .]
Angel of Azar sings
Again again
We have lightened afresh and
we are hot burning
Again
Fairies together
Again again

The balanced literary style which, to some extent, contains both the naturalness of expository language and the prosaic energy of the fictional prose is another idiosyncratic element of Moqaddam's poetry. Moqaddam's new language did not repeat the overused, limited range of poetical words and expressions and was not limited to merely inserting colloquial elements into the poem. Moqaddam's poetry is constantly shifting between literary and non-literary registers of diction. This kind of combined language has broader boundaries than conventional literary language. It allows the poet to enter different voices into the poem and let them talk in their own natural tone. The multiplicity of the voice and heterogeneity among components of the literary language, in turn, is a drive to a more democratic poetic structure. The new language uses the whole Persian lexicon (not just the conventional literary one) to award to all voices in the poem an equal opportunity to be heard and understood:

آهسته هسن نزدیک شد
پشت خود را به درختی داد
وخاموش ماتش برد
پس از لختی بنشست و خم شد تا چهره خود در آب شوید
چشمان خودش در آب او را گرفتند

و چون در چشمان خود در آب مینگریست
سرود پریان را شنید
وان سان سرودشان سبک و شیرین بود
[. . .] که هسن نزدیک بود بلغزد و در آب افتد

پری روی نیلوپر
خدای دژ الموت رو بنگرید
هوای کوه نمی‌خاد
خوراک و نوشاک خورده
بویی از دختر برده
دیگه تنهایی نمی‌خاد
پریان با هم

خدای دژ رو بنگر
شیفته شده به دختر
همچی که شد پس بهتر
و چون بدینجا رسید
هسن دید که چشمانش آذرین گشته³⁴ [. . .]

Hasan drew closer slowly
Leaned against a tree
And wordlessly stunned
After a while, bent over to wash his face in water
His reflected eyes enticed him
And as he looked into his own eyes in the water
Heard the fairies' anthem
It was such sweet and heartwarming
That he was about to fall [. . .]

Fairy on the lotus:
Look at Alamut castle's lord
Doesn't fancy the mountains
Had something and is drunk
Scented a girl, he's drunk
Wants solitude nevermore

Fairies together:
Look at Alamut castle's lord
He fell in love with a girl
Then if it is, how better.

And as the anthem got this apex
Hasan found his eyes in flames.

In the previous section, the voice of the narrator holds the same rank as other voices and does not affect the language of the fairies. In contrast, the narrator of traditional poetry turns the suppressed, hidden language of different classes to the public transcript proportioning them to be presented in a highly valued poetic template, which automatically neutralizes its force and softens its edge. However, in this poem, the narrator has no dominant influence on the way that other characters speak. Fairies can represent their own group using the language of their

choice. Thus, their words, unlike the narrator's, are colloquial and rhythmical. Using the whole Persian lexicon, Moqaddam provides all objects and characters (irrespective of their rank in the hierarchy of cultural values) with a distinctive language by which they can appear in the poem.

Moqaddam's unconventional ideas about poetics were not limited to his innovative rhyme, rhythm, and language. Shafiei Kadkani criticizes Moqaddam's attitude toward classical rhetoric and claims that there are no successful examples of figures of speech or rhetorical devices in his work. He goes on further to state that there is not even a single metaphor or simile in the whole poetry collection of *Raz-e Nime Shab* (The Midnight Mystery).³⁵ A major problem with Shafiei's criticism is that he uses traditional definitions of rhetorical figures to analyze a radically experimental poem. A more appropriate approach for such a purpose would be to create a new system by combining the criteria for evaluating Western rhetorical devices with classical Iranian ones and simultaneously expand both by having in mind the qualities of non-literary written and spoken Persian.

One may argue that Moqaddam's poetry is based on converting dead metaphors and public symbols of Persian literature into fresh, private symbols. These symbols mostly represent the figure of pioneer poet who fights with advocates of inherited culture and particularly traditionalist literati. In the first collection, *Raz-e Nime Shab*, he uses the dead metaphors of the traditional poetry – including the candle, butterfly, leopard, and cypress – and turns them into symbols for the marginal, experimentalist poet himself. Doing so, he widely explores characteristics of objects which can be associated with the conception of experimental poetry to use as the vehicle of the new metaphor. In the opening stanza of the collection, the poet pictures a firefly in the darkness of the night. Both of these elements are public symbols. Darkness represents unawareness in most cultures, and the light of the firefly, as an inverse of darkness, signifies awareness:

در تاریکی شب
گفته‌های پراکنده من
همچون پروانه شب تاب
درخشند و پرند³⁶

In the darkness of night
My scattered sayings
Like a firefly
Shine and fly

The firefly is a light-giver who represents an entity of enlightenment in the depth of darkness. However, by creating a direct context for the image, the poet turns this metaphor into a private symbol representing himself (the experimentalist poet) and his poetry as a provider of light at poetic and social levels. The words are scattered because his poetry is experimental, but they shine and fly to provide role models. This is the light (the new context) which transforms the meaning of dead metaphors of the collection and symbolically brings them to a new life. In the last stanza of the collection where the poet promises to return later to complete the journey and to reveal the mystery, he alludes to his next experimental attempts through the same private symbols:

تاریکی شب گفت مرا
این تابش تو جهنده بود و کوتاه
راز تو هنوز راز مانده
گفتمش آری باز می‌گردم³⁷

The darkness of the night told me
 This radiation of yours was jumbled and quick
 Your secret is still a secret
 I told him yes I would be back

The same stanza is repeated on the first page of the second collection, *Bang-e Khorus*. This is followed by another stanza, saying that the author has come back in the brightness of the morning to awaken audiences and reveal his mystery to them. In this long, episodic work, the poet presents himself symbolically as the rooster, which traditionally acts as an awakener. Seyed Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh (1982–1997), a leading, modern Persian writer, gives this metaphor a new political sense to show the significant role of literary modernity in awakening people and informing them about the upheavals of their society.³⁸ Jamalzadeh in this introduction, states that writers and poets must explain the natural unity of political and literary despotism to their audiences.³⁹ In Moqaddam's work, probably inspired by Jamalzadeh, this metaphor has turned into a symbol representing a pioneering artist who is not directly involved with socio-political conflicts but still proposes emancipatory philosophical thoughts.

In *Bang-e Khorus*, Moqaddam gives the symbolical character of the rooster the authority to question its identity. Similar to a pioneering artist living in a dictatorship and struggling with the social function and the political engagement of his work, the rooster is astonished by events in his surroundings over which he has no control. He finds the opportunity to break the rules and sings day and night freely to awaken people. However, the gardener and his wife (symbols of closed-minded society) try to eliminate the rooster. In the eyes of the gardener's family, the singing of the rooster at sunset is unconventional, and thus they fear its consequences. In contrast, the gardener's son (potentially a representative of the young generation of modern poets) is the only one who understands the rooster's concerns and tries to explain its emancipatory message:

خورشید پایین تر رفت دیگر پیدا نبود
 ابرها کنار آسمان سرخ شدند
 خروس پشت پنجره روی تخته ای
 از این ور به آن ور میرفت
 آرام نداشت
 اندیشه ای سنگین در سرش بود
 سرخی آسمان تاج سرخش را سرخ تر کرده
 و پوشش سپیدش را آذرگون ساخته بود
 ناگهان استاد
 و ناله‌ئی از ته دل برآورد
 دو دو لو دو و و
 زن باغبان با شوهر و بچه‌اش نشسته بودند
 زن رو به شوهر خود کرد و گفت
 ناله خروس را شنیدی
 امشب چه شبی است بیگانه میخواند
 که خواهد مرد
 باید سرش را بری⁴⁰

