

## 6 Margins, Resistance and Transformation in Classical Persian Poetry

### Yaghmā Jandaqi as Precursive Kernel of the Constitutional Revolution Poetry

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Unexpected changes in the poetic forms and themes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries suggest that in contrast with what *Bāzgasht-e adabi* (the Literary Return Movement) promoted in this era, a group of poets were keen to create more topical poems. Some of these poets attempted to depict the socio-political crises of the Qajar period in works which can be considered as early examples of poetry committed to socio-political change. Although these poems do not represent the modern sense of society and liberty, one may identify them as the origin of the innovative, revolutionary poems composed during the 1905–1911 Iranian Constitutional Revolution. Indeed, the socio-political poetry of the pre-revolutionary era, regardless of the perspective it takes on the crisis, can be seen as first attempts paving the way for social commitment in the works of the next generation. However, the primary concern of this paper is to show how these committed poems contributed to a trend of modernization and reformulation of poetic forms in Persian poetry.

Among the poets of early and mid-nineteenth century Iran, three poets are particularly renowned for political poems in which they criticize or maintain an advisory position in relation to the corruption of the clergy, lower state officials and the government itself. They are: Mirza Abolqāsem Qā'em Maqām Farāhānī, Mirza Fathollāh Khan Sheibāni of Kāshān, and Mirza Abolhasan Yaghmā Jandaqi. The following pages will introduce the political dimensions of Qā'em Maqām and Sheibāni's works and will then proceed to focus on Yaghmā, who produced the forms of poetry that had the most significant impact on the poets of the following generation. Yaghmā's oeuvre contains both poems indifferent to the cruelty of the ruling class, and poems in which he criticizes the socio-political status quo. This chapter defends the view that the later part of Yaghmā's poetry contains the hidden language of the subordinate people, suppressed by the common, public language promoted by the hierarchical power. Therefore, raising this hidden language against the public one might be the Yaghmā's motivation in creating innovative poetical forms.

### Qāem Maqām Farāhāni and Fathollāh Khan Sheibāni; from didactic poetry to political criticism

Mirza Abolqāsem was born in 1779 in Farāhān. After completing his education, he was introduced to ‘Abbās Mirza’s court (1789–1833), where his father, Mirza Bozorg (The Grand Secretary), was working as the minister and advisor to the crown prince. Mirza Abolqāsem was Abbās Mirza’s secretary for several years before his father retired and Fath-Ali Shah chose him as the new minister of the crown prince.<sup>1</sup> The substitution of Mirza Abolqāsem for his father provoked some animosity from Hāji Mirza Āqā (Grand Vizier of Mohammad Shah between 1835 and 1848) because he preferred Mirza Mūsā, Qā’em Maqām’s brother, for the position. This animosity, coupled with Qā’em Maqām’s loss of the Shah’s support immediately before the start of the last Russo-Persian war (1826–1828), was prescient of the pitfalls yet to come.<sup>2</sup>

Disillusioned by this unfair treatment, Qā’em Maqām composed a number of *qasidehs* (occasional odes or poems of purpose) in a critical tone (*shekvā’iyyeh*). In these poems, he sets out to expose the hostility of the courtiers and regional governors towards logical thinking. Qā’em Maqām attempts to illustrate the general corruption of the court while advising his addressees to change their attitudes towards this situation. In other words, although he maintains a critical position in relation to court corruption, he ends his arguments with some practical advice. For instance, in the following *qasideh*, he demonstrates how members of the government and courtiers conspired to undermine his position in the court, and he asks his addressee and patron to help him confront the activities of his enemies:<sup>3</sup>

ای بخت بد ای مصاحب جانم  
ای وصل تو گشته اصل حرمانم  
O, my bad fortune, O, my soul mate  
O, you, whose companionship has become the origin of my deprivation ...

ای شاه جهان نه حد من باشد  
کاین گونه سخن به بزم تو رانم  
O, you King of the world, it is not appropriate for me  
To talk in this way in your banquet

لیکن به خدا نمانده با این حال  
امکان سکوت و جای کتمانم  
However, by God, it is no longer possible  
with these conditions to stay silent and deny

صد گریه نهفته در گلو دارم  
در ظاهر اگر چه شاد و خندانم  
I have a hundred cries in my throat  
looking happy and laughing though in appearance

گر رای تو بود اینکه من یک چند  
زان تربت آستان جدا مانم  
If you thought I should for a time  
be separated from the soil of your court

بایست به من نهفته فرمایی  
زان روز که بود عزم تهرانم  
You should have told me in confidence  
on the day I was about to set off for Tehran

نه اینکه به کام دشمنان سازی  
رسوای فرنگ و روم و ایرانم<sup>4</sup>  
Not like this, that you made me lose my reputation  
Everywhere in Europe, Byzantium and Iran, as my enemies wished<sup>5</sup>

After Fath-Ali Shah's death, Qā'em Maqām became the Grand Vizier in Mohammad Shah's court. However, Mohammad Shah feared Qā'em Maqām's power and waited for an opportunity to eliminate him. Also, other courtiers noticed a duality in Qā'em Maqām's behaviour. According to Rezā-Qoli Khan Hedāyat, he was not obedient to the Shah, and his relatives interfered in some of the court's daily affairs.<sup>6</sup> However, his attempts to devise a compromise with Iran and Russia and another with Afghāni insurgent groups, as well as his constant resistance against colonizers, are illustrations of his ability to manage internal and external crises successfully.<sup>7</sup> Finally, in the second year of his rule, the Shah decided to have Qā'em Maqām killed. He invited Qā'em Maqām to Negārestān Park where the Shah's guard strangled and buried him the same night.<sup>8</sup>

During the last years of his life, Qā'em Maqām continued to compose critical poems about the structure of power in Iran. These were, however, limited to his critical views of governors and military officers. One poem, for instance, is concerned with the governors of Tabriz:

دلی دیوانه دارم و ندران دردی نهان دارم  
که گر پنهان کنم یا آشکارا بیم جان دارم  
I have a frantic heart and therein a latent grief  
Whether to hide or reveal it, I fear for my life.

مرا تبریز تب خیز است و لب از شکوه لبریز است  
چه آرها به جان از ملک آذربایجان دارم  
Tabriz is the cause of my fever, and my lips are full of complaints  
What flames are in my soul because of the land of Azarbaijan.

چرا از ضابطان ارواق صد طعن و دق بینم  
که قدری آب و ملک آنجا برای آب و نان دارم<sup>9</sup>

Why should I suffer the insults and invectives of the assigned rulers of Arvanaq.

Only because I have some land and a share of water providing my daily ration.

His critical comments remain personal in tone and thus bear comparison to the *habsiyyāt* (prison poems) of the Khorāsāni style, particularly the poems of Mas'ud Sa'd Salmān (1046–1121) in the Ghaznavid period, in which the poet talks about his lost position and wealth whilst accusing his colleagues of chicanery and deceit. The main difference between a *habsiyyeh* and a committed socio-political poem might be that the acute objection in *habsiyyeh* remains personal rather than social or political. In this poem and others of its kind, the poet is still at the centre of the narrative and does not address the affliction of the marginalized lower-class or represent the suppressed voice of society in his work.

One can argue, therefore, that as an advocate of *Bāzgasht-e adabi*, which approved of adopting the diction and poetic qualities of the fourth-century Khorāsāni or Irāqi styles of poetry, Qā'em Maqām made a conscious attempt to imitate classical poetry in his critical poems, but the chaotic conditions in that society and his tendency to use a relatively straightforward language, in comparison to that of earlier poetry, made them sound more realistic and political. This difference, however, is not reflected in other formal properties of these poems, which are not refashioned in structure and remain the same.

Although the context and, to a lesser extent, the language have moved towards modernity, the poetic form of Qā'em Maqām's poems remains classical. He composed a *masnavi* (couplet),<sup>10</sup> *Jalāyer-nāmeḥ* (*the letter of Jalāyer*), which was taken as a model for satirical, classical-like *masnavis* by poets of the next generation, such as those of Iraj Mirza in his *Āref-nāmeḥ* (*the letter of 'Āref*).<sup>11</sup> In this long poem, Qā'em Maqām tries to free his work from the language and occasionally the conventions of classical poetry, whose over-emulation was all but cliché. The poem is composed from the perspective of Jalāyer, the poet's servant, and seeks to demonstrate his critical view of governors through quips in a relatively simple language and style.

In addition, he criticises people lower down the totem pole of power. As seen in the first example above, the voice is soft and gentle towards Abbās Mirza and merely grumbles quietly like a supplicant. In the second poem, the voice is bolder, but only addresses the flaws of the lower-level governors. Therefore, although Qā'em Maqām managed to change Persian prose through the simple eloquence of his letters, which functioned as models for later writers,<sup>12</sup> he seems to have failed to establish a similar style in his poetry. A critic of this perspective, Shams Langrudi claims that the Qajars wiped out 30,000 verses of Qā'em Maqām's works after his death.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, even if this claim has some basis in fact and Qā'em Maqām composed poems with unconventional forms, they could not have had any impact on later developments within Persian poetry as they could not have been read by the public before they were destroyed.

Another political poet in this era is Mirza Fathollāh Khan Sheibāni, who was born in 1825 in Kāshān. His grandfather served under several Zand kings (1751–1794) and Āqā Mohammad Khan Qajar (r. 1789–1797) as the governor of some major cities. His father, too, was a high-ranking clerk and a minister of finance in the court of Mohammad Mahdi Bāmdād also states that Sheibāni was the grandson of Mohammad Hossein Khan Andalib, son of Malek al-Sho'arā Sabā, and one of the prominent leaders of *Bāzgasht-e Adabi* (Literary Return) during Fath-Ali Shah's period of governance.<sup>14</sup> Sheibāni entered Mohammad Shah's court when he was 16 and was soon appointed as one of the companions of the crown prince. Later, he became an influential governor during the premiership of Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Kabir. However, following Amir Kabir's assassination in 1852, like the rest of Amir's entourage, he experienced a long period of isolation in Kāshān.<sup>15</sup> After a while, his close friends, including some influential people and princes such as Mo'ayyed al-Saltaneh Tahmāsb Mirza, Fereydun Mirza Farmānfarmā as well as Hesām al-Saltaneh, managed to get him appointed as the special Clerk of Mashhad in 1872.<sup>16</sup>

Some argue that the isolation, state pressure and penury that Sheibāni suffered after the assassination of Amir Kabir (1807–1852) exposed him to the low standards of the lives of ordinary people.<sup>17</sup> Langrudi argues that Sheibāni reflects on his experiences of living like and among the subalterns, which created some of the early modern prototypes of committed poetry. In these poems, the critical gaze of the poet is directed not only towards members of the government, including the ministers and regional rulers of the time, but also towards the Shah himself. At times, these poems have a political, advisory tone, but, in most cases, they are directly critical of the political establishment.

