New Discourses and Modernity in Postrevolutionary Iran

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Iran's social and cultural climates seem to have undergone a relative relaxation in recent years.[1] The end of the Iran–Iraq war (1988), the death of Ayatollah Khomeini (1989), and the emergence of Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani as president are some of the factors affecting this development. A cursory analysis of the level of literate intellectual culture[2]—print media, film industry, literature, and music—reveals the range and nature of some cultural activities in post-1979 Iran. For example, between 1981-91, the number of book titles published annually increased from 3,500 to 8,600, periodicals from 100 to 501, and public libraries from 415 to 550 units, while the number of people using libraries rose from 4 million (1981) to 14 million (1991).[3] In the film industry, despite a vigilant censor, Iranian cinema matured and acquired a new character,[4] a development described as "the most stimulating event in arts"[5] over the last decade. More films were made by the local film industry and screened in international film festivals in 1990-91 than during any single year prior to the 1979 revolution.[6]

A paradoxical linkage between constraints on cultural activities and the flowering of creative potential also applies to music. Despite Khomeini's fatwa banishing music from the national radio and TV for a time,[7] it is now claimed that the creative range of modern Persian music is unmatched in the sixty years of its recorded history.[8] In literature, the emergence of new writers, new experiments in form and technique, as well as a phenomenal growth in the readership, sale, and publication of works by contemporary Iranian authors have enriched the cultural scene considerably.[9] With sales of each best-selling title running between 15,000 to 35,000, together with the impressive quality of the works produced, the literary arena appears to be more buoyant than at any other period of recent Iranian history.[10]

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Even so, many cultural manifestations are grounded by problems, mainly due to the absence of a multiparty democracy, which is one of the reasons why the cultural realm remains perhaps the only channel for articulating the experience of a society scarred by revolution and war. Consequently, culture has become a medium "with and through which"[11] society is expressing its need for evaluating, interpreting, and analyzing its own coherence. Such a critical relationship with the present need not be solely political, as Abbas Mar'ufi, editor of a literary biweekly, argued after winning a court case against the government's closure of his magazine in 1994. According to him, fiction, art, and literature in postrevolutionary Iran are not necessarily a means of propaganda and "reflect a creative effervescence, born of immersion in present realities,"[12] an "effervescence" that accounts for the cultural vitality discussed above and also underlined by recent studies of postrevolutionary Iran.

In this context, Amanat underscores the unprecedented rise in readership and print runs of historical titles as "a unique development" reflecting "the remarkable interest of the general reader in documents and primary material."[13] Such interest makes him wonder "whether the new revolutionary climate, in spite of a certain degree of intellectual repression, has not led to a new historical consciousness less hampered by dated biases and delusions?"[14] Pahlevan argues that the "unprecedented interest" in the study of history is inherent in the Islamic revolution, which "very soon and in a unique way intensified the need for understanding and re-evaluating the past."[15] A craving for knowledge, he continues, was bound to arise in the wake of a revolutionary upheaval "which overturned everything and created a sense of puzzlement about what had happened, as well as a need for finding coherence and meaning in why it happened the way it did."[16] This need for coherence by a critical, self-interpreting, and historically aware readership seems to be an important factor underlying the vitality, at the level of the literate intellectual culture, of postrevolutionary Iran.

This paper argues that the vibrant cultural matrix seen in the above discussion indicates the emergence of a new cultural discourse. By analyzing some of the cultural manifestations in postrevolutionary society, the paper argues that elements of the new intellectual discourse include a critical reclamation of a Persian–Islamic past as well as an interpenetration with a western civilizational heritage. It also discusses the relevance of these intellectual developments in terms of Iran's transition to modernity.