The sun went down could no longer be seen
The clouds turned red in the horizon
Rooster behind the window on a board
was walking from side to side
He was anxious
He had a frightful thought in his head
The red of the sky had made his crown redder
And had made his white feathers fire-like
He suddenly stopped
And cried from the bottom of his heart
Du du lu du . . .
The gardener's wife was sitting with her husband and son
The woman turned to her husband and said
Did you heard the rooster's cry
What a night he is singing untimely
Who will die?
Must cut off his head.⁴¹

The rooster (or the morning bird in post-constitutional poetry) is the symbol of the good news of breaking the darkness of tyranny and approaching the brightness of freedom. However, in this long poem, the morning bird has doubts about the correct time to announce the new day. The rooster in this poem has lost his metaphorical identity and is confused by its inner conflicts and thoughts. One may argue that this poem is the narrative of Moqaddam, wondering if this is the right time for such a big step in modernizing Persian poetry, as with Nima Youshij's belief that Moqaddam's experiments are "too advanced for public understanding and sentiments."⁴²

In the last collection, the poet portrays himself through a symbolic story about Hasan Sabbah, a rebellious missionary of the Nizari Muslims in the late 11th century who formed an order known as *Hashashins* in the Alamut mountains. Hasan Sabbah, although he cannot be considered a dead metaphor, is an established symbol of an oppositional, unreachable and mysterious figure. In this poem, Hasan, like a pioneer poet, is rejected by ordinary people and those who shape the thoughts of ordinary people. In this poem, Hassan tries to break the conventions of the traditional society and teach *Divanegi* (craziness) and *Azadegi* (liberality) to the youth:

اینجا استادان شاگردان را از نامه‌های نوشته
و گفته‌های ساخته و آماده می‌آموزند
شاگردان یاد می‌گیرند و پس می‌دهند
بیرون از نامه و دهان استادان چیزی نیست
[. . .] و چیزی نمی‌خواهند
نامه‌های دبستان را دور اندازید
چیزهای بزرگتر شما را آموزم
اینجا شما را خرد و مردمی و چیزهای ساختگی دیگر آموزند
من شما را دیوانگی آموزم از ادگی آموزم⁴³

Here the masters educate their students by writing letters
As well as made-up and ready-made sayings
Students learn and give back
There is nothing outside the letters and mouths of the masters
And they do not desire anything . . .

Abandon elementary school letters
I will teach you more significant things
Here they teach you rationality and humanity and other artificial subjects
I teach you craziness I teach you liberality

The craziness associated with liberality represents divergent thinking which breaks the borders set by inherited culture and is a cause of creativity and progress in society in all directions. This divergent thinking in Moqaddam's world, of course, is embodied in experimental poetry due to its unconventionality sounding like nonsense to its readers yet liberating their minds towards changes in the fundamentals of traditional literature. Masters and students represent conservative men of the letter and readers, respectively. In this symbolic system, students understand art through the "written letters, made-up and ready-made sayings" of their teachers, which represent the traditional scholarly books and existing monuments of classical literature. However, Hassan wants to guide students toward innovative thinking. He places craziness against "rationality, humanity" to emphasize the role of deconstructive approach and anarchy in experimentalism.

Therefore, in response to Shafi'i's arguments about the absence of rhetorical devices in Moqaddam's poetry, one can argue that the whole oeuvre of Moqaddam is based on a new rhetorical system. In his three collections, Moqaddam turns dead metaphors and established symbols of Persian poetry into symbols representing elements of his era's literary revolution. Shafi'i also argues that Moqaddam's poems did not influence the literary mood of the era. He claims that there is no trace of critical essays or dialogues about these three collections of poetry during the 1930s and 1940s, which, in turn, demonstrates the indifference of literary society to these experiments.⁴⁴

The main problem with Shafiei's perspective, in this case, is that he has wrong assumptions about the expected reception of experimentalism in society. Experimental works, like these three collections, do not confront traditions to propose a new aesthetic regime or a literary style to the public. They rather aspire to broaden the boundaries of the genre and pave the path of modernization for avant-gardes and high-modernists. Moqaddam's greatest influence, therefore, is to be found in the poetry of the following generation. With the foundations laid, the following generation and some poets of the same generation were able to construct a new building in the space that Moqaddam as an experimentalist created by demolishing the old structures. Thus, the innovations that one can spot in Moqaddam's works are experiments with the potentials of Persian poetry. These potentials were activated in the works of the next generation, particularly Ahmad Shamlu and the followers of his prose poetry, also known as *she'r-e sepid* (white poetry), as well as avant-garde groups such as *she'r-e digar* (the other poetry) and *mowj-e now* (new wave) in the 1960s. However, the influence of Moqaddam's works on these movements is yet to be examined in detail in theoretical works of critics.

Zabih Behruz: A Wandering Poet in the City of Drama⁴⁵

Another writer who experimented with poetic and rhetorical aspects of Persian poetry in his plays and poems was Zabih Behruz. Although Behruz is most known for his dramas and some satirical poems in classical templates, he conducted radical experiments with poetic expression in his plays. However, these experimental drama-poems were never proposed and examined as poetry by the author or literary critics. Choosing the genre of drama to experiment with the poetic aesthetic system was probably due to the pressure that the literary community exerted on experimentalist and avant-garde poets. In addition, drama, as a genre, already contains dramatic elements which most of the Iranian pioneer poets were trying to develop in their poems. Finally, probably to protect his academic status, Behruz preferred to be known as a respected linguist and

playwright rather than an unconventional poet. This was partly because his poetic innovations were so radical that he might have been criticized by the majority of literary scholars of his time if he wanted to propose them in the genre of poetry.

Zabih Behruz was born in 1890 in a well-known family who traced their ancestry to the *Safavids* and were also related to the *Qajars*. His father, Aboufazl Tabib Savoji, was a famous writer who worked in Naser al-din Shah's court. At the age of twenty, Behruz left Iran for Egypt, where he lived for ten years. Then, he moved to England and worked at the Cambridge University with Professor Edward Browne. However, due to a dispute with Browne, he moved to Germany for about a year before his return to Iran in 1924. In Tehran, he worked in the ministry of finance before he started teaching mathematics at the Airforce school of the Army University in Ahvaz. He wrote most of his literary and research works during the time that he was teaching in this university. He retired in 1965 and shortly after became a permanent member of *Farhangestan-e Zaban-e Farsi* (the Academy of the Persian Language),⁴⁶ before he passed away in 1972. Behruz's writings, creative and academic, have been admired by both traditionalists and modernists.⁴⁷ This popularity among academics and artists is likely due to his experience working in some of the most prestigious academic centers of the time, as well as his vast knowledge in a variety of cultural and scientific branches.

Behruz's publications can be categorized into three different types: language, pedagogy, and literature. His research works on modern and ancient Persian language are those by which he gained his fame as a prominent linguist. He and Mohammad Moqaddam were among the main founders of *Iranvich* forum and *Irankudeh* journal. He was also a leading figure of the *Sereh-Nevisi* (language purification) movement. His essays on the necessity of reforming the Persian language and purifying it from foreign words are some of the most critical works in favor of this movement. In addition, he published several pedagogical books for children, mainly in mathematics and literature.