دادگر آسمان که داد به شه داد

داد که تا خاکیان رهند ز بیداد

When the Sky's judge entrusted the right of judgement to the Shah

He wanted to save earth-dwellers from injustice

گر ندهد داد خلق دادگر خاک

دادگر آسمان بگیرد از او داد

If the judge of the earth (the Shah) does not grant justice to people

the Sky's judge will revenge

داد تو را داد تا که داد دهی تو

گر ندهی داد داد از تو کند داد

He gave you the right of judgement so you would give justice to people

If you do not grant justice, Justice will object

داد ده امروز تا که داد دهندت

فردا کتجا یکی ست بنده و آزاد

Grant justice today so you are granted justice

tomorrow, where the master and serf are equal

گوش به فریاد دادخواه ده امروز

تات به فردا نکرد باید فریاد<sup>18</sup>

Listen to the cries of supplicants today  
If you don't want to cry tomorrow

The language clearly echoes the didactic poetry of the Khorāsāni style, written between the ninth and twelfth centuries, with moral messages similar to those of Rudaki, Kasā'i or Daqiqi. The low percentage of Arabic words of the poetic diction and less complicated rhetorical figures show that the poem is modelled after the classical masters of that era. In terms of meter, too, the poem is based on a very popular prosodic meter for the ghazal template, *Monsareh-e Mosaman-e Matvi-e Manhur* (- / - u u - /u - u - / - u u -). In this poem, Sheibāni speaks to the concept of justice, but not as a modern concept born of the Constitutional Revolution. Niku-Hemmat believes that the political aspect of Sheybāni's works is related to the last years of his life and, except for this portion, the majority of Sheibāni's poems are his *Bāzgasht* poems. However, he does not clarify what he means by "last years" or indicate the source of this claim. Thus, one could consider Sheibāni a rigorous advocate of *Bāzgasht-e adabi* in so far as (1) he was encouraging other poets to join that movement; and (2) his political works can be considered a kind of poetical experiment under the rubric of that literary movement to the end of this life.<sup>19</sup>

Justice in this poem is still a holy covenant between the ruler and God. In clarifying the criticism embedded in it (justice), one must investigate the poem's references to socio-political events and figures. In the following poem, Sheibāni is speaking about the realm's governors and in the last two distichs addresses the Shah himself as the culprit:

والیان را غم ولایت نیست  
ظلمشان را حد و نهایت نیست  
Governors do not mind the country's grief  
Their cruelty has no limits or end  
وز جهاندار سوی خلق جهان  
نظر رحمت و عنایت نیست  
And the kings of the world do not look  
upon their subjects with mercy and favour  
یک سرائی نماند در همه ملک  
که در او فتنه را سرایت نیست  
There is no house in the whole country  
Which is not infected by misery  
وندین کافیان حضرت شاه  
بخدا ذره ای کفایت نیست  
Moreover, there is not even a bit of competency  
in the ranks of the competent at the court  
وین سخن های مجلس وزرا  
به جز از قصه و حکایت نیست  
And the blabber of the ministers in the parliament  
Are nothing if not fantastical tales and anecdotes

این حکایت ز من به شاه برید  
 که مرا از کسی شکایت نیست

Take this tale of mine to the Shah

As I have no complaints against anyone else

چکنی والی آن کسی کورا

غم و اندیشه ولایت نیست<sup>20</sup>

Why do you assign someone as a governor who

does not care about the land and the people?

The poet is aware of the ministerial shortcomings within the country, and accordingly, he addresses the highest ear in the land. Therefore, the appealing (complaining) language of the poem is not that of the common folk idiom. The addressee in this poem is treated as a sublime figure and the language is commensurate with the discourse of court poetry. In most verses, the poet uses the third person to address the Shah indirectly.<sup>21</sup> Although the critical perspective of the poem refers to a broad, public issue, the poem's form remains elitist.

Like Qā'em Maqām, Sheibāni's shortcoming is that he did not harmonize the formal features of his political poems, such as the rhythmic system and poetic form with the topical content. Although he establishes a convincing voice to criticize the government, he is not successful in adapting the structure of the text to the subject matter. His critical ideas are, therefore, adversely affected by his penchant for old conventions—with an added redundancy that was his own.<sup>22</sup>

Mohammad Mokhtāri states that varying degrees of change as per different aspects of culture stem from an incompatibility between the desires of individuals, which accords with the means society or the political establishment provides for the fulfilment of those desires. He stresses that this holds particularly true in the case of Persian poetry, pointing to a culture that suffers from the asynchronous evolution of social groups, which in turn can be conducive to inharmonious cultural products.<sup>23</sup> Sheibāni's poetry, then, speaks of two different societal demands. On the one hand, he wants to reform Persian poetry so that it is able to expose the tyranny of the age, and on the other hand, he wants to preserve inherited poetical conventions. This ambivalent approach towards literary change is also visible in the works of both the traditionalists and the gradualist modernists of the next generation. In this situation, on the one hand, the work is loyal to the traditional poetic standards, and on the other hand, struggles with traditional and hierarchical systems in social reality.

Thus, choosing a moderate corrective approach towards the past, the poet attempts to reform and improve some aspects of the traditional aesthetic instead of destroying it.

Sheibāni employs the *ghazal* content form primarily used for lyrical expression to illustrate his critical (political) views. Although lyrical poetry, with its scope for expressing the poet's personal feelings, is able to carry political subject matter, *qasideh* is oft more suitable for conventionally more societally relevant and critical subjects. By changing the medium of criticism from the *qasideh* to a more intimate and personal poetic form (*ghazal*), Sheibāni also attempts to

free his poetry from complex classical figurative devices.<sup>24</sup> Sheibāni's message to his readers is unburdened by convoluted imagery and rhetoric in comparison to former poets. This has made him, however, be more cautious when it comes to criticizing the Shah himself as even in his most critical poems, his tone is more didactic than critical:

شاه ما چشمه ایست عذب و زلال  
 که دور او خفته شیر و پیلی چند  
 Our King is like a fountain, sweet and clear  
 Around which some lions and elephants are asleep  
 می نگرود اگر چه تشنه بود  
 گرد آن چشمه مرد دانشمند<sup>25</sup>  
 A wise man does not walk around that fountain  
 even if he is thirsty.

While praising the Shah, the poet criticizes the Shah's inner circle. One can consider this a *zamm-e shabih be madh*, or asteism, where a complaint is clad in the clothes of intense praise. The poet uses this rhetorical figure to generate a courteous sarcasm through which he is able to criticize the Shah covertly: whilst praising the Shah for being gracious and honest, the poet warns wise people not to engage with him closely.

Whereas Qā'em Maqām and Sheibāni's innovations were mostly limited to content, Yaghmā's were mostly limited to form. In his poetic protestations, he espouses elements from *ta'ziyeh* (passion plays) and the *nowheh* (dirge) religious tradition. He also experiments with the folk idiom in an attempt to broaden the range of his readers to include ordinary people and not only the usual educated elite and courtiers. Thus, although Qā'em Maqām, Sheibāni and Yaghmā often address the same issues, in Yaghmā's poetry the language and the tone are not conciliatory, and there is little space for advisory gestures. Yaghmā is not a court poet, and his political criticism is mostly addressed to the people of his class rather than the court. He therefore composed some of his poems in forms more familiar to ordinary people. In contrast, the first two poets seem to have been interested in advising only the ruler and could not find a common tenor with ordinary folk, the masses. As such, the inclusion of Qā'em Maqām and Sheibāni amongst pioneering poets who were harbingers of new pathways for changing the neglectful social climate of their time is somewhat erroneous. Yaghmā's poetry has the ironic distinction of being both a poetics that garners common societal elements in its expression and one that weds elitist learnedness with centuries-old embedded traditional folk cognizance. His form seems to engage an idiom of nagging amongst the common folk: earthy per se. Conscientious of the function of religious rituals as theatrical spaces well-equipped for expressing frustration, Yaghmā embarked on writing poetry that combines poetic religious dogma with social protest.

A social crisis often impacts artistic production in two phases. In the first phase, when the crisis is still in progress, the artistic voice is concerned with the topical

turmoil. The second phase is when long-term pressures prevalent in the foundation of the crisis may translate into the form and structure, as in pre-war and post-war poetry: the crisis is an impetus for transforming the poetic forms. Yaghmā, whose life and works will be analysed in the following section, dedicated a significant part of his oeuvre to translating the moments of crisis into new forms.

### Mirza Abolhasan Yaghmā Jandaqi: A Wanderer Rebel

Yaghmā, son of Hāj Ebrāhim-Qoli, was born in 1782 in Khur and Biyābānak, a small village in the environs of Jandaq, Esfahān province. He came from a low-income family and had to work as a camel herder from the mere age of six.<sup>26</sup> Almost all *Tazkarehs* (biographical dictionaries) include an anecdote about an event that drastically changed his life. Apparently, Yaghmā encountered Amir Esmā'il Khan Arab Āmeri, one of the most powerful local rulers of that era, at some point early in his life.<sup>27</sup> At first, Yaghmā became one of Esmā'il Khan's carriers (letter and such), but, after a while, Esmā'il Khan discovered his talent in writing and promoted him to the position of the scribe. It was during these early formative years that Mirza Rahim Yaghmā, who had changed his first name to Abolhasan, began to compose poetry with Majnun as his nom de plume.

In 1801, the central government waged war against Esmā'il Khan. Bāqer Khan Enzāni, who was the commander of the state forces in that conflict, defeated Esmā'il Khan and appointed Sardār Zolfaqār Khan as the governor of Semnān and Dāmghān.<sup>28</sup> Consequently, Esmā'il Khan's wealth and staff were transferred to Zolfaqār Khan. After a short stint as a soldier, Yaghmā managed to convince Mohammad Ali Māzandarāni, Zolfaqār Khan's brother-in-law, to return him to his former post as the scribe. It did not take long before his intellectual and artistic capacity attracted the attention of Zolfaqār Khan, who made him his special secretary. Zolfaqār Khan's victory in Khorāsān's war (1817–1818) made him an essential commander to Fath-Ali Shah, which, in turn, had an enormous impact on Yaghmā's social climb.<sup>29</sup> This did not last as when, in the 1820s, the Shah sent a governor named Hāj Aziz Semnāni to the region to gather taxes, the governor who envied Yaghmā's position forged a letter in Yaghmā's name, defaming Zolfaqār Khan. This led to the Yaghmā's arrest further leading to the confiscation of his wealth and detainment of his family.<sup>30</sup>

After his release, he changed his pen name to Yaghmā (booty, despoliation). He became enthralled with mystical ideas and travelled to different parts of the country: journeys as a mystic wayfarer. However, it seems these mystical journeys served another purpose as well: avoiding his enemies. For a short period, Yaghmā also lived in Qom, where he established a literary group under the name of *Anjoman-e Mofākeheh* (Facetiae Community) with Mohammad Ali Māzandarāni and Mirza Mahdi Malek al-Kottāb, Qā'em Maqām's son-in-law. This group, as the name suggests, consisted of a group of poets and writers composing satirical poems and texts. Khan Malek Sāsāni's essay, which is the best chronicle of this group says this:

Every evening those three gathered together in the tomb of Mostowfi al-Mamālek in the ‘Old Yard’, and as Yaghmā called it, they conducted the business of *Anjoman-e Mofākeheh*. Mirza Mohammad Ali read orisons, Mirza Mahdi taught calligraphy to Mirza Khanlar Khan, and Mirza Mahmud Khan, sons of Mirza Mohammad Mahdi, and Yaghmā composed *Sardāriyeh* on behalf of Sardār Zolfaqār Khan.<sup>31</sup>

One possible implication of Sāsāni’s essay is that *Anjoman-e Mofākeheh* was merely a series of informal gatherings rather than a professional literary group. There is no evidence to suggest that it had any published outcome except for *Sardāriyeh*. One may argue that, regardless of the activities in which *Anjoman-e Mofākeheh* engaged, the members’ founding of a private, marginal literary organization indicates their intention to act against the institutionalized literature of the mainstream men of letters—and court poets. Forming such a group can be considered the beginning of a period in which several secret intellectual groups and societies started to be shaped. The members of *Anjoman-e Mofākeheh*, at that time, had been driven out of the Qajar court. Both Āqā Mohammad ‘Ali and Malek al-Kottāb were people whose lives had been adversely affected by their conflicts with the state. Yaghmā had problems with governors who were his enemies or showed cruelty to the masses. As such he created one of the earliest intellectual societies of Iran, the intention of which was to oppose the unjust behaviour of those in power through satirical poetry. Besides, it is not clear if Yaghmā composed *Sardāriyeh* for Zolfaqār Khan since as he probably moved to Qom to put distance between himself and Zolfaqār Khan. It seems, therefore, an unlikely postulate that he would dedicate a work to the Khan.

Thereafter he headed to Tehran where he came across Hāji Mirza Āqāsi (d. 1848), the prime minister. According to ‘Ali Āl-e Dāvud, Hāji Mirza Āqāsi, who dabbled in mysticism, became Yaghmā’s advocate even though Yaghmā did not like him and had even composed a couplet criticizing his management of country’s affairs as a minister.<sup>32</sup> Āl-e Dāvud does not delve into the chronological order of these events, and it is not clear when the said couplet was composed. Yaghmā’s biographers clearly imply that his relationship with the prime minister led him to the court of Mohammad Shah Qajar’s (r. 1834–1848) and Hāji Mirza appointed him as the minister of Kāshān (*vezārat-e hokumat-e Kāshān*), during which ministership he composed, *Kholāsāt-ol-Eftezāh* (Synopsis of messing-up), a narrative poem about the scandal of a famous family.<sup>33</sup>

Āl-e Dāvud says that after the circulation of *Kholāsāt al-Eftezāh* in Kāshān, the offended party tried to weaken and ruin Yaghmā’s reputation by depicting him as a debauched drunkard. They even forced the leading preacher of the city to disseminate this information. This yielded a forceful and insincere repentance from Yaghmā. Although he composed some poems as to his devotional sincerity, he could no longer live in Kāshān. Indeed, if it were not for the renowned clergyman, Mollā Ahmad Narāqi (1771–1829), Yaghmā could have been killed.<sup>34</sup>

Having survived this crisis, in 1838, he travelled to Afghanistan as a member of Mohammad Shah’s entourage. Immediately after this trip, he became familiar

with Sheykh Ahmad Ahsā'i's discourse and the 'Sheykhiyyeh' branch of Shi'ism through his son, Esmā'il Honar. Reading *Ershād al-Avām* (Guidance for ordinary people) by Mohammad Karim Khan Kermāni, he was further immersed in Sheykhiyyeh teachings. According to Āl-e Dāvud, Mohammad Rahim Khan (d. 1890), the leader of Sheykhiyyeh of Kerman, wrote a book entitled *Khan-e Yaghmā* (Yaghmā's feast), in which he focused solely on answering Yaghmā's enquiries about the religious practices of that denomination.<sup>35</sup> The fact that a book was written specifically to convince Yaghmā to follow that denomination suggests the importance of Yaghmā for the leaders of Sheykhiyyeh and probably his later position in the hierarchy of this sect. Yaghmā's interest in Sheykhiyyeh also caused a rift with Hāji Seyed Mirza Jandaqi the mujtahid and the judge of Jandaq. This fight may have been the reason why, on several occasions, he had to leave Jandaq and live in other cities for long periods of time. Yaghmā was a wanderer by nature and the thought of settling down in one place did not sit well with him. During the last years of his life, at his children's insistence, he stayed in Khur for a few years. Thereafter, he set out on his last journey all across the country, with a short stay in Herat, before coming back to his birthplace.<sup>36</sup> He died on 12 November 1859 in Khur, where he was buried in a small shrine. He asked his second son, Safā'i, to devote his whole wealth to the establishment of a 'Hosseini' (a hall for Shiite lamentation ceremonies).<sup>37</sup>

According to most anthologists and biographers, Yaghmā himself did not collect his poems and letters.<sup>38</sup> However, one of his closest friends, Hāj Mohammad Esmā'il took it upon himself to gather Yaghmā's works. This collection was published by Mirza 'Abd al-Bāqi Tabib, Hāj Mohammad Esmā'il's son, in 1866 in Tehran.<sup>39</sup>

Hāj Mohammad Esmā'il and his son went so far as to change some of the Yaghmā's poems because they were worried about revealing the poet's unconventional thoughts in a society governed by conventional ideas. Āl-e Dāvud points to the fact that they specifically changed the lines in which the poet criticized religious figures. For instance, they substituted 'ābed', 'zāhed', 'Sheykh' with 'kāfer', 'bābi' as well as 'nāseh'.<sup>40</sup> One may argue that by changing these words, they attempted to hide Yaghmā's interest in Sheykhiyyeh and to avoid accusations of apostasy.

Soltān Seyf al-Dowleh mentions Yaghmā's anxiety about the projected consequences of Hāj Mohammad Esmā'il's efforts.<sup>41</sup> Yaghmā himself claimed that none of the works Hāj Mohammad Esmā'il had gathered was his. In a letter to his son, Ahmad Safā'i, in 1852, he states:

Except for *Sardāriyeh* and a few old Persian letters, as well as some ghazals which are clearly mine, style-wise, other poems are incorrect or distorted. [...] Please add these worthless poems which [do not belong to me and] are attributed to my works incorrectly to [the collection named] *Ahmadā* (*O Ahmad*),<sup>42</sup> because this collection is, also, devoid of beauty and poetic conventions and, if not for its rhyme, is not poetry.<sup>43</sup>

In a letter to his friend Mollā Mohammad Hasan Esfahāni,<sup>44</sup> he explains how he attempted to destroy a substantial amount of his work. However, one can argue

that Yaghmā's claim about the number of poems mistakenly attributed to him is exaggerated. For instance, based on almost every text about Yaghmā's life and career, *Khoāsāt al-Eftezāh* is his work. Also, Seyf al-Dowleh in his letter to Esmā'il Honar about the errata in the published divan, emphasizes that a considerable number of those poems are his except for a few. He was one of Yaghmā's closest friends and students and was in his inner circle during the composition of these works. Seyf al-Dowleh explains that Yaghmā had composed poems under different pen names in *Ahmadā* and *Qassābiyyeh* (*Letter of a butcher*). However, different pen names are not justification for omitting these works from the divan.<sup>45</sup>

According to Esmā'il Honar, Yaghmā stopped composing satirical poems in the middle of working on the Tarji'band<sup>46</sup> *Hajv-e Belā Mālek* (*a satire not attributed to anyone*). Having decided to stop composing satirical poems, Yaghmā seems to have tried to destroy the earlier ones, or he may have compiled them in another book under a different pen name.<sup>47</sup> He also composed several *robā'is* (quatrains) in *Enābat-nāmeḥ* (*the letter of regret*) to absolve himself of the evil influence of his satires. There is no evidence that external pressures prompted him to stop composing satires. It may be that after years of composing critical poetry against the authorities to no avail he decided to quit. One may also argue that he was worried that his children's future would be adversely affected by his radical, critical points of view about the political and religious establishment.

Although Yaghmā worked hard to disclaim his satirical works, they were considered influential by some of his contemporaries and by later generations. Rezā-Qoli Khan Hedāyat argues that some of Yaghmā's satirical poems had innovative poetic forms and introduced new nuances into Persian poetry.<sup>48</sup> In contrast, based on an unfortunate post-rationalization that deemed base all poetical works between the fifteenth and late nineteenth century, some recent scholars consider these satirical poems nothing short of harmful, with little literary value.<sup>49</sup>

### **Yaghmā's Satirical Poetry: Publicizing the Hidden Transcript**

Yaghmā's abstention from any contact with the ruling class may explain his disclaiming of his satirical works. The low number of *qasidehs* in his divan also shows that he did not want to be known as a panegyrist. It can be assumed that he composed some panegyric *qasidehs* for the Qajar kings in the early stages of his career. However, almost none of these are available in his divan or anthologies and Tazkarehs (biographical dictionaries). The only panegyric in his divan is a *qasideh* about Mirza Seyed Mohammad Khan-e Tubā (1868), one of the Sufi leaders of the time. In addition to his immersion in Sufi ideas and ideals in the second half of his life, his conflict with the authorities might also have been a reason for destroying these panegyric poems.<sup>50</sup> A poem composed in his later years points to this lack of interest in panegyrics:

تا کنون کم سی گذشت از روزگار شاعری  
کافر یک حرف اگر مدح کسم در دفتر است

Until now it has been thirty years since I became a poet:  
Call me an infidel if you find one panegyric word in my *divan*.<sup>51</sup>

This aversion to panegyric poetry is also corroborated by Mahmud Mirza Qajar, one of Fath-Ali Shah's many sons who was a poet and a writer himself. Mahmud Mirza refers to Yaghmā as a hot-blooded and outspoken person, who constantly runs away from taking service. He recounts his first meeting with Yaghmā in which the latter was taciturn and gloomy because one of the attendants had told him that his clothes were not suitable for that occasion.<sup>52</sup> In contrast, his behaviour towards his friends, and generally those of the same social rank, was completely different. While he tried to perpetrate an aloof and unattainable demeanour and persona to the members of the ruling class, he was quite the opposite with those lower in the social hierarchy. For instance, the daughter of Adib al-Mamālek Marāghi, who was one of Yaghmā's closest friends in Tehran, and who shared many of his beliefs (Sheykhiyyeh) and passions<sup>53</sup> describes Yaghmā as an agreeable and cheerful man who was a bottomless treasure-trove of poetry and satire.<sup>54</sup> Yaghmā's lifestyle, together with his deliberate act of omitting satirical and panegyric poems from his repertoire, suggests that he was aware of the trend of the considerable clash between the ruling class and the subalterns: Yaghmā naturally empathized with the latter due to his own experiences. Although he comprehended the crisis of his time, since his social resistance was devoid of premeditated discourse and his mindset was traditional, his attacks were limited to local rulers and lower-level officials.