The paper first examines cultural manifestations in postrevolutionary Iran in terms of recent publications, especially dictionaries, given the centrality of language and meaning in articulating the emerging discourse. These are then discussed and analyzed in terms of a postrevolutionary cultural context, where Michel Foucault's works on modernity and discourse formation provide the theoretical terrain. Given the nature of the study, it is useful to have as a point of reference Europe's civilizational

experience, as the intellectual underpinnings of social revolutions are generally attributed to the new thinking that engendered the Enlightenment.[17]

As for the terms used here, the key elements of modernity, "the central problematic in contemporary Iran,"[18] are regarded as "its acute historical sense of the present, its emphasis on rational autonomy over conformity and dogma, and its critical outlook."[19] As generally understood, modernity pertains to "a radical transformation in epistemology, aesthetics, economics and politics, transforming the private and public life of man and a society dominated by traditions."[20] Rather than a period in history, modernity is envisaged here as an attitude entailing "a form of relationship to the present as well as a mode of relationship that has to be established with oneself"[21] and as reflecting "a voluntary choice in a way of thinking and feeling . . . of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task."[22] Discourse pertains to "a way of thinking, talking, or representing a particular subject"[23] and is thus "a group of statements that provide a language for a way of representing or talking about a particular kind of knowledge about a topic."[24] It consists "of several statements working together to form a discursive formation."[25] These statements, in turn, fit together because each one implies a relation to all others; "they refer to the same object, share the same style and support a strategy . . . a common institutional or political drift or pattern."[26] Discourse, then, is not based on the conventional distinction between thought and action, language and practice, but is rather about the production of knowledge through language, although it is "itself produced through practice: discursive practice—the practice of producing meaning."[27]

The connection between discourse formation and dictionary writing, therefore, seems intrinsic, for dictionaries are the repository of language, and dictionary writing is an activity that produces meaning. The centrality of dictionary writing, a publication boom, and other cultural manifestations in postrevolutionary Iran suggest that the period in question is giving rise to new discourses.

I

Farhang, the Iranian equivalent for "dictionary," also means "culture." The term includes bibliographies, glossaries, indexes, and other forms of compilation. The "dictionaries" cited in this study correspond to the Persian usage of farhang. What is distinctive about them is that, in addition to representing new ways of producing and classifying knowledge, they reflect an attempt at intellectual autonomy and cultural authenticity. One could say that, as with the compulsive list-making and drawing up of taxonomies that were distinctive features of the sixteenth-century renaissance,[28] dictionary writing constitutes one of the most visible manifestations of classifying forms of knowledge in postrevolutionary Iran.

Indeed, in being the repository of language and its dynamism, these publications mirror dimensions of meaning underlying the extant mode of thinking and organizing consciousness in postrevolutionary Iran. Most of the dictionaries discussed here were published after 1988, when a cease-fire halted the Iran–Iraq war. Moreover, they are only a cross-section of such publications on the basis of their availability during my visit to Iran during the summer of 1992.

The proliferation of dictionaries and encyclopedic glossaries of such works as the *Shahnameh* (the 65,000 verse epic poem [regarded as] the archive of the Persian national culture) and the *Avesta* (the sacred book of Zoroastrian Persia) suggest that, in addition to being the repository of language and a cultural past, such publications could also be viewed as capillaries of consciousness for the reclamation and reconstruction of national identity. This statement is borne out by the subjectivity underlying some of the authors' motives for producing their works. For example, in the preface to his *Dictionary of Geographical Terms*, Ashuri states:

> The triumph of the Islamic revolution in Iran could be considered, in all certainty, as a new beginning for the revival of spiritual values and a context for manifestation of an Islamic identity. The undertaking of this dictionary is part of a process of questioning and evaluating the extent to which the "scientific method" and the methodological and educational molds of the West have been relevant to (our) cultural context.[29]

The author notes further that, despite limited progress in the postrevolutionary period in the cultural and scientific areas, a major achievement has been "the turning to research by thousands of students and teachers regarding problems of our society in the throes of transformation."[30] A similar theme underlies the preface of Moshiri's *Persian Dictionary*.[31] This ground-breaking volume follows Paul Robert's method of enriching and extending the frontiers of the extant alphabetical dictionaries by interspersing thousands of epigrams, verses, and supportive material from the Persian heritage and the experience of revolutionary Iran. According to Moshiri, the need for a new Persian dictionary forms part of an intellectual response to the process of reconstruction and renewal:

> Language is a dynamic phenomenon, [for] it changes as it undergoes transformation at multiple levels. In this sense, the various logisms in tune with the times are formed, reconstructed, or borrowed from other languages, thereby assuming new meaning or form, acquiring currency or falling out of circulation. It is, therefore, our duty to revise, complete and enrich previous dictionaries. The best expression of our gratitude to authors of past dictionaries is to follow their path, not to repeat their work."[32]

This craving for expanding the horizons of Persian and intellectual discourse is also reflected in Radfar's *A Literary Dictionary of Rhetoric and Eloquence*. This innovative work represents an attempt to understand the terms used in Persian language and literature in the larger context of world literary heritage, especially the literary experience of western civilization in terms of Greek, French, English, and Russian sources. Pointing out the insufficiency in extant Persian dictionaries, Radfar's introduction reads:

> With the expansion of knowledge and specialization of human sciences, the need for composing specialized dictionaries is being felt more acutely now than in the past. Dictionary writing expresses one of the most vital needs in the development of human civilization and culture. Since work on writing Persian dictionaries began a thousand years ago, over 250 dictionaries have been written. Even so, there is a felt need for more comprehensive and scientific works in the realm of dictionary writing.[33]

Another noteworthy work is the *Amid Dictionary of the Persian Language*.[34] Although first published during the Pahlavi era, what makes this completely revised edition special is that its record print run of one hundred thousand copies includes a section on Persian names. Persian names, as distinct from Arabic names, are classified based on the various aspects of meaning for each name by drawing on the historical, mythological, and aesthetical contexts of Persian culture. Nowroozi describes his *Dictionary of Political Terms* as "a product of the Islamic revolution" written "in response to the urgent need of students and teachers who merged with the revolution and wanted access to the foreign media."[35] He seeks to provide Persian equivalents for political and international relations terms by examining the context that gave rise to some of them. Arastekhou, author of *A Critical Dictionary of Social Scientific Terms*, has described his work as an "act of defiance" against existing academic molds.[36] Recognizing the dynamism inherent in words, he argues that words and terms, when they enter a field of knowledge, "go beyond their simple meaning as they are transformed into complex and dilative conceptual tools."[37] Emphasizing the organic link between research and a spirit of tolerance, Arastekhou gives special emphasis to terms such as mysticism and gnosis:

> The various levels of meaning deriving from these terms have merged over the centuries with the deposits of social phenomenon in Iran. As a result, mysticism and gnosis have impacted and influenced various social and political movements and events in the country; these notions permeate popular belief, intellectual reflection and unconscious processes.[38]

Stressing the social relevance of gnosis and mysticism in Iran's cultural discourse, he argues further that:

> Contrary to what is sometimes preached, gnosis and science are not ranged across an unbridgeable chasm. At its higher levels, science becomes an auxiliary to gnosis, while gnosis without science is incomplete and illegitimate.[39]

Another glossary, covering thirty-one volumes of Ali Shariati's *Collected Works*, contains definitions and explanatory notes of the terms and concepts used by this revolutionary thinker in his attempt to rethink Islam in terms of contemporary consciousness. This entailed a critical encounter with Pahlavi Iran's politics and culture, the West's intellectual heritage, and Islamic tradition and history. Shariati's redefinition of Islam meant an informed understanding of the elements of pre-Islamic religious thought, including Buddhism, Hinduism, and Zoroastrianism. The immediacy of the political moment in Pahlavi Iran, against which Shariati etched the broad parameters of a new Islamic discourse, made him the controversial voice of new thinking in revolutionary Iran. While noting that Shariati's spirit of creative defiance could not be bound "by the mundane boundaries of conventions,"[40] the glossary's compilers point out the "balancing interplay of thought and feeling, order and informality"[41] at the heart of his worldview, where rationalism becomes the self-conscious instrument of gnosis.

Another marker in postrevolutionary Iran's linguistic enrichment is the emergence of a new lexicon born of the Iran–Iraq war and published in a series entitled *Culture of the Battle Front*.[42] This series marks the transfusion of a new experiential dimension—that of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards from the war front—into mainstream Iranian society. The nine slim volumes published so far exemplify what could be termed modernity's critical preoccupation with itself and bring to the "public sphere" that which remained inaccessible during the war in the combatant's "private" sphere. Their lived experiences have been captured in a diverse range of activities and concerns constituting personal and group life at the war front.