In addition to all these activities, Behruz is best known for his poetry and dramas. The most famous poetry book by Behruz is a long satirical poem entitled *Me'raj-nameh-ye Ebn-e Deylaq* or *Gand-e Badavard* (Ebn-e Deylaq's Book of Ascension or Wind-Blown Stench).⁴⁸ Similar to the satirical poetry of the constitutional era, this long *Masnavi* is in colloquial language and is composed in the conventional prosodic meter. Thematically, the poem was in line with other anti-superstition and anti-Islam satirical works of the period such as Jamalzadeh's story *Sahra-ye Mahshar* (The Dessert of Resurrection, 1944) and Hedayat's play *Afsaneh-ye Afarinesh* (The Creation Myth, 1946). Another satirical poem by Behruz is *Mer'at al-Sara'er* (Mirror of Secrets), which ridicules a European orientalist, who probably was a colleague of Behruz in Cambridge. This work is written in prose and verse as a parody of old *tazkarehs* (biographies). He also composed a short collection of prose and poetry called *Gandestan* (Stench Land), which is a parody of Sa'di's *Golestan*. (The Rose Garden) The last prosodic poem by Behruz is *Gandname* (Stench Book), a satirical poem in the same prosodic meter as Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*.⁴⁹ Paul Sprachman argues that these satirical works illustrate Behruz's "mastery of parodic technique, his extensive knowledge of both orthodox and folk Islam, and his splenetic Iranophilia, all of which coalesced to produce a major Persian parody."⁵⁰

As mentioned, all of these works are composed in standard templates using conventional meters and traditional rhetoric. However, in his plays, Behruz creates poetic pieces with open forms which can be examined as some of the first experiments with free verse in Persian literature. Referring back to Derek Attridge's tools of measuring free verse, one may explain poetic experiments in Behruz's dramas through phrasing, metric, and rhythmic analyses.⁵¹

Shab-e Ferdowsi (Ferdowsi's Night, written in 1933 and published in 1967)⁵² is a poetic play imitating the theme and tone of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*. In this play, dialogues are taken from

both existing verses of the *Shahnameh* and prose rhythmic lines which imitate the language and tone of the original verses:

کو آنهمه شهر و دهستان های آبادان و جوی و کشت و بستانش؟

«نه دهقان نه لشکر نه تخت و کلاه نه آبادی و شهر و گنج و سپاه»³⁵

Where are all the cities and prosperous villages and their brooks, harvests and gardens?

...

“Neither the farmer, nor the soldiers, nor the throne, nor the crown, nor the village, nor the city, nor the treasure, nor the army”

In this example, the poet has reformulated the tone of the *Shahnameh* in prose poems. Phrasing plays a significant role in reformulating the beat of an epic poem in prose lines. The caesura-like pauses within each line, line breaks, and repetition are formal devices that the poet uses for the phrasing of each piece. In addition, the lament-like overtone of lines requires longer lines at a slower pace. Thus, the rhythm derived from the phrasing is equally a product of syntax and meaning.

In addition to phrasing, rhythm in most of the poetic pieces of this play is formed by imitating the tone of the original verses. The play consists of dialogues formed by several prose lines supported by single verse lines from Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* at the end of each piece. Archaic words used in the prose lines harmonize the language and tone of poetic dialogues with those of the original verse. In addition, the insertion of occasional rhymes in certain lines helps the poet to create a beat that is more closely aligned with the verse. All of these techniques, combined with the narrative and dramatic nature of the work, allow the creator to develop poetic pieces with fresh themes and tones. Despite these attempts, *Shab-e Ferdowsi* fails to shape an independent poetic form, and Behruz's experiments remain limited to different angles of rhythmic prose.

Dar Rah-e Mehr (In the Path of Love, 1934) differs from *Shab-e Ferdowsi* in one respect. *Shab-e Ferdowsi* contains prosodic verses from the *Shahnameh* or replicates its style, whereas poetic lines of *Dar Rah-e Mehr* are entirely in prose. The language and phrasing of poetic pieces in *Dar Rah-e Mehr* are affected by the theme of the play. *Dar Rah-e Mehr* is a story about one of the Persian classical masters, Khajeh Shams al-Ding Mohammad Hafez (1315–1390), most famous for his love and mystical ghazals. The theme of the play is centered around the dialogues of Hafez with symbolic personas of his own poems, such as *mohaseb* (the public inspector) and *rend* (vagrant), as well as his prayer-like monologues. The author uses the style and language of old mystical prayers, such as those in *Monajat-nameh* (Book of Hymns) by Khajeh Abdollah Ansari (1006–1088), which contain a considerable number of archaic and literary words. Also, the majority of the play's long lines are formed by several small sentences, divided by pauses. To approximate the beat of old prayers, the poet has highlighted most of the internal breaks within the lines by *saj'* (prose rhymes):

خواستہ جهان به چشم هیچ است و نام و ننگ پیشم پندار

زندگی از سر میگیرم؛ کی از جان دادن ترسم.⁵⁴

The attractions of the world are nothing to me and I consider both fame and shame
insignificant thoughts

...

And then I recommence life; I am not afraid of death.

The combination of internal pauses, line breaks, and the classical compositional technique of *saj'* shapes the mood of each piece. Joined with the rhythmic energy of the genre of Persian prayer, this phrasing style approximates an open poetic form in each section. Although all of these free verse pieces have a similar tone, one cannot see this play as an independent poem. Indeed, poetic pieces of this work are just components of a bigger form and cannot be seen as a whole if one analyses them outside the play's structure. However, Behruz has another play, written about a decade before *Shab-e Ferdowsi* and *Dar Rah-e Mehr*, in which he created an entirely experimental poetic play which reads like a long poem.

Shah-e Iran va Banu-ye Arman (The Iranian King and the Lady of Armenia, 1927) is a poetic play/screenplay entirely written in free verse style. It contains a variety of prosodic, rhythmic, and prose lines. It also shares several remarkable rhetorical points with experimental poetry of the time. However, the formal poetic properties of this work have not been welcomed by scholars of theatre studies. For instance, Yaqub Ajand states that the poetic dimensions of this work have a negative impact on the theatrical side of it, arguing that the poetic form of the text has transformed it into an unnatural text which does not follow "the logic of drama."⁵⁵ Jamshid Malekpur also mentions that the language of *Shah-e Iran va Banu-ye Arman* is close to that of modern free verse poetry rather than the conventional language of plays written in that period.⁵⁶

Despite these critical points, Malekpur states that *Shah-e Iran va Banu-ye Arman* is a successful adaptation of Nezami's *Khosrow va Shirin* in that Behruz's rendition of the love triangle of Farhad, Shirin, and Khosrow has been done much better than other adaptations of the story.⁵⁷ In his introduction to this play, Behruz writes that this work was initially written as a screenplay in English in 1920. However, to accentuate dramatic adaptations of classical Persian tales in modern genres such as cinema, he decided to publish the Persian version first.⁵⁸ Thus, he translated and released the Persian version of this play in 1927. Although writing a poetic screenplay based on traditional Persian literature is innovative per se, one may argue that the screenplay template is a cover for the radical experiments in Persian poetics that the author engages in.