Yaghmā's angst unveils itself in an unconventional form in his satirical works, to the extent that his critique of the hierarchy of power in society is embodied also in his resistance to the conventions of literary language. In *Sardāriyeh*, a collection of satirical *ghazals*, Yaghmā tries to use Sardār Zolfaqār Khan's rude catchphrase, "zan qahbeh" (cuckold), in every single verse. By reflecting the harsh and impolite language of Sardār Zolfaqār Khan, Yaghmā, for the first time in his career, is reacting to the corruption of his age. His harsh tone and choice of impolite words mean to reflect badly on those he invokes in his poems. This acutely ironic poetry is a dark stage imbued with swearing and harassment. It portrays the atmosphere of the era, while attacking the hierarchy of values. He rebels against the presumptuous correlations between high-value subjects and haughty mannerisms that come with fancy words. Instead, he deems filthy language as more suitable for such high-minded folk. Nevertheless, his approach toward the poetic language does not, in itself, make the poem, as a literary work, a perfect example of the newly changed structure of poetry. He represents a radical corrective approach towards the ossified grips of traditional poetics. His position suggests the power of political anxieties in advancing individuation in poetics—and poetry.

*Kholāsāt al-Eftezāh* is an apparent attempt at structural innovation, where he has tried to use some *nowheh*-like (lament) monologues to direct the narrative's language towards ordinary people. In doing so, he creates a *nowheh*-like discourse and develops it by a built-up colloquial language. *Nowhehs* with colloquial idiom

and different arrangements of rhyme and prosodic patterns point to his rigour in breaking the monotony of classical Persian poetry. *Nowhehs* are used as a sort of poetic respite during the course of the narration and add a theatrical nuance. The content of the poem is compatible with Yaghmā's persona as a political insurgent: he is the first to unveil, poetically, the regrettable social divide in the country, without hiding behind symbols and metaphors. The story is set in Kāshān and describes a big party at which an attack is carried out by a group of bondswomen. In this poem, Yaghmā attempts to illustrate violence committed by the 'lower class', the bondswomen, against a group of men considered to be of higher rank. The bondswomen assault these drunk and affluent men. They beat them as punishment, saying that they have suffered at the hands of such men of leisure. Yaghmā does not evaluate any of these groups and does not try to depict these bondswomen as revolutionaries. Instead, he affords a theatre of retribution that is both utterly uncensored and unabashed.

As James C. Scott states in his book *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, every subordinate group creates a 'hidden transcript' representing a critique of power, spoken when proponents of the dominant rule are absent.<sup>55</sup> That is to say, every social class has its idiom in facing the dominant rule, although only understood by its own members. In moments of crisis or when these subordinate groups are under pressure, this language may turn aggressive and radical. It stands to reason, however, that cautiousness is key when the dominant class is face to face.

Scott also argues that the ruling class develops its own hidden transcript to represent the practices and claims of its rule. Not openly avowed, non-disclosure of information helps maintain a gap between the upper and lower classes. Scott demonstrates how a comparison of the 'hidden transcript' of the subordinates with that of the masters, and the two 'hidden transcripts' with the 'public transcript' offers a new way of understanding resistance to domination. By 'public transcript,' he means the general manner or behaviour of people from different social classes or with a different scale of possessions towards each other in a public and otherwise normal context:

Here we may perhaps say that the power of social forms embodying etiquette and politeness requires us often to sacrifice candor for smooth relations with our acquaintances. Our circumspect behavior may also have a strategic dimension: this person to whom we misrepresent ourselves may be able to harm or help us in some way. George Eliot may not have exaggerated in claiming that 'there is no action possible without a little acting.' [...] *Public* here refers to action that is openly avowed to the other party in the power relationship, and *transcript* is used almost in its juridical sense (*process verbal*) of a complete record of what was said. This complete record, however, would also include non-speech acts such as gestures and expressions.<sup>56</sup>

Yaghmā's oeuvre is two-pronged thematically: poems that are neutral and unbiased, and those expressing social cruelties as per the injustice incurred by the master class, the feudal lord, the king. Yaghmā's poetry is the frontier between public

and hidden transcript: the mediator if you will. In fact, in certain parts of his work, the public transcript succumbs to the 'hidden transcript'. Yaghmā becomes the voice of the subordinate: a voice markedly different from the other voices of *Bāzgasht-e adabi*. In addition, Yaghmā's innovations in form are in communication with his agenda for the public and the hidden transcript, as will be further elaborated.

The new conception of poetic expression presents a pathway to thinking of modern issues in also a novel way: classical poetics are no remedy for modern pains. Esmā'ilzādeh argues that portraying the real world was the most critical problem for the literature of Yaghmā's period, and he was continuously looking for an innovation to transcend or solve this problem. Esmā'ilzādeh claims that Yaghmā's rigour in offering innovation is evident in all dimensions of his thoughts.<sup>57</sup>

Two works in particular, *Āsār-e Morādiyyeh* (Moradi's works), and *Seyed Abud*, are ideal for illustrating how Yaghmā tried to change poetry. *Āsār-e Morādiyyeh* (Moradi's works), a satirical poem about 'Ali Morād Khan Tunī, one of the rulers of Khorāsān in the Qajar era is one of the said works. Unfortunately, there is little detail available as to the date of, and the reason for, the poem's composition. However, according to Āl-e Dāvud's, Ali Morād Khan had attacked a caravan on its way to Jandaq and Biyābānak in which there were some of Yaghmā's belongings. Personally affected by the cruelty of Ali Morād Khan Tunī and depicting himself and those in the working class as underdogs, Yaghmā composes a poem that echoes the pangs of a *ta'ziyyeh* passion play, knowing full well the societal impressions this type of performative art will yield. By adopting the theme of banditry and loss, he is, in fact, addressing societal ills to the people, revealing corruption at the governmental level.

According to Peter Chelkowski, the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries were the apex of development for the *ta'ziyyeh* based on its popularity and the radical changes it went through:

Despite criticism by the majority of the religious authorities who considered it sacrilegious for mortal men to portray any holy personage, *ta'zieh* became more and more beloved by the people. Performances, no longer restricted to the first ten days of the month of Muharram, lasted until the end of the following month of Safar. Plays commemorating the birthday of a saint or a prophet provided an excuse to extend the dramas to other months. Eventually, popular demand induced troupes to perform *ta'ziyyeh* throughout the year as an act of thanksgiving, celebrating such occasions as the happy conclusion of a journey, the recovery of health after sickness, or the return from a pilgrimage. At the end of the nineteenth century, *ta'ziyyeh* was on the verge of giving birth to an Iranian secular theatre.<sup>58</sup>

*Āsār-e Morādiyyeh* is a dialogue simulating the form of a typical *ta'ziyyeh* to the extent that the first verse of the poem states this is a *shabih* or *ta'ziyyeh* of a real incident.<sup>59</sup> It contains 503 verses and, just like a *ta'ziyyeh* play, it starts with

the monologue of *chāvosh-bāshi* (the corps' guide, frontman) and continues with monologues and dialogues by characters. Āl-e Dāvud claims that a *ta'ziyyeh* with dialogue as its platform was controversial and not yet established in those years. In other words, he suggests that it was Yaghmā who introduced dialogue into the thematic fold of a *ta'ziyyeh*.<sup>60</sup>

However, late Zand period (1751–1794) European travelogues illustrate that there were already *ta'ziyyeh* of the kind in Iran before Yaghmā. In addition, writing *ta'ziyyeh* dialogues as a text for future performances can be traced to the Zand period. It should also be noted that there is evidence showing that there was a book of *ta'ziyyeh*, *Jong-e Shahadat* (Collections on Martyrdom), written between 1800 and 1834, and accessible in Fath-Ali Shah's court library.<sup>61</sup> He may have been influenced by this book as he had access to Mohammad Shah's library. Saeed Talajooy also states that there were always speaking parts in *ta'ziyyeh* plays in the style of narration or announcements, but the intermittent dialogue was introduced during the reign of Karim Khan (r. 1751–1779), reaching its zenith in the 1840s.<sup>62</sup>

At the very least, *Āsār-e Morādiyyeh* was unique in that it introduced the polyphony of drama into the primarily monophonic discourse of Persian poetry. The importance of this innovation is most aptly highlighted when one notes the rigorous experimentations to the same effect in the era leading to the Constitutional Revolution and later leading to the poetic styles of Mirzadeh Eshqi, Nimā Yushij and Tondar Kiā, who are among the more stellar poets of the period. However, it must be noted that it is not clear if these poets were influenced by Yaghmā, particularly because they had their own vision of drama, which was more Western in its nuances and philosophical dimensions.

One may argue that Yaghmā too, had the opportunity to become familiar with the Western sense of drama through travelogues written by contemporary writers. He may have read *Masir-e Tālebi* (Tāleb's Route), published 1813, a travelogue by Mirza Abutāleb (d. 1806), who was in Europe between 1798 and 1803, and *Safarnāmeḥ-ye Mirza Sāleh*<sup>63</sup> (Mirza Sāleh's Travelogue), who was in Europe between 1815 and 1819: both talk about the theatre. However, one can find nothing in Yaghmā's divan to suggest his familiarity with Western drama, even though certainly reading other people's works had a significant role in shaping his ideas about dramatic poetry.

During Yaghmā's lifetime, another type of *ta'ziyyeh*, *shabih-e mozhek* (quasi-buffoonish *ta'ziyyeh*), was invented and evolved. This comic form of *ta'ziyyeh* probably began in the 1810s but reached its full potential in the 1870s. As Sādeq Āshurpur states, this kind of *ta'ziyyeh* was necessary for enhancing people's morale after two months of mourning. It was performed from about the eleventh day of Moharram. The narrations often revolved around the avenging of Imam Hossein by Mokhtār (1225–1289) and his subsequent victories to that end.<sup>64</sup> After a time, the contents of these works started to change gradually. A number of *ta'ziyeh* plays, mostly relating to the second half of Fath-Ali Shah's reign (1815 onwards), are about religious figures involved in comic situations. For instance, a *ta'ziyyeh* play named *Arusi-e*

*Qoraysh* (Qoraysh tribe wedding) about Fātemeh, daughter of the Prophet Mohammad, going to a wedding party is mentioned by E'temād al-Saltaneh in his memoirs.<sup>65</sup> Although there was a considerable backlash against such works, *shabih-e mozhek* became one of the proper types of *ta'ziyyeh* in Nāser al-Din Shah's era (r. 1848–1896).<sup>66</sup> Thus, one can consider *Āsār-e Morādiyyeh* a *shabih-e mozhek* that is not only based on a new form of dramatic art in that age but also innovative in making this kind of *ta'ziyyeh* political. A regular *shabih-e mozhek* still dealt with religious and semi-religious figures and issues, while Yaghmā was directly concerned with secular and political subjects.