The template of *Shah-e Iran and Banou-ye Arman* allows the author to create a poem which might not be accepted by the mainstream literary intelligentsia at the time of creation. Behruz, thus, seemed to have tried to save himself from harsh criticism by presenting it in a genre which was not institutionalized in Iran yet. In other words, literary critics were less likely to analyze the poetic experiments of this work as it was not presented as a collection of poetry. The fact that this work was written as a screenplay also allowed the author to use different literary and non-literary elements of the Persian language. This, in turn, helped the poet to expand the field by employing registers of Persian which were uncommon in contemporary literature.

One may argue that major poetic innovations of this work are in line with the attempts of other pioneer poets of the time to break their immediate literary tradition. For instance, breaking away from traditional poetic meters was a tendency that Behruz shared with Nima, Moqaddam, and Kia. Tondar Kia refers to *Shah-e Iran va Banu-ye Arman* as one of the first attempts in Persian literature to compose poems with uneven verses.⁵⁹ These uneven verses, in a combination of rhythmic and non-rhythmic prose lines, create melodic pieces. In fact, it was Behruz who, years before Tondar Kia and Nima Youshij, confronted the tyranny of traditional prosody and tried to transform Persian poetry.

In the following example, Behruz creates a free verse stanza in which hemistichs approximate a kind of prosodic meter. However, the rhythm of these hemistichs cannot be categorized under any of the distinguished traditional meters.

اسپهد – (به دختر مینگرد) آری شاهها به از این صد چند و هزارن چندان

شاه – این سان! 60۴

General – (looks at the girl) your grace; better than her hundreds and thousands of times

...
Shah – This much indeed!?

The beat of the fragment also is partly a result of rhyming *chandan*, *an*, *san*, and *Shirin*, *in* as well as *ni* and *dani*. At the end of the fifth line, one can see that the recurrence of rhyming words in a fast beat approximate a distinctive prosodic-like rhythm. In the following example, the poet uses another open form of rhythm:

شاه – بشنو ... از من .. بانوی ارمن نادیده انسان دل برده کز وی باز ستاندن نتوانم
از مهرش با فکرش در پنهان میگیریم در پیدا میسوزم و میسازم _ اکنون چاره‌ی دردم
کن یا مارا بر وی می بر _ یا ویرا سوی ما میخوان. 61

Shah – listen. . . to me. . . The lady of Armenia takes man's heart even without being seen, in a way that one can not take his heart back – I cry because of her love thinking about her secretly and burn openly – Now find a remedy for my pain. Either take me to her – or call her to me.

The blended rhythm built in the previous examples can be studied by the devices of phrasal and metrical analyses. These lines are fragmented into hemistichs by placing dashes, which may function as a caesura among different clauses. In addition, these clauses are made either in an uncommon variation of *bahr-e tavil* (repetition of the prosodic foot *maf'ulon*) or rhythmic prose.⁶² The poet tries to protect the rhythm from becoming a traditional *bahr-e tavil* by mixing prosaic phrases with prosodic hemistichs in the stanza. In the scansion of the following lines, one can see that, similar to traditional *bahr-e tavil*, the length of verses are variable. However, the lines are not built upon a consistent metrical pattern. That is in several cases the poet changes the foot *fa'ulon* (- - -) to *maf'el* (- - u) and *maf'ulo* (u - -) to distinguish his innovative, open poetic form from the conventional templates with uneven verses:

فرهاد – اکنون پیشست خرم و خوشدل _ لیکن چندی بندی و بیدل _ تا طوسم بردند و تن
آزدند و رها کردند
شیرین – گفتندم کشتندت 63

Farhad – now I am with you happy and gleeful –, but I was imprisoned, and anxious for a while – They took me to Tus and hurt my body and then released me.

Shirin – I thought they killed you.

The first two hemistichs are scanned as (- - u/- - -/- - -). However, this pattern does not remain consistent in other lines of the fragment. In the third hemistich, the pattern has been enlarged by adding two more irregular feet (- - -/u u -/- - u/- - -/- - -). Finally, the scansion of the last line shows the pattern (- - -/- - -). Mehdi Akhavan Sales states that Nima, in his free verses, tried to utilize the qualities of both *mostazad* and *bahr-e tavil* in shortening and lengthening lines. However, his short lines do not always consist of the first and the last feet of the longer lines as is the case in *mostazad*. Besides, the last feet of his long lines in *bahr-e tavil* are always consistent, whilst Nima consciously alters the last feet of each line to maintain their “independence” and

distinguish its new, open poetic form from the mentioned traditional templates.⁶⁴ One may argue that Behruz has used the same technique to distinct his rhythmic system from the classical prosody about a decade earlier than Nima. Therefore, *Shah-e Iran and Banou-ye Arman* might be one of the sources of Nima in theorizing the Nimaic poetic form.

However, the major problem with this conclusion is that although Behruz (like Nima) challenged the aesthetic regime of traditional prosody and poetic forms, he did not set out to create a full-scale poem in a conventional, organic form. He combined different elements of drama and classical form of narrative poetry (*masnavi*) to create a hybrid form of the dramatic poem. However, the borrowed form of drama remained external, and the poetic parts seemed fragmented. In other words, Nima ended up writing poems with dramatic qualities, while Behruz inserted poetic fragments into his drama. Nevertheless, the fact that this play was written years before the appearance of the first poems of Nima's second phase (Nimaic style) and those of Todar Kia may draw scholars' attention to this experiment as a source of inspiration not only for Nimaic poets but also for other marginal poets of the later generations.

Shin Partow: A Bridge Between Nimaic and Experimental Poetry

Another marginal poet who can be considered an advocate of experimentalism in the 1940s was Ali Shirazpur Partow (1907–1997). Partow studied in France and was awarded a PhD in French history and literature. In 1931, he returned to Iran, where he contributed to the foundation of the *Arman* literary journal. In this journal, he worked with a group consisting of the most well-known academics, including Malek al-sho'ra Bahar, Badial-zaman Foruzanfar (1904–1970), and Abbas Eqbal Ashtiani (1896–1956), as well as pioneer modernist writers, including Sadeq Hedayat and Bozorg Alavi.⁶⁵ He also served the government as the Iranian consulate in Baghdad and ambassador to India.⁶⁶ Partow published several novels and stories which were admired by his contemporaries. In addition, he composed five innovative collections of poetry, namely *Samandar* (Phoenix, 1946), *Dokhtar-e Darya* (The Girl of the Sea, 1946), *Jinus* (1946), *Khushsh Parvin* (The Pleiades, 1946), and *Ghojmeh* (The Grape, 1950). He reprinted all of these works in a collected volume in 1974 under the title of *Ghazaleh-ye Khorshid* (The Gazelle of the Sun).

In a letter to Nima Yushij dated September 29, 1946, Partow writes that his main goal in writing such experimental poems was merely “simplifying and pushing the Persian language forward,” which in turn placed his focus on the literary language rather than a poem as a whole.⁶⁷ One may argue that Partow's emphasis on the literary language as an innovative aspect in his poetry is because of his reliance on Nima Youshij as the real “leader of new poetry.”

In his efforts to align himself with Nima, Partow is careful to classify his non-Nimaic writings as literary prose, not poetry. There is a list of Partow's publications on the very first page of *Dokhtar-e Darya*, in which the phrase “*Nasr-e Ahangdar*” (rhythmic prose) is written in front of his experimental poetry collections entitled *Jinus*, *Samandar*, and *Dokhtar-e Darya*. He also, in the same list of publications, labels his other collection of poetry *Khushsh Parvin*, “*She'r be Sabk-e Farangi*” (poetry in European style).⁶⁸ Partow emphatically states that Nima is the primary (and only) founder of new Persian poetry.⁶⁹ However, Partow's innovations in the form of his poems are not in line with those of Nimaic style. In fact, his approach toward poetical change is more likely to be inspired by earlier Persian experimental poets.

Similar to Moqaddam and Behruz's works, the form of Partow's poems are in dialogue with both modern Persian prose and Western free verse. One can argue that Partow's experiments, in line with those of his contemporaries, fall into three categories: (1) broadening the conventional literary language, (2) using fictional narration techniques, and (3) developing a free verse rhythmic system.

Partow's works follow the revivalist trend promoted by a considerable number of language and literature scholars of the time. Advocates of this trend portrayed it as a way of reforming the traditional aspects of Iranian culture by reducing its Islamic-Arabic dimensions. In poetry, the purpose was to replace the rhythms of traditional prosodic system, which had evolved from Arabic poetics, with a variety of innovative rhythmic systems. Saeed Nafisi (2895-1966), a prominent literary scholar of the period, admires Partow's attempts in the "new style" of composing "poetic prose or free poetry" which seeks its roots in ancient Iranian poems. He sees Partow's efforts in reviving the forgotten poetics of ancient literature in line with those of Vladimir Mayakovsky and Louis Aragon in Russian and French literature, respectively.⁷⁰

Partow's revivalist approach towards the language gave the poet the opportunity to build a poetic language beyond the boundaries of the literary lexicon. To create an unconventional poetic language, Partow utilized all grammatical potential of the Persian language rather than using the limited, standard language. For instance, the word "Faramushideh" in the line "*khod ra faramushideh*" (She had forgotten herself) consists of the noun "faramush" and suffix "-ideh," which turns the noun into an adjective. This new adjective is grammatically correct yet possesses an odd inflection.

Partow's attempts to use the full potential of the Persian language were not limited to creating unusual inflections. Like the earlier experimentalists of this era, Partow tended to use archaic Persian words instead of their more regular Arabic counterparts. Furthermore, he created new words based on the models of old Persian inflexion and grammatical rules to broaden the Persian literary lexicon. These words, mostly nouns, sometimes do not look natural to Persian speakers. Indeed, in some of his poetry collections, Partow provides readers with a glossary of unfamiliar words. For instance, in *Dokhtar-e Darya*, the word *Muzigar*, which is the name of one of the main characters, is taken from the English word "music" being altered to "muzi." He also added the suffix *gar*, indicating a sense of profession or occupation, to create a synonym for *navazandeh* or *musiqidan* (performer or musician). *Navazandeh* is Persian, and *musiqidan* is Arabic-Persian; however, the poet creates an English-Persian word to replace them. This, in turn, shows that Partow's motivation for the creation of new words is not entirely related to the nationalist trend of language purification. However, this is more about experimenting with the language of poetry in a way to give the poet an authority to go beyond the existing conventions and build an idiosyncratic poetic diction.

The second similarity between Partow's poetry and that of other experimental poets was the use of modern Persian prose as a source of inspiration. Like Moqaddam, Partow, who was best known as a fiction writer, borrowed his style of narration from the modern stories of the time. Nima Youshij, in a letter to Partow, admires this dialogue between Partow's work of poetry and modern fiction and particularly his "skilful use of story writing techniques." Indeed, the presence of fictional features in Partow's poetry is bold in a way that in some cases makes those works indistinguishable from short stories.

One of these elements in Partow's works is the third person omniscient point of view. In Partow's poetry, all characters and even objects have their personal voice, and the narrator is the one who ties all the events and images together. For instance, in the following stanza, the narrator is a third-person omniscient who tries to articulate the inner sentiments of the characters which may not be comprehensible from the dialogues alone. The omniscient narrator, the poet, jumps between the lines to express the hidden thoughts of the characters:

وقتي كه من مردم، يكبار ديگر
آن سرود "هر دو به هم شاديم" را

از برایم بنواز
تمام هستی همه گیتی، این دم خامش بود
موزیگر و آویسا هم خاموش⁷¹

When I die, once again,
play that song which is called “We are both happy together”
for me
The whole existence of the entire universe was silent at that moment
The musician and Avisā were silent too

According to Karimi-Hakkak, this kind of poetry is merely distinguishable from prose based on “the use of space” and “the presence or prevalence of poetic images.”⁷² This poem does not display the metrics and regularity of rhyme of prosodic poetry. Therefore, its rhythm is formed based on phrasing a prosaic, narrative text. Additionally, the relatively fresh images of the “crazy leopard cub” and “silence of the world” poeticize the expository, prosaic tone of the poem.

According to Attridge, the free verse in this sense is “the introduction into the continuous flow of prose language, which has breaks determined entirely by syntax and sense, of another kind of break.” These breaks are shown on the page by means of a different typeface which indicates a slight pause in the flow of words.⁷³ Most of Partow’s prose poems consist of short prose lines in which all components of the sentence are in their logical order. However, the breaks in sentences in the form of enjambment indicate a sense of rhythm to the reader.

In some other poems, Partow uses a few simple techniques to create a distinguishable rhythm. For instance, in the first part of *Jinus*, the poet simply repeats certain words to create a beat. Besides, to make a stronger rhythm and give a specific character to it, the poet places commas, as the moment of pause, among fragments of sentences to indicate offbeats:

آمد باد، باد آمد، یک دسته ابر همراه آورد
ابر پر تخم تیره، روی زمین تن انداخت
پر از ورون، نرمک نرمک، با میغ و مه، در هم آمیخت
وندر دل ابر و میغ، رگباری یکباره ترکی⁷⁴

The wind came, came the wind; it brought a bunch of clouds
The dark cloud, full of seeds, fell to the ground
Full of lust, gently, mated with mist and fog
And in the heart of the cloud and the fog, a bolt of lightning burst at once

Another set of techniques he uses are associated with the phrasing aspect of the poetic form. Indeed, the phrasal movement in a free verse poem could simply happen by changing the sequence of words in the sentence. This not only gives rise to an external rhythm but also busts the effectiveness of the speech. Creating reverse adjectival clauses is a kind of the phrasal movement which regularly appears in conjunction with the metrical movements in the works of Partow’s contemporaries, particularly Nima. In the following example, the adjectival phrase “*rangi vijeh*” has turned into “*vijeh rang*” which, though grammatically correct, is not natural in standard Persian:

هر شاخه از دهاوارش ویژه رنگی داشت
تنه اش رنگ مس بگداخته
دگرگونه شده هر زمان رنگی میافت⁷⁵

Each its dragon-like branch found its own exceptional colour
Its trunk: melted cooper
Its vivid makeup verily took a new colour.

In some of his poems, it is also possible to analyze the free verse through metrical and rhythmic analysis. For instance, in the previous stanza, the line “*Taneh-ash rang-e mes-e bogdakhteh,*” is scanned (- u -/- - u u/- - u u), which is a popular classical meter named *Ramal-e mosadas-e makhbun-e mahzuf*. This line is followed by two prose lines with a distinguishable phrasal movement in which omitting the verb “*bud*” disturbs the logical order of the words and consequently indicates a form of the beat. Moreover, other lines of the stanza rely on signaling of line ends by rhymes to generate an alternative rhythmic system.