مژده دادن صفرقلی مراد را

Safar-Qoli's glad tidings to Morād:

مژده ای دزد طیس قافله تون آمد

مستعد باش که هنگام شبیخون آمد

Glad tidings, O the thief of Tabas: Tun's convoy just arrived

Get ready because that is *camisado* time

بارشان سنجد و انغوزه و جوز است و مویز

برک و موزه و عناب و زریبر و همه چیز

They are carrying Persian olive, *asafetida*, walnuts and Zante currant and walnuts.

Woollen fabric, shoes, Jujube, Reseda and all sorts of goodies.

پای بر راه نه و بر سرشان شبیخون آر

شکم ریقوی خود را ز عزا بیرون آر

Let's go, attack them *camisado* style.

And make your weepy belly happy

خطاب مراد به صفرقلی

Morād's address to Safar-Qoli:

ایا جوان به چه منزل عبور قافله بود

میان تو و ایشان چه قدر فاصله بود

O young man from which place are they passing?

How long was the distance between you and them?

بگو ز عدت ایشان که بس به تشویشم

مخالفت بگذار ای گه تو بر ریشم

Tell me about their numbers because I am so nervous

Stop opposing me as your shit is on my beard.

مباد آنکه خیر نادرست پوچ بود

نه کاروان طیس لشکر بلوچ بود

I hope the information is not wrong

And your Tabas convoy becomes the Baluch army.

جواب صفرقلی مراد را

Safar-Qoli's response to Morād:

به ریش تو که خودم اهل کاروان دیدم

چنان شدم که ز شادی به خویشتن ریدم

I swear on your beard that I myself saw the convoy  
I was so happy that I pooped my pants.

رسیده اند کنون که تا حوالی طشتاب  
شتر شده به چرا چشم کاروان در خواب

They are in the proximity of Tashtāb now [this night]  
Their camels are grazing and the convoy is sleeping tight

نهاده با برک تنگ تنگ بر سر هم  
فدای ریش تو انغوزه نیست از گه کم

They have stacked tons of woollen fabric on top of one another it appeared  
May your lovely beard be blessed: asafetida is akin shit when it comes to  
your beard.

سپه بساز که اینک زمان تاراج است  
کسی که با تو نیاید به دزدی اخراج است<sup>67</sup>

Prepare your army because it is time to loot  
Anyone who does not join you in the loot should be sacked

By his critique of society, Yaghmā slams the opportunistic governors of his period. His Ali-Morād Khan type is not a specific class. Abuse of power and pillage comes in many shapes and forms. To portray the pressures on the common people, Yaghmā utilizes their hidden transcript, their idiom, and the most popular form of art among them to make his criticism public.<sup>68</sup> Thus he utilizes *ta'ziyyeh*, supported by the Shah and the upper class, but still maintains its popular forms of expression. He infuses an idiom that is folkish while observing all classical and elite poetic conventions.

By token of its idiomatic appeal, a poem like this sets itself apart from a typical satirical poem such as fourteenth-century Obeyd Zākāni's *Mush-o-Gorbeh* (Mouse and Cat). Obeyd also created enigmatic dialogues and transgressed the standard diction of Persian poetry to make it colloquial. However, the language of Obeyd's work finds proximity to the idiom of the common folk by following the traditional mode of *monāzereh* (argumentation). Therefore, the purpose of colloquial language or dialogue is not to communicate with common people but to adhere to the conventions/forms of the traditional form of *monāzereh*. *Āsār-e Morādiyyeh*, however, is an experiment geared to finding a new way of using colloquial language by innovating a new form—a new genre per se. While a narrative poem like *Mush-o-Gorbeh* is imbued with symbolic and veiled depictions, *Āsār-e Morādiyyeh* yawps on behalf of the common folk and names the actual governors of the era.<sup>69</sup>

The importance and influence of Yaqmā's satirical, political, and *ta'ziyyeh*-like poems have been overlooked. Histories of literature and theatre in Iran identify Mohammad Ali Afrāshteh (1908–1959)<sup>70</sup> as the first person who combined poetry and comic *ta'ziyyeh* to mock the government and the members of the ruling class.<sup>71</sup> Although Afrāshteh's works were instrumental in advancing this type of poetry and he peppered them with his insightful critical views, his works were merely a matured version of Yaghmā's *Āsār-e Morādiyyeh*.

For instance, in one of his most famous works, *Ta'ziyyeh dar Bakhshdāri* (*Ta'ziyyeh* in the Sheriff's Office), he describes how a sheriff, the town commissar and the village overlord try to confiscate ordinary people's belongings and imprison Mashadi Hasan, who is the villagers' representative. Notwithstanding the historical differences in the settings of these dramatic works, there are ample similarities between Yaghmā's Mohammad Shah Qajar era and Afrāshteh's early 1920s. A difference is that Yaghmā uses real names and events to highlight societal cruelty, while Afrāshteh's characters are symbolic of various people in his milieu. One can argue that Afrāshteh's familiarity with modern drama and, in fact, the prominence of modern drama in his literary landscape yields non-objective comparisons.

Another notable difference between *Āsār-e Morādiyeh* and the works of Yaghmā's predecessors and successors is its attempt to change both the traditional, monotonous rhythmic system and the solidified rhyme patterns in the conventional poetic forms. In *Āsār-e Morādiyeh*, each side of the dialogue is placed in a separate stanza. In order to reflect a more natural tone of speech based on the situation of each persona, all stanzas follow an independent meter. For instance, in the previous sample, in the first stanza containing Safar-Qoli's glad tiding to Morād, the poet has used the meter *Ramal-e Mosamman-e Makhbun-e Mahzuf* (- - / - - u u / - - u u / - - u -). Then he moves on to *Mojtas-e Mosamman-e Makhbun-e Mahzuf* (- - / - u - u / - - u u / - u - u) to reflect the change in the tone: from initial excitement to a doubtful and anxious dialogue between the two personas. Indeed, *morakkab* (alternate), multiplicative meters used in these stanzas harmonize the rhythm of the poem with the natural tone of speech. In some other parts of the poem, he also uses *monfared* meters to reflect the sadness and disappointment in the tone of the personas. For instance, at the end of the poem the broken forces of Morād sing in a *Rajaz-e Mosamman-e Sālem* meter consisting of a sequence of the same foot (- u - - / - u - - / - u - - / - u - -), which is mostly used for laments and elegies. In terms of rhyme patterns, most stanzas consist of more than three distichs and follow the rhyme scheme of a *masnavi*, or independently rhymed couplets. However, later in the poem, to show the pace of events and the desperation of the personas, he reduces the length of each stanza to a quatrain and changes the *masnavi* template to alternate rhyming.

Another little-studied work by Yaghmā which illustrates his approach towards changes in the formal aspects of Persian poetry is *Seyed Abud*. This poem is a satire written on behalf of Hossein Jandaqi, who was a friend of Yaghmā's and a clerk in the court of the governor of Kāshān. The target of the satire is Seyed Abud, who apparently plotted to confiscate Hossein's wealth after a dispute in the court of Khorāsān's governor. This poem has never been included in Yaghmā's divan, and it has only been published once in the journal *Yaghmā* in 1954.<sup>72</sup> According to the short preface to this poem, Hossein was himself an inferior poet. Thus, Yaghmā, who adopts Hossein as his persona, reflects his predicament, but in a poetic style that reflects his flaws as a poet.

Since the poem was intended to support Hossein and deride Seyed Abud, it seems odd that the poet mocks his friend while lampooning his enemy, but he successfully strikes a balance between a friendly metapoetic commentary on his friend's poetic skills and a heavy-handed satire against Seyed Abud. In addition, his use of uneven verses, adoption of common idiom and irregular prosodic rhythm makes this more than a simple lampooning satire. Although the subject matter of the poem does not differ greatly from that of his other satire, his innovative poetic form makes this poem unique to the extent that none of Yaghmā's editors have included it in their books of his compiled poetry:

هیزم تر بس که بر من میفروشی در دلم پیچیده دود

You have sold so much wet wood to me that smoke has reached my stomach

ز آتش هجو منت اندیشه نیست ای سید ابود ای سید ابود...

Don't you fear the flames of lampoon, O Seyed Abud, Oh Seyed Abud

بعد هفده سال خدمت می تو بدهی چیزها نسبت به من

After seventeen years of service, you accuse me of deeds

که نگویید بعد هفتصد سال عودت موسی را بیهود.

That the Jews did not attribute to Moses when he returned after seven hundred years

باشد آنروزی که من خود از تو پیش اقم مگر نشنیده ای

There will come a day when I get ahead of you, have you not heard [you stupid cow],

ای کم از گوسفند از طنبور نظم مثنوی مولوی معنوی این خوش سرود:

The nice daddies from the Tanbur-sounding verses of Rumi's *Masnavi*:

چونکه گله بازگردد از ورود

When the herd is coming back from watering place

پس فتد آن بز که پیش آهنگ بود

the goat which was the scout will fall behind

[...]

گفته ای چشم حسین جندقی شور است و شعرش بی نمک، به به به قربان ... بری.

You have said Hosein has evil eyes and his poetry is banal. Go fuck yourself!

رو فدای چشمهای مست همچون نرگسم گردی تو ای لوچ حسود.

My beautiful narcissus eyes are worth more than your whole being, O you jealous, cross-eyed nobody

میرزا یغما که در انشاء و شعر امروز بعد از معتمد پیش از همه است، میگریزد از منک ده برو که رفتی بمیولی.

Mirza Yaghmā who is nowadays better than everyone in prose and verse apart from

Mo'tamed, run away from me, run ... run you trickster

تو کجا و طعن و دق بر نظم و نثر چون منی، تا چند مس و مس و مس، طولش مده، گم شو برو، کوتاه کن گفت و شنود.<sup>73</sup>

You are not in a position to taunt and moan about my prose and verse, how much delay, delay, delay, don't extend your stay, get lost, and stop your jibber-jabber

One can see that from the second hemistich of the poem, the prosodic rhythm has been disturbed by extra syllables. According to classical conventions of prosody, the arrangement of the prosodic meter in the first hemistich should be maintained in every other hemistich. However, the prosodic pattern (- u -/ - - u -/ - - u -/ - - u -/ - - u -) in the first line, which in turn is an irregularly long variation of *Ramal-e Mahzuf*, with five subsequent feet, has changed to a slightly deviated form of the

same meter in the second hemistich (- u/ - - - / - u - - / - - u - / - - - u - / - - - u -). In the sixth hemistich, the *Ramal-e Mahzuf* meter has become even longer. Although in the seventh and eighth hemistichs, recalling a verse from Rumi's *masnavi*, the meter turns to the conventional form of *Ramal-e Mosaddas-e Mahzuf*, with three feet, the next hemistich contains five feet as well as two extra feet at the end in *mostazād* format (increment poem). This format repeats in the semi-final hemistich with six feet in the first portion of the verse and four in the extra part. The final hemistich is the longest one with ten subsequent feet in the *Ramal-e Mahzuf* meter.