One may question the significance of Partow in comparison with other experimental poets of this era. Especially if one investigates Nima, Moqaddam, and Behruz’s works of poetry, the originality of Partow’s experiments seems questionable. However, Partow acted as a bridge between the two major fronts of literary modernization. On the one hand, he maintained his ties with the Nimaic high modernists and, on the other, he gathered and worked with specific elements of the earlier experimental poems such as widened literary diction, fictional prose techniques, and free verse. Furthermore, the wide reception of his works at the time of composition due to his fame as a writer, his literary relationships with influential men of letters, and Nima’s endorsement of his poetry made him one of the leading experimental poets of this period. It is also possible to argue that these characteristics enabled Partow to pass down the achievement of his contemporary experimental poets to subsequent generations, particularly the younger Nimaic poets.

This chapter set out to determine a new classification of Persian pioneer poets in the 1930s and 1940s, including modernism, high modernism, experimentalism, and avant-garde. This classification highlighted the differences between gradualist modernists who were advocates of the neo-romantic approach in Nima’s early poems and high modernists or Nimaic modernists who followed his later, more radical suggestions in the process of poetic modernization. The main part of the chapter analyzed the attempts of Persian experimentalists, namely Mohammad Moqaddam, Zabih Behruz, and Shin Partow, to break the old regime of aesthetics through deconstructing literary tradition. In separate sections, this chapter examined the quality of experiments with the traditional poetic forms in the selected works of each poet. The experimentations of these poets were examined through analyzing their dialogue with the Persian prose of the time, their conscious misreading of traditional rhetoric and introducing free verse as an alternative rhythmic system. These analyses further support the idea that Persian experimentalism played the role of a catalyst for the more developed works of their contemporary high-modernist and avant-garde poets.

Notes

- 1 Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press and Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 89–90.
- 2 Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 89.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 84.
- 4 Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 9.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 6 Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. xiv.
- 7 *Ibid.*, pp. 90–91.

- 8 Some may argue the reputation of high-modernist socio-politically committed poets is partially rooted in the spaces used to present their works. A good example of this, as Ahmad Karimi Hakkak mentions, is the fact that periodicals related to the Tudeh Party of Iran facilitated the publication of Nima's works and that Ehsan Tabari, a prominent member of the party, played an important role in promoting Nima's poetry in the 1940s and early 50s. Ahmad Karimi Hakkak, *A Life in Essays on Nima Youshij; Animating Modernism in Persian Poetry*, ed. Ahmad Karimi Hakkak and Karmran Talattof (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), p. 54.
- 9 Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 216.
- 10 Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 60.
- 11 Hassan Vahid Dastgerdi, *Enghelab-e Adabi* (Tehran: Vahidnia, 1956), p. 11.
- 12 Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 60.
- 13 Seyf al-ding Najmabadi, "Ostad Doktor Mohammad Moqaddam," in *Jurnal of the School of Humanities and Literature; Special Issue: Jashn-nameh-ye Doktor Mohammad Moqaddam* (Tehran: The University of Tehran Press, 1977), p. 10.
- 14 The imprint says 'the second publication. No. . . . from 150 issues.' However, as far as the library records show, there is no sign of the first publication in any of accessible libraries. So, one may consider the phrase 'Chap-e dovom' part of the title. Also, the last page of *Bazgasht be Alamout*, as an advertisement for other Moqadam's poetry collections says: 'Raz-e Nimeh Shab; Rahi Chand Biroun az Pardeh (Chap-e dovom).
- 15 Mohammad-reza Shafiei Kadkani, *Advar-e She'r-e Farsi* (Tehran: Tus, 2000), pp. 52–53.
- 16 Probably Moqaddam or the interviewer has confused the poet's surname Millay with Miller. In this case, he refers to Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892–1950) who was a Pulitzer Prize-winning American poet and playwright known for her feminist activism.
- 17 This collection is dedicated to Zabih Behruz, Shin Partow, Bozorg Alavi, and Sadeq Hedayat, *Aniran* (Tehran: [no publisher], 1930), p. 2.
- 18 Hassan Mir-Abedini lists a considerable number of celebrated historical novels, short stories, and dramas being published during the years 1930–1940, most of which were focused on the pre-Islamic and pre-Mongol era. Hassan Mir-Abedini, *Sad sal dastanneveisi-e Iran* (Tehran: Cheshmeh, 1380), pp. 40–41.
- 19 Jahangir Hedayat, *Farhang-e Amianeh-ye Mardom-e Iran* (Tehran: Chshemeh, 1999), pp. 10–18.
- 20 Some of the most well-known writers of this period who had a clear tendency to the retrospective trend of modern literature, such as Sadeq Hedayat, Mojtaba Minovi, Abdulhossein Noushin, Mas'ud Farzad, Shin Partow, and Bozorg Alavi, played a major role in the wave of translations from European literature. This group, also known as *Rab'eh* (Four), was officially formed in 1934 and translated a number of masterpieces of modern western literature. The activities of this group are commonly seen as acting against a similar community with traditionalist inclinations called *Sabe'eh* (Seven).
- 21 Mohammad Moqaddam, *Raz-e Nimshab; Rahi Chand binun az pardeh* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1934), p. 10.
- 22 Derek Attridge, *Poetic Rhythm: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 182.
- 23 Roi Tartakovsky, "Free, Verse, Rhythm: An Introduction," *Style*, vol. 49, no. 1 (Special issue: Free verse rhythm) (2015), p. 5.
- 24 Mohammad Moqaddam, *Raz-e Nimshab; Rahi Chand binun az pardeh* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1934), p. 4.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 26 Roi Tartakovsky, "Free, Verse, Rhythm: An Introduction," *Style*, vol. 49, no. 1 (Special issue: Free verse rhythm) (2015), p. 1.
- 27 Derek Attridge, *Poetic Rhythm: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 181.
- 28 Parviz Natel Khanlari, *Hafvad Sokhan*, vol. 1 (Tehran: Tus, 1998), pp. 273–274.
- 29 Mohammad Moqaddam, *Raz-e Nimshab; Rahi Chand binun az pardeh* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1934), p. 13.
- 30 Mohammad Shams Langrudi, *Tarikh-e tahlili-e she'r-e no* (Tehran: Markaz, 1998), p. 189.
- 31 Mohammad Moqaddam, *Bazgasht be Alamout* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1935), p. 11.
- 32 Roger Mitchell, "A Prosody for Whitman," *PMLA*, vol. 84, no. 6 (October 1969), p. 1607.
- 33 Mohammad Moqaddam, *Raz-e Nimshab; Rahi Chand binun az pardeh* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1934), pp. 54–55.
- 34 Mohammad Moqaddam, *Bazgasht be Alamout* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1935), pp. 52–56.
- 35 Mohammad Reza Shafiei Kadkani, *Ba Cheraq va Ayeneh* (Tehran: Sokhan, 2011), p. 582.

- 36 Mohammad Moqaddam, *Raz-e Nimshab; Rahi Chand birun az pardeh* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1934), p. 1.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 109.
- 38 Mohammad Al Jamalzade, *Yeki bud yeki nabud* (Tehran: Parvin, 1941), p. 17.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- 40 Mohammad Moqaddam, *Bang-e Khorus* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1935), pp. 23–24.
- 41 There are some superstitions among Iranians about the unluckiness of a rooster singing untimely. They believe that in this case, one should sacrifice the rooster, protecting the household from its misfortune.
- 42 Nima Youshij, “Arzesh-e Ehsasat,” in *Darbare-ye she’r va sha’eri*, ed. Sirus Tahbaz (Tehran: Negah, 2006), p. 87.
- 43 Mohammad Moqaddam, *Bazgasht be Alamout* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1935), p. 34.
- 44 Mohammad Reza Shafiei Kadkani, *Ba Cheraq va Ayeneh* (Tehran: Sokhan, 2011), p. 586.
- 45 Although most of the Behruz’s experimental drama-poems were published between 1927 and 1934, due to the significance of Moqaddam’s experiments in forming the conception of experimentalism in Persian poetry, I decided to analyze Behruz’s oeuvre after his.
- 46 A governmental institution where a group of scholars were supposed to replace alien words with more natural and authentic ones
- 47 Interestingly, Homaei admires both Behruz’s prose and poetry, although he was a serious opponent of literary change. Vahid Ayubi, *Zabih Behruz: Zendegi va Gozideh-ye Asar* (Tehran: Nik Bookshop, 2007), p. 7.
- 48 There is no accurate date of publication available for this work, but due to its similarity to other anti-Islamic works of the time, it would not have been composed earlier than the late 1940s or early 1950s.
- 49 The exact dates of creation of these works are not available. However, as a part of his *Gand-e badavard* was published in the journal *Arman* in 1931, most of these works were not composed later than the late 1940s.
- 50 Paul Sprachman, *Zabih Behruz*, *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. IV, Fasc. 1–2, p. 112.
- 51 Roi Tartakovsky, “Free, Verse, Rhythm: An Introduction,” *Style*, vol. 49, no. 1 (Special issue: Free verse rhythm) (2015), p. 5.
- 52 This play was performed for the first time during the Ferdowsi millennial celebration in 1934.
- 53 Zabih Behruz, *Shab-e Ferdowsi* (Tehran: Sazman-e Namayesh-e Iran, 1967), p. 23.
- 54 *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- 55 Vahid Ayubi, *Zabih Behruz: Zendegi va Gozideh-ye Asar* (Tehran: Nik Bookshop, 2007), p. 10.
- 56 Jamshid Malekpur, *Adabiat-e Namayeshi dar Iran* (Tehran: Tus, 2006), p. 217.
- 57 *Ibid.*, p. 217.
- 58 Zabih Behrouz, *Shah-e Iran va Banou-ye Arman* (Tehran: Farous, 1928), pp. a–b.
- 59 He refers to *Shah-e Iran va Banou-ye Arman* as a failure in producing new poetry. He argues that Behruz could not reach a new rhythmic system, so he merely creates uneven verses in the conventional template of *bahr-e tavil*.
- Tondar Kia, *In Response to the Third Question of Andishe va Honar Magazine* (Tehran: Andishe va Honar, 1962), p. 18.
- 60 Zabih Behrouz, *Shah-e Iran va Banou-ye Arman* (Tehran: Farous, 1928), pp. 6–7.
- 61 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 62 Bahr-e Tavil is a type of Persian verse generally consisting of the repetition of a whole foot (rokn) of the meter hazaj (∪ – – –), a whole foot of the meter ramal (– ∪ – –), or permissible variations of the two. Mohammad Dabirsiqai, Bahr-e tavil, in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. III, Fasc. 5, pp. 503–504.
- 63 Zabih Behrouz, *Shah-e Iran va Banou-ye Arman* (Tehran: Farous, 1928), p. 28.
- 64 Mehdi Akhavan Sales, *Bed’at-ha va badaye’ Nima* (Tehran: Zamestan, 1995), p. 276.
- 65 Mohammad Shams Langrudi, *Tarikh-e tahlili-e she’r-e no* (Tehran: Markaz, 1998), p. 343.
- 66 Partow did much of his research and hosted Hedayat when he wrote *Alavieh Khanom* and published *Buf-e Kur* (The Blind Owl) when he was serving the government in India.
- 67 Ali Shirazpur Partow, *Do Nameh* (Tehran: Chap-e Zarrin, 1950), p. 118.
- 68 Ali Shirazpur Partow, *Dokhtar-e Darya* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1946), p. 2.
- 69 Ali Shirazpur Partow, *Do Nameh* (Tehran: Chap-e Zarrin, 1950), p. 119.
- 70 Mohammad Shams Langrudi, *Tarikh-e tahlili-e she’r-e no* (Tehran: Markaz, 1998), p. 342.
- 71 Ali Shirazpur Partow, *Dokhtar-e darya* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1946), pp. 40–41.
- 72 Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, *Free Verse*, *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. X, Fasc. 2, pp. 201–202.
- 73 Derek Attridge, *Poetic Rhythm: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 5.
- 74 Ali Shirazpur Partow, *Jimus* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1946), p. 9.
- 75 Ali Shirazpur Partow, *Samandar* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1946), p. 5.

SAMPLE LITERATURE FOR CHAPTER 12

Sonboldel – “Experimentalism in Persian Poetry During the 1930s–1950s; an Analysis on the Practice of Poetry in the Works of Mohammad Moghaddam, Zabih Behruz, and Shin Partow”

Sample

من مرغ شباویزم
روز پنهانم و از روشنیش پرهیزم
آشیانم کس ندیده هرگز
تاریک چو شد بیرون پرّم و خوانم¹

A scope owl I am
Day's latent light's fugitive
Nobody's seen my nest
When it is dark, I fly, I sing

در باغ های تنها
در دره های پر بیم
بر شاخ درختان تک رو
افراز درختان بلند پر برگ می پرّم و میخوانم²

In deserted gardens
Through fearsome valleys
On the branches of maverick saplings
Above all tall leafy trees I fly, I sing

چون نیمه‌ی شب گشت یکی پروانه
از دور بیامد برم و روشنیم خواست
از روشنیم بال و پرش سوخت
سوزی ز درون من بر آورد.³

At the midnight, from afar
A butterfly came close to me and asked for my light
On my flakes, her wings ignited bright
My fire flamed that made me glum

اکنون نیمی ز شب تیره گذشته
نیمی ز تنم سوخته
مانده به جای نیم دگرش
یا سوخته گردد یا نه⁴

Now half of the dark night's passed
Half of my body's burnt
Half of it remains
May burn May not.