According to Mohammad Dabirsiyāqi, *bahr-e tavil* is a poetic form in classical Persian poetry with uneven hemistichs which may contain up to 20 or even more prosodic feet. The number of feet may 'vary from line to line of a particular poem.'<sup>74</sup> One may argue that in *Seyed Abud* Yaghmā attempts to combine, probably for the first time, *bahr-e tavil* with *mostazād*, which is another template with unequal hemistichs commonly used for folk songs and religious laments. *Mostazād*, indeed, is a *ghazal* or *robā'i* in which the second hemistich of the verse is shorter than the first. Also, in the most common form of *mostazād*, the shorter hemistich adheres the first and last feet to the full metrical pattern. Despite the conventional form of *mostazād*, in this poem, the shorter hemistichs are only added to two verses and also vary in length. Besides, Yaghmā's excessive use of the metrical exemptions in almost half of the verses makes the rhythm, and consequently the template, less recognizable. Mehdi Akhavan Sāles refers to some other experiments by Yaghmā with unconventional forms of *mostazād* appearing mostly in his *nowhehs*. Although Akhavan Sāles tends to portray Yaghmā's work as a mere playing with the rules of existing traditional templates with uneven verses, he admits that Yaghmā's attempt to vary the length of the hemistichs in a particular poem is a step towards an infrastructural change in classical poetics.<sup>75</sup>

Yaghmā has attempted to reflect the anger and anxiety—and dismal poetic ability—of the persona in the prosody. In fact, the dangerous process of making the hidden transcript public is the main reason behind disrupting the traditional conventions. Personalizing the natural rhythm and rhymes of the narrator/persona under constraint and pressure is more important than the conventions of poetic forms for him. In other words, in this work, Yaghmā consciously does as he did in his *ta'ziyyeh*-like poetry, this time adapting rhythm and poetic form to the mood. By individuating the persona he individuates the poetics of the poem. In doing so, he parses common idiom even further, getting down to the 'nitty-gritty' of the character's natural speech; meanwhile addressing a broader audience.

### ***Nowheh* and the Hidden Transcript**

In addition to satires, the poems in which Yaghmā tried to approach, sympathetically, the hidden transcript of the subordinated masses are of two kinds. The first type, which bemoans social conditions with him as a member of that society, is similar to the poetry of Qā'em Maqām and Sheibāni. The second type consists

of religious poems, which are composed in a new style of '*nowheh*' (religious lament), written to be recited or sung in religious ceremonies as dirges for Hosein ebn-e Ali, the third Shiite Imam. Edward Browne believes that Yaghmā is the founder of this new type, which is called *nowheh-ye sineh-zani* (breast-beating dirge).<sup>76</sup> Jan Rypka also mentions this type of poetry in Yaghmā's work as one of the innovations in the poetry of the Qajar era.<sup>77</sup> These poems are also significant due to the influence they had on the revolutionary poetry of the Constitutional Revolution (1905–1911) as they provided a new system of poetic expression to yawp the hidden transcript in the public space.

Referring to the colloquial language in some of Yaghmā poems, Āriyānpur argues that he could have played an important role in shaping the language of Constitutional poetry.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, one may consider this new poetic language as the basis for the poetry of the Constitutional Revolution where the primary goal of the poet was to publicize the revolutionary ideas of the age. Doing so, they needed to use the poetry as a media to convey their message. Thus, they required a simplified literary language which is capable of carrying modern ideas of the revolution. Yaghmā's innovative style is the best model as it was experienced for similar objectives before and speaks to a time that similarly is setting the stage for a social-minded political upheaval. To prove his idea, Āriyānpur mentions one of Yaghmā's poems which reminds him of Iraj Mirza's work in every facet of its poetic make-up.<sup>79</sup>

Yaghmā writes:

در خواب شهید کربلا را  
دیدم که ز دیده اشکریز است  
I have seen the martyrdom of Karbala (Hossein b. 'Ali)—  
I saw tears dropping from his eyes  
گفتا نه ننالم از اعدای  
بر من ز احباب رستخیز است  
He said I do not cry because of my enemies  
My resurrection is for my 'supporters'  
خاصه خرکی که در تکاپا  
هر شام و سحر به عر و تیز است  
Specially [for punishing] that little donkey  
Who is screaming and farting every day to morn me

Iraj Mirza writes:

زن قحبه چه میکشی خودت را  
دیگر نشود حسین زنده  
[...]  
O, cuckold why you are killing yourself?  
Hossein would not become alive anymore  
من هم گویم یزید بد کرد  
لعنت به یزید بد کننده  
I say Yazid has done a terrible thing as well:  
Curse be Yazid the oppressor!

اما دگر این کتل مثل چیست  
[...] وین دسته خنده آورنده

However, what are these ensigns;  
Moreover, what is this ludicrous squad.

در جنگ دو سال قبل دیدی  
شد چند کرور نفس رنده

Have you seen in the war, two years ago?

Millions of people were minced

از این همه کشتگان نگریدید  
یک مو ز زهار چرخ کنده<sup>80</sup>

That many victims could not pain the world:

Even as much as a detachment of a hair from its genitals.

There are several similarities between Yaghmā's poem and that of Iraj. In fact, we can consider the language and rhyme in Iraj's work as a consequence of Yaghmā's experiments. The aggressive and straightforward language of Yaghmā's work reflects the 'hidden transcript' among ordinary people against the corrupted religious figures of the era. Similarly, the language of post-revolutionary poets, such as that of Iraj, whose intention was to criticize extreme religious behaviour in Iranian social life is based on that 'hidden transcript.'

However, the perspective of these two poets is not precisely the same. Yaghmā criticizes a certain preacher for his extreme behaviour in the condolence ceremonies held yearly for Hossein B. 'Ali, whereas Iraj addresses ordinary people who attend these ceremonies. Besides, Iraj's position on religious demonstrations is entirely different from that of Yaghmā. Iraj, just like most of the intelligentsia of his era, sees religious demonstrations as a sign of backwardness, whereas Yaghmā merely criticizes the dogma displayed by the folk as per these demonstrations. As we said before, although Yaghmā is not a religious person in his private life he has a considerable number of *nowhehs* that were used in public condolence ceremonies. In fact, one can argue that *nowheh* in Yaghmā's oeuvre is a form of folk poetry rather than a religious one.

Seeing *nowheh* as a folk template, Yaghmā uses it as a space for the dissemination of the 'hidden transcript.' It is using the effective passion play *nowheh* that lends to his ability to resonate the private voice of the folk in a public sphere. Scott suggests that cultural products directly conversant with the masses could develop the idea of resistance against dominance by expressing the idea of resistance in the form of an anonymous folk work of art:

I suggest, along these lines, how we might interpret the rumors, gossip, folktales, songs, gestures, jokes, and theatre of the powerless as vehicles by which, among other things, they insinuate a critique of power while hiding behind anonymity or behind innocuous understandings of their conduct.<sup>81</sup>

Concealing the hidden transcript of the subordinate masses in an anonymous folk-like poem is a form of insubordination which Scotts refers to as the 'infrapolitics of the powerless.'<sup>82</sup> Indeed, this process of insubordination by breaking the

hierarchy of discourses, and dominating a common discourse of the lower class in a poem is a political or infrapolitical act. Also, the target audience in *nowheh* were changed from the upper social class as the readers of classical poetry to the common people. On the other hand, one may argue that folk-like formats might be a more familiar space for ordinary people to face new ideas. This stratum of society is inclined to remember the sufferings of the saints in moments of crises in order to self-heal, as such a remembrance provides them with a fraternal theatre, where their problems dissipate in the face of anxieties of guilt and sin.

Choosing *nowheh* and *ta'ziyyeh* as the structural basis for his political poetry, Yaghmā incites a departure that gives rise to the revolutionary poetry of the next generation.<sup>83</sup> Indeed, Yaghmā's movement towards freer poetic forms and colloquialism in literary language, particularly in his *nowhehs*, paved the way for the Constitutional poets' corrective efforts directed at the hierarchical and autocratic system of classical poetics.

In the following *nowheh*, even though the poet portrays the events at Karbalā, he presents *himself* as the martyr:

دلم از زندگانی سخت سیره  
 بمیرم هر چه زوتر باز دیره  
 My heart is so tired of this life  
 Even if I die as early as now, it is too late  
 زنان را دل سرای درد و ماتم  
 تن مردان نشان تیغ و تیره  
 Women's hearts are the houses of pain and grief  
 Men's bodies are targeted by swords and arrows  
 پسر در خون تپان دختر عزادار  
 برادر کشته و خواهر اسیره  
 Boys are drenched in their blood and girls are mourners  
 Brother is murdered, and the sister is captured  
 به کام مادران لخت جگر خون  
 به حلق کودکان خوناب شیر  
 Mothers have congealed blood of their livers in their mouths;  
 Infants suckle serum in lieu of milk  
 اسیران را به جای اشک و افغان  
 شرر در چشم و آتش در ضمیره  
 In the eyes and souls of the captives  
 There are flames and fire instead of tears and wailing  
 [...]  
 بدین ماتم کجا باشم شکویا  
 کجا زخمی چنین مرهم پذیر  
 How could I be patient with this grief?  
 How is such a wound treatable?  
 ترا آنان که تن در خون کشیدند  
 الهی، خاکشان با خود نگیر  
 O God, I wish the earth would reject them

Those who drenched your body in your blood

[...]

جهان دشمن، زمین سخت، آسمان دور  
غریب کربلا، مادرت بمیره

The world is your enemy, the earth is so hard and the sky so far

Hey, you, the stranger in Karbalā, your mom would prefer to die rather than see you like this

Many verbs, mostly those placed at the end of each verse as the rhyming words appear in their broken colloquial form. Also, some words such as *zutar* and *mār*, which are the shortened versions of *zudtar* (sooner) and *mādarat* (your mother) are written in their common expressions. The poem is composed in the *Hazaj-e Mosaddas-e Mahzuf* (- - u/ - - - u/ - - - u) which is the standard meter of *tarāneh* or *dobeyti* (folk quatrains).