برای دوری از مردم از کارهایشان از اندیشه‌هایشان
از آرزوهای کوچکشان از دردهای پستشان
برای ندیدن ریختشان نشنیدن سخنشان بو نکردن بویشان
برای آزادانه تماشا کردن نیست شدنشان
در ویرانه دژ الموت که دست کس بدان نرسیدی
که تنها آله بلند پرواز گردش پریدی
و مار در ویرانه اش سوراخ داشتی
در همان دژی که روزگار کلید زندگی و مرگ جهانی آنجا بودی
حسن آرام گرفته بود.⁵

To keep himself away from people their work their thoughts
From their little dreams from their cheap pains
to not seeing their face not hearing their words not inhaling their smell
To watch them vanishing freely
In the ruins of Alamut Fortress that no one could reach
Which only high-flying eagle could fly around it
And snakes have holes in its ruin
In the same fortress where once the key to world life and death was placed
Hasan had settled down

Zabih Behruz

کو آنهمه شهر و دهستان های آبادان و جوی و کشت و بستانش؟
کو شوش و جندی شاپور و دانشمندان و پزشکان و بیمارستان و تیمارستانش؟
. . . ویران . . . ویران
«نه دهقان نه لشکر نه تخت و کلاه نه آبادی و شهر و گنج و سپاه»⁶

Where are all the cities and prosperous villages and their brooks, harvests and gardens?
Where are *Shush* and *Jundishapur*, and their scientists and physicians and their hospital and
sanitarium?
Destroyed . . . Destroyed . . .
“Neither the farmer, nor the soldiers, nor the throne, nor the crown, nor the village, nor
the city, nor the treasure, nor the army”

خواسته جهان به چشم هیچ است و نام و ننگ پیشم پندار
،روزی از خروشی می‌خروشیدم و به این و آن می‌آگستم
،اکنون زیر تیغ بران پای کوبان می‌شتابم، جان می‌دهم و دم نمی‌زنم

غمی جز غم دیگران ندارم و شادی مگر برای جهانیان نخواهم
. . چیزی از تو درخواست نمی‌کنم
تو نخواستی داده‌ای و نیوزیده بخشیده
آنکه ندارد نکوشید و به داده‌ات پی نبرده.⁷
!من؟! هرگز
در بند گمان و نادانی من هر دم باری صد می‌میرم و
زندگی از سر می‌گیرم؛ کی از جان دادن ترسم.⁸

The attractions of the world are nothing to me and I consider both fame and shame insignificant thoughts
In the past, I was roaring in response to someone else's roar and grappling with this and that,
Now I am rushing under the sharp razors dancing, I would die, not saying a word,
I have no sorrow but the sorrow of people and I would not wish happiness except for the whole world.
I would not ask you for anything . . .
You have provided without us demanding and you have given without us begging
The one who does not own did not try and did not appreciate your gift
Me?! Never!
In the captivity of doubt and ignorance, I would die every moment a hundred times each time
And then I recommence life; I am not afraid of death.

اسپهد – (به دختر مینگرد) آری شاهها به از این صد چند و هزارن چندان شاه – کی بود آن؟
اسپهد – بانوی ایرانی ارمن: شیرین
!شاه – شیرین! هرگز نبود چون این
اسپهد – چونان نی _ گر بینی شاهها دانی _ لیکن نا دیده چه بگویم _ قدش مویش رویش
خویش در گیتی نتوان گفتن به کسی ماند
شاه – این سان!؟⁹

General – (looks at the girl) your grace; better than her hundreds and thousands of times.
Shah – Who is she?
General – The Iranian queen of Armenia: Shirin.
Shah – Shirin? She would never be like her!
General – I am afraid she's distinctly better, your eminence. But what can I tell whereas my king has not seen her yet? Her visage, her hair and her allure are doubtlessly inimitable.
Shah – This much indeed!?

شاه – بشنو . . . از من . . . بانوی ارمن نادیده انسان دل برده کز وی باز ستاندن نتوانم
از مهرش با فکرش در پنهان می‌گیریم در پیدا می‌سوزم و می‌سازم _ اکنون چاره‌ی دردم
کن یا مارا بر وی می‌یر _ یا ویرا سوی ما میخوان.¹⁰

Shah – listen . . . to me. . . The lady of Armenia takes man's heart even without being seen, in a way that one can not take his heart back – I cry because of her love thinking about her secretly and burn openly – Now find a remedy for my pain. Either take me to her – or call her to me.

فرهاد – اکنون پیشست خرم و خوشدل _ لیکن چندی بندی و بیدل _ تا طوسم بردند و تن آزدند
و رها کردند
شیرین- گفتندم کشتندت¹¹

Farhad – now I am with you happy and gleeful –, but I was imprisoned, and anxious for a
while – They took me to Tus and hurt my body and then released me.

Shirin – I thought they killed you.

Shin Partow

وقتي که من مردم، یکبار دیگر
آن سرود ”هر دو به هم شادیم“ را
از برایم بنواز
ولي موزیگر مست او بود
مست عشق آویسا بود
در اندامش میل بزرگی
چون يك بچه پلنگ دیوانه
که میخواهد خود را از بلندي پرتاب کند
او را میآزد
و چون اندر کوره فروزاني میسوخت
آویسا هم از پرستشهاي آتشین دلدارش
سرمست و نادان از هستي
خود را فراموشیده
. . . تن زیبایش را به موزیگر داد
تمام هستي همه گيتي، این دم خامش بود
موزیگر و آویسا هم خاموش¹²

When I die, once again,
play that song which is called “We are both happy together”
for me
But the musician was drunk
in Avisā’s love
There was a great desire in his body,
like a crazy leopard cub
Who wants to throw himself from a height,
which was bothering him
And he was burning as in he was in a blazing furnace
Avisā also because of the fiery worships of her lover
was charmed and unconcerned about [everything] in the life
She had forgotten herself
She gave her beautiful body to the musician . . .
The whole existence of the entire universe was silent at that moment
The musician and Avisā were silent too

آمد باد، باد آمد، یک دسته ابر همراه آورد
ابر پر تخم تیره، روی زمین تن انداخت

پیر از ورون، نرمک نرمک، با میغ و مه، در هم آمیخت
وندر دل ابر و میغ، رگباری یکباره ترکی¹³

The wind came, came the wind; it brought a bunch of clouds
The dark cloud, full of seeds, fell to the ground
Full of lust, gently, mated with mist and fog
And in the heart of the cloud and the fog, a bolt of lightning burst at once

هر شاخه از دهاوارش ویژه رنگی داشت
تنه اش رنگ مس بگداخته
برخی از شاخه ها دودی، چند تا کبود و نار
. . برخی دیگر به رنگ یشم
وین آرایش رنگینش در اسپیده دم، یا در آفتاب
یا در فرو رفتن آفتاب در لای میغ، یا در پرتو مهتاب
دگرگونه شده هر زمان رنگی میافت¹⁴

Each its dragon-like branch found its own exceptional colour
Its trunk: melted cooper
Some branches: smoky, some others: sapphire
And the rest: jasper . . .
At dawn and twilight
or whenever its dignity vanished from sight among the clouds at night
Its vivid makeup verily took a new colour.

Notes

- 1 Mohammad Moqaddam, *Raz-e Nimshab; Rahi Chand birun az pardeh* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1934), p. 10.
- 2 Ibid., p. 4.
- 3 Ibid., p. 14.
- 4 Ibid., p. 13.
- 5 Mohammad Moqaddam, *Bazgasht be Alamout* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1935), p. 11.
- 6 Zabih Behruz, *Shab-e Ferdowsi* (Tehran: Sazman-e Namayesh-e Iran, 1967), p. 23.
- 7 Zabih Behruz, *Dar Rah-e Mehr* (Tehran: Iranikude, 1944), p. 14.
- 8 Ibid., p. 21.
- 9 Zabih Behrouz, *Shah-e Iran va Banou-ye Arman* (Tehran: Farous, 1928), pp. 6–7.
- 10 Ibid., p. 9.
- 11 Ibid., p. 28.
- 12 Ali Shirazpur Partow, *Dokhtar-e darya* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1946), pp. 40–41.
- 13 Ali Shirazpur Partow, *Jinus* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1946), p. 9.
- 14 Ali Shirazpur Partow, *Samandar* (Tehran: No Publisher, 1946), p. 5.