The poem has a very personal tone in the first distich and a sympathetic one, specially when talking about the suffering of men and women. It seems that the poet is in pain because he is in a state of empathy with the characters at Karbalā. Yaghmā gives voice to the personas of Karbalā with the tone and register of the folk considered to be the lower strata of society: he is using their language to illustrate their ‘hidden transcript’ more convincingly. In contrast, in Qā'em Maqām and Sheibāni's poetry, the addressee is the aristocracy. That is why, in their works, ‘the hidden transcript’ remains hidden, and their critical views remain personal, mechanical, and artificial as they attempt to imitate traditional forms such as *habsiyeh* and *bas-o-shekvā*.<sup>84</sup>

To conclude, the above discourse highlights the effects of internalizations crisis by some of the poets in pre-Constitutional era, some of whom had an immense influence on the make-up of the poetics recognized as those of the Constitutional Revolution. It speaks to the means and degrees by which they reflected the voice of the suppressed using their poetic innovations. The concept of resistance against corrupt power in Qā'em Maqām and Sheibāni is not as internalized as that of Yaghmā, as the infrastructure of their poetry shows that they still defend the hierarchical and autocratic order of traditional poetics. Thus, although they attempted to reflect the crisis of the era, they did not move away from their ‘regular’ readers with their penchant for classics: the elite.

In contrast, Yaghmā started a corrective movement in order to make his poetry more appealing and accessible to the non-elite. Thus, he did what his two contemporaries could not: he gave voice to the repressed. Publicizing the ‘hidden transcripts’ of the ordinary people through experimentation, Yaghmā subverted the hierarchical systems of subject matter and poetic form. He addressed the topical issues facing his society and spearheaded a movement to a colloquial poetic lexicon. He also attempted to break with the solidified standard poetic forms through experimenting with metrical patterns and folk templates. His attempt to remodel the erstwhile autocratic aesthetic poetics led to a trend of politicizing Persian poetry, a daring act, the fruits of which were to be savoured by the poets of the Constitutional Revolution.

## Notes

- 1 Seyed Badr al-Dīn Yaghmā'i, ed., *Divan-e Ash 'ār-e Qā'em Maqām Farāhāni* (Tehran: Sharq, 1988), 5.
- 2 In a meeting with the principal members of the government and regional rulers, who were inclined to continue the war with Russia, the Shāh asked Qā'em Maqām's opinion, and he expressed his opposition by comparing the wealth of Iran unfavourably to that of Russia. The Shāh was none too plussed by this argument, and the attendants accused Qā'em Maqām of supporting the enemy. Yaghmā'i (ed.), *Divan-e Ash 'ār-e Qā'em Maqām Farāhāni*, vi-vii.
- 3 According to Āriyānpur, 'Abbās Mirza is the addressee of this poem. Yahyā Āriyānpur, *Az Sabā tā Nimā* (Tehran: Franklin, 1976), 62.
- 4 Yaghmā'i (ed.), *Divan-e Ash 'ār-e Qā'em Maqām Farāhāni*, 104.
- 5 All poems have been translated by the author of this paper.
- 6 Jamshid Kiyānfār, ed., *Rowzat al-Safā-ye Nāseri*, vol. 15 (Tehran: Asātir, 2001), 8164–167.
- 7 Āriyānpur, *Az Sabā tā Nimā*, 63–65.
- 8 Yaghmā'i (ed.), *Divan-e Ash 'ār-e Qā'em Maqām Farāhāni*, 8.
- 9 Yaghmā'i (ed.), *Divan-e Ash 'ār-e Qā'em Maqām Farāhāni*, 99.
- 10 "Masnavi, also *mathnavī*. Also referred to as *muthannā* (doubled), *athnayn athnayn* (two by two), masnavi is one of the oldest poetic forms in the Persian-speaking world. Its most prevalent uses historically have been in epic-narrative, epic-romantic, epic-didactic and homiletic expressions. It is a prosodic form (rhyme scheme) in which each distich (*bayt*) consists of two metrically identical rhyming hemistichs (*misra'*). For more see J.S. Meisami and A. Korangy Isfāhani, "Masnavī," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, edited by Roland Green, Stephen Cushman, and Clare Cavanagh. 4th ed. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2012). Accessed January 20, 2020, URL: <https://search-credoreference-com.ezproxy.st-andrews.ac.uk/content/entry/prpoetry/masnavi/0?institutionId=2454>.
- 11 'Ārefnāmeḥ is a long satirical *masnavi* by Iraj Mirza. It is known for its overly homoerotic content addressed to Abol-Qāsem 'Āref Qazvini, a contemporary poet and musician friend of Iraj. According to Āriyānpur, Iraj Mirza composed this 515-verse-long couplet to ease the irritation caused by 'Āref's discourteous behaviour during his stay in Mashhad in 1920. Āriyānpur gives various historical accounts as per the creation of 'Ārefnāmeḥ, most of which blame 'Āref for affronting his old friend, Iraj, purposefully. Apparently, 'Āref went to Mashhad in support of the semi-independent government of Colonel Mohammad-Taqi Khan Pesyān. He not only insulted Qajar family in his concert but also behaved disrespectfully when met Iraj in public. Āriyānpur, *Az Sabā tā Nimā*, 391–99.
- 12 Yahyā Āriyānpur, *As Sabā ta Nimā*, 65-66.
- 13 Mohammad Shams Langrudi, *Maktab-e Bāzgasht* (Tehran; Markaz, 1993), 175.
- 14 Mahdi Bāmdād, *Tārikh-e Rejāl-e Irān* (Tehran, Zavvār, 1969), III, 55.
- 15 Ibid, 3.
- 16 Ahmad Karami, ed., *Divan-e Ash 'ār-e Mirza Fathollāh Khan Sheibāni* (Tehran: Ma Publication, 1992), 2.
- 17 Langrudi, *Maktab-e Bāzgasht*, 224.
- 18 Karami (ed.), *Divan-e Ash 'ār-e Mirza Fathollāh Khan Sheibāni*, 139.
- 19 Karami (ed.), *Divan-e Ash 'ār-e Mirza Fathollāh Khan Sheibāni*, 23-29; See also A. Niku Hemmat, "Sheibāni," in *Divan-e Ash 'ār-e Mirza Fathollāh Khan Sheibāni*, Ahmad Karami, ed. (Tehran: Ma, 1992), 23–29.
- 20 Karami (ed.), *Divan-e Ash 'ār-e Mirza Fathollāh Khan*, 15.
- 21 This is a rhetorical technique which signifies the respect of the speaker to the noble addressee and, in turn, shows the hierarchical distinction between the Shāh and the masses (*khalq*). Also, the poet refers to the Shāh as *Jahandār* (Keeper of the World), which is a common complimentary sobriquet in court literature.

- 22 Metrically, the poem is composed in a popular prosodic meter for classical didactic poetry (*Khafif-e Mosadas-e Makhbun* - - u / - u - u / - - u -). The poetic form is also that of a conventional *ghazal* with its usual rhyme scheme.
- 23 Mohammad Mokhtāri, *Cheshm-e Morakkab* (Tehran: Tus, 2009), 38.
- 24 Poets such as Obeyd Zākāni (d. 1371), famous for his satires and even Hāfez (d. 1390) criticized their contemporary rulers using the *ghazal*.
- 25 Mokhtāri, *Cheshm-e Morakkab*, 18.
- 26 Āriyānpur, *Az Sabā tā Nimā*, 109.
- 27 It has been said that Esmā'il Khan recognized Yaghmā's talents after a brief conversation and attempted to raise him as his son. According to a version, considered to be implausible, he exchanged his real son, Rafī' Khan, with Yaghmā because he thought the latter would be more successful in his court than his own son. Seyyed 'Ali Āl-e Dāvud, ed., *Majmu'eh-ye Āsār-e Yaghmā-ye Jandaqi* (Tehran: Tus, 1988), I, 25.
- 28 Āriyānpur made a mistake about this period. He considers Ja'far Soltān, who was the deputy of Zolfaqār Khan, to be the ruler of Semnān in that period. However, he was only Zolfaqār Khan's representative in Semnān when he was on his way to Khorāsān to help Shoajā' al-Saltaneh, the Khorāsān ruler, to defend that region against Afghansans in 1817 (1233 AH).
- 29 Āl-e Dāvud (ed.), *Majmu'eh-ye Āsār-e Yaghmā Jandaqi*, 26.
- 30 Āl-e Dāvud (ed.), *Majmu'eh-ye Āsār-e Yaghmā Jandaqi*, 27.
- 31 Khan Malek Sāsāni, "Mirza Abolhasan Yaghmā of Jandaq", *Yaghmā*, no. 213 (1966): 26.
- 32 Āl-e Dāvud (ed.), *Majmu'eh-ye Āsār-e Yaghmā Jandaqi*, 30.

نگذاشت به ملک شاه حاجی درمی  
شد صرف قنات و توپ هر بیش و کمی  
نی مزرع دوست را از آن آب نمی  
نی خایه خصم را از آن توپ غمی

Hāji did not leave even a penny in the Shah's land—

The whole country's wealth was spent for irrigation channels and guns.

However, neither did our friends' fields receive a drop of that water,

Nor did our enemies' balls/testicles feel the pang of those guns.

- 33 Āl-e Dāvud, ed., *Majmu'ye Āsār-e Yaghmā-ye Jandaqi*, 29.
- 34 Having become a leading Mojtaهد, Mollā Ahmad became more powerful than most high-ranking governors of his period. He is also famous because he was the first to introduce the concept of 'velayāt-e faqih' into the political sphere. This concept technically suggested that the leading faqih of the time is the ideal candidate for becoming the monarch. A large number of followers all over the country enabled him to force the government to endorse and follow most of his decrees. He was even able to fire the regional rulers who acted as the Shāh's representatives in provinces. Mirza Mohammad of Tonekāboni states, he had recurring disputes with regional governors, who accused him of interference in governmental matters. He mentions the time when Mollā Ahmad was accused of wilful disposal of a provincial ruler. He also goes to condemn Fath-Ali Shāh by using a religiously significant term that suggested 'cruelness' on the Shāh's part and forces him to apologize. Mollā Ahmad Narāqi was also one of the first protestors against the Qajar kings. After the first war between Iran and Russia in 1813, Iran was forced to sign the *Golestān* agreement, which forced Iran into giving up a considerable number of its Northern regions to Russia. However, some of the most powerful Mojtaهدs tried to force the government to break the agreement and attack the Russian army to reclaim the lost territories. Demonstrations started in 1825, a year before the second Russo-Persian War (1826–1828). These uprisings were led by Seyyed Mohammad of Esfahān and Mollā Ahmad Narāqi. Yet defeat in this war led many people to voice their angst against Mollā Ahmad. Even Yaghmā questioned Mollā Ahmad's unrealistic political aspirations and thoughts; nonetheless, Yaghmā's initial entry into the world of

- political protest and resistance is in fact the result of his relationship with Mollā Ahmad. See Mirza Mohammad Tonekāboni, *Qesas al-Olamā* (Western Azerbaijan, Shajareh-ye Tayyebeh ebooks), pp. 321–324; See also Bāmdād, *Tārikh-e Rejāl-e Irān*, vol. VI, 21.
- 35 Āl-e Dāvud (ed.), *Majmu'eh-ye Āsār-e Yaghmā Jandaqi*, 30.
- 36 Āriyānpur, *Az Sabā tā Nimā*, 111.
- 37 'Husaynia, buildings specifically designed to serve as venues for Moharram ceremonies commemorating the martyrdom of Hoseyn b. 'Ali (q.v.), and to accommodate visiting participants (Dehkhodā, Loghatnāmeḥ, s.v.). This name has also been used for certain branches of early Shi'ism and as a place name.  
Jean Calmard, 'Husaynia,' *Iranica*, vol. XII, Fasc. 5, 517, URL: [www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hosayniya](http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hosayniya)
- 38 Āl-e Dāvud, ed., *Majmu'eh-ye Āsār-e Yaghmā Jandaqi*, 35. See also Mahmud Mirza Qajar, *Bayān al-Mahmud; Falak al-Merrikh, Tazkereh-ye Delgoshā*, Hāshem Mohaddesi, ed. (Tehran: Ettelā'āt, 2015); Besmel of Shirāz, *Tazkereh Delgoshā*, Mansur Rastgār Fasā'i, ed. (Shirāz: Navid, 1992); 'Abd al-Razzāq Danbali, *Negārestān-e Dārā*, 'Abd al-Rasul Khayyāmpur, ed. (Tabriz: n.p., 1963); and Ahmad Divān Beygi, *Hadiqat al-Sho'arā*, 'Abd al-Hossein Navā'i, ed. (Tehran: Zarrin, 1984).
- 39 As Soltān Mohammad Mirza Seyf al-Dowleh states, Hāj Mohammad Esmā'il was a middlebrow man who was extremely interested in Yaghmā's works. He had, therefore, included in his collection every single poem that he thought might belong to be Yaghmā, even those which Yaghmā denied writing. Ahmad Golchin Ma'āni, 'Soltān-e Qajar va Yaghmā Jandaqi,' *Yaghmā*, no. 198 (1965): 475.
- 40 Āl-e Dāvud (ed.), *Majmu'eh-ye Āsār-e Yaghmā Jandaqi*, 8.
- 41 Golchin Ma'āni, 'Soltān-e Qajar va Yaghmā Jandaqi,' 475.
- 42 *Ahmadā* is a collection of satirical *ghazals* with the pen name Ahmadā. See E'tezād al-Saltaneh and 'Ali-Qoli Mirza, eds., *Kolliyyāt-e Yaghmā-ye Jandaqi* (Tehran: n.p., 1921), 234–49.
- 43 Habib Yaghmā'i, 'Sharh-i Hāl-i Yaghmā va Jughrāfiyā-ye Jandaq,' *Armaghān* 5, nos. 7–8 (1918): 404–15.
- 44 Āl-e Dāvud (ed.), *Majmu'eh-ye Āsār-e Yaghmā Jandaqi*, vol. I, 38.
- 45 Golchin Ma'āni, 'Soltān-e Qajar va Yaghmā Jandaqi,' 475.
- 46 Tarji'band is a form of Persian poetry which consists of several *ghazals* of the same meter and different rhyme: between each stanza there is a single verse with an independent rhyme.
- 47 Āl-e Dāvud (ed.), *Majmu'eh-ye Āsār-e Yaghmā Jandaqi*, 51.
- 48 Mazāher Mosaffā, ed., *Majma' al-Fosahā*, 6 vols. (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 2006), vol I, 1786.
- 49 Jalāl al-Din Homā'i goes further and states that Yaghmā's works and those of some other poets, such as Shahāb Tarshizi (1752–1802), Mosāheb Nā'ini (1904–1942), and Suzani (1100–1166), are just collections of abusive language (Jalāl al-Din Homā'i, *Havāshi bar Majma' al-Fosahā*, (Tehran: Homā, 2006), 144–88.  
Jalāl al-Din Homā'i, *Havāshi bar Majma' al-Fosahā* (Tehran: Homā, 2006), 144–88.
- 50 Although Yaghmā did not compose panegyric poetry, he and, later his sons received a considerable salary from the court. According to Āl-e Dāvud, this salary was paid until the establishment of the parliament after the Constitutional Revolution. However, one may argue that we cannot consider Yaghmā's salary as that of a court poet because, firstly, he did not compose eulogies for the governors and secondly, he did not have a royal nickname to that end. Even during the Amir Kabir period, when governmental payments to poets were forbidden, Yaghmā's salary was paid. Furthermore, this salary was either a kind of retirement payment related to his governmental job; or it was part of the Qajar royal family aid to support poets and their families, especially in the provinces. These payments could probably have been for the *nowhehs* (dirges) he composed. Āl-e Dāvud (ed.), *Majmu'eh-ye Āsār-e Yaghmā-ye Jandaqi*, 90.
- 51 Āl-e Dāvud (ed.), *Majmu'eh-ye Āsār-e Yaghmā-ye Jandaqi*, 119.

- 52 'Abd al-Rasul Khayyāmpur, ed., *Safīneh-ye Mahmud*, 2 vols. (Tabriz: University of Tabriz, 1967), vol. I, 246.
- 53 According to Khan Malek Sāsāni, Adīb al-Mamālek of Marāqī was the coordinator of weekly poetry meetings in Tehran. The members had regular meetings every week and, in the evening, they were supposed to meet the Shāh and share their newest works with group. Sāsāni mentions Qā'āni, Yaghmā, Tarāz of Yazd, Mirza Moshtari of Khorāsān, Seyhun and Jeyhun of Yazd, Māyel Afshār as members of the group.  
Ahmad Khan Malek Sāsāni, "Mirza Abolhasan Yaghmā of Jandaq," *Yaghmā*, no. 213 (1966): 26.
- 54 Khan Malek Sāsāni, "Mirza Abolhasan Yaghmā of Jandaq," 27.
- 55 James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University press, 1990), xii.
- 56 Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, xii-1.
- 57 G. Esmā'ilzādeh, "Vijehgihā-ye Honarvari dar She'r-e Yaghmā Jandaqi," translated by Hosein Mohammadzādeh, *Yaghmā*, 322 (1975): 240.
- 58 Peter J. Chelkowski, ed., *Ta'zieh: Ritual and Drama in Iran* (New York: New York University Press & Soroush Press, 1979), 8.
- 59 خواهی اگر مشاهده تفصیل ماجرا/ اینک "شبییه" اوست که آوردهام برون  
If you would like to see the incident in full details/here is a *shabih* that I created based on that.
- 60 Āl-i Dāvud, ed., *Majmu'eh-ye Āsār-e Yaghmā Jandaqi*, 53.
- 61 Bahrām Beyzā'i, *Namāyesh Dar Irān* (Tehran: Rowshangarān va Motāle'āt-e Zanān, 2001), 117–19.
- 62 I am indebted to Dr. Saeed Talajooy for these historical details.
- 63 Died Circa 1839.
- 64 Sādeq Āshurpur, *Namāyesh-hā-ye Irān*, 2 vols. (Tehran: Sūreh Mehr, 2010), vol. II, 242.
- 65 Āshurpur, *Namāyesh-hā-ye Irān*, vol. II, 241.
- 66 Āshurpur, *Namāyesh-hā-ye Irān*, vol. II, 242.
- 67 Āl-e Dāvud, ed., *Majmu'eh-ye Āsār-e Yaghmā Jandaqi*, 53.
- 68 This notion of veiling the message by not doing so is accentuated in the cultural veins of Iran. In fact, the poetic representations implying the importance of this technique are highly visible in the Sufi poetics of the Persian-speaking world as early as the 13th century.

وگر از عام بترسی که سخن فاش کنی  
سخن خاص نهان در سخن عام بگو  
ور از آن نیز بترسی هله چون مرغ چمن  
دم به دم زمزمه بی‌الف و لام بگو

If you are afraid of revealing your thoughts in public,  
Say your special thoughts in common words  
And if you are afraid of that too, just like the nightingale  
Sing constantly without using a single word

Mohammad Rezā Shafi'i Kadkani, ed., *Gozideh-ye Ghazaliyāt-e Shams* (Tehran: Sherkat-e Sahāmi-e Ketāb-hā-ye Jibi, 1981), 449.

- 69 The closest work of Yaghmā to these kinds of typical satirical poems is *Shabih-e Hojjāj-e Kāshi* (a *ta'ziyeh* about pilgrims of Mecca) which is consistent with a number of satirical *nowhehs* and *monāzerehs*, yielding, a no doubt, symbolic intent. See Āl-e Dāvud, *Majmu'eh-ye Āsār-e Yaghmā-ye Jandaqi*, vol. 1, 57.  
See *Ibid*, vol 1, 57.
- 70 Afrāshteh, a writer and journalist in the Pahlavi period, composed a number of critical dramas about societal issues and ills in the form of *ta'ziyeh*. He was also the chief editor and the main contributor of *Chalangar* (The Blacksmith, 1950–53), a leftist newspaper, which was characterized by political satires in anecdotes and poems. Afrāshteh quit writing and had to leave Iran after the 1953 coup, whence was toppled the popular premier Mohammad Mosaddeq.

- 71 Āshurpur, *Namāyesh-hāye Iran*, vol. II, 248.
- 72 ‘Seyed Abud (a description of one of Yaghma’s poems)’, in *Yaghma* 2, (1954), 76–77.
- 73 Habib Yaghmā’i, “Seyyed Abud”, *Yaghmā* 7, no. 2 (1916): 76–77.
- 74 Muhammad Dabirseṯāqi, ‘Bahr-e tawil’, in *Encyclopædia Iranica*, URL: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bahr-e-tawil-type-of-persian-verse> (Accessed 5 July 2020).
- 75 Mehdi Akhavan Sāles, *Bed’at-hā va Badāye’-e Nimā*, (Tehran: Zemestān, 1997), 204.
- 76 Edward G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, 5 vols. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1959), vol. 5. 339.
- 77 Jan Rypka, *The History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel), 333.
- 78 Āriyānpur, *Az Sabā tā Nimā*, 117.
- 79 Āriyānpur, *Az Sabā tā Nimā*, 123.
- 80 Iraj Mirza, *Divan-e Kāmel Iraj Mirza*, Edited by Mohammad ja’far Mahjoub (Tehran: Andisheh publication, 1975), 202.
- 81 Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, xiii.
- 82 Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, xiii.
- 83 Zarrinkub identifies the root of poetic innovations of Constitutional poetry in the experiential works of the pre-Constitutional poets, particularly elegies and *nowhehs* composed by Yaghmā. See ‘Abd al-Hossein Zarrinkub, *Naqd-e Adabi*, 2 vols. (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1983), vol. 2. 639.
- 84 *Bas-e-shekvā* is a rhetorical term also known as *Shekvā’iyyeh* (gripe poetry): poems in which the poet complains about the his/her life or life in general. *Dandāniyyeh* (tooth poem), a *qasideh* by Rudaki might be the oldest *bas-e-shekvā* in Persian poetry. Qadamali Sarraimi, ‘Bas-e-shekvā’ in *Encyclopaedia of the Islamic World (online version)*, URL: <http://rch.ac.ir/article/Details?id=5881> (Accessed 30 September 2019).

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