If most of the publications discussed above have appeared in the post-Khomeini era, this is probably because of the long preparation such works require, rather than a policy of official encouragement. Several other dictionaries published in recent years also underscore the contextual relevance of the postrevolutionary period in their genesis. The *Dictionary of Legal, Political, and Economic Terms*[43] appeared in response to popular interest among Iranians eager to familiarize themselves with international legal terminology after Iran and some western countries were implicated in international legal suits. The *Glossary of Filmographic Terms*[44] and the *Bibliography of Cinema in Iran*[45] reflect the centrality assumed by Iranian cinema in postrevolutionary society as a form of popular art, in many ways comparable to Soviet cinema after the October revolution. They also reflect a desire to approach the realm of cinematography in a professional manner and thereby linking developments in Iran to the international cinema.

The *Bibliography of Names in the Shahnameh*[46] belongs to a distinct research category that is emerging as a hall.2mark of Iranian national identity. Going by the number of critical works being published on it and its prominence in postrevolutionary discourse, the receptivity to and appeal of the Shahnameh in postrevolutionary Iran seems phenomenal. This is perhaps the result of the enduring appeal of an epic reflecting the national ethos in terms of Persian mythology and pre-Islamic history as much as it is of its being a historic symbol of Persian cultural defiance of Arab imperialism, which replaced Persian with Arabic after the seventh-century Persian defeat. Reflecting what could be termed a self-evolving project for the reclamation of national culture, including Iran's pre-Islamic past, is a bibliography of the *Shahnameh*[47] that traces its heroes' names to the *Avesta*, an interest also reflected in the *Dictionary of Mythology and Symbolic Stories in Persian Literature*.[48] The *Dictionary of Persian Poets*[49] lists Persian poets over the last eight centuries, cites samples of their work, and is complemented by *Caravan of India*,[50] a bibliographical anthology of over seven hundred poets who emigrated to India during the Safavid period (1500– 1743) and composed Persian poetry there.

Three dictionaries dealing with aspects of Qur'anic studies could also be cited: *The Statistical Dictionary of the Words in the Holy Qur'an*[51] claims to be "the most comprehensive dictionary providing access to all the words in the holy Book, as well as giving the context for each given word in terms of chapter and verse." However, the *Dictionary of the Translation and the Stories of the Qur'an*[52] is of as much interest to devotees of Qur'anic research as it is to scholars of the Persian language, as it is based on one of the oldest Persian-language commentaries of the Qur'an. A third work, *A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms*, is written to "facilitate the work of the world's researchers, Islamologists and Iranologists."[53] The latter would also find *A Bibliography of Tehran*, the first of a three-volume series, of interest. Described as "an analytical and descriptive work . . . based on scientific methods and moral standards of research,"[54] it provides wide-ranging access "to the social and human problems of Tehran"[55] in terms of lists of books published about the city.

A host of research articles dealing with aspects of research methodology are also being published in various research journals, literary magazines, scientific periodicals, and even daily newspapers. Discussion and analysis of these periodicals lies beyond the scope of this paper.

II

A common denominator of the works cited above is the underlying impulsion for intellectual expansion, an attempt to go beyond the literal level of interpretation and extant meaning by enlarging, where possible, the scope of each entry by means of a juxtaposition of cultural and spiritual dimensions. This is achieved in Moshiri's dictionary of the Persian language by using verses of such great Persian poets and mystics as Ḥāfiẓ

(d. 1389) and Rūmī (d. 1273) as well as many other Iranian gnostics known throughout the Persian-speaking world. Verses of these poets permeate the dictionary, just as they do Persian culture. The attempt to go beyond the literal level of the "given" and of Cartesian logic is also underlined by the dictionary of social sciences, which reinterprets many western terms and concepts by situating them in the context of the Iranian gnostic tradition. This technique transfuses a spiritual dimension into what might otherwise have remained a compendium of borrowed intellectual constructs. Nowroozi's dictionary of politics also attempts an enlargement of perspective by adding a third-world dimension and dwelling on the political, historical, and economic origins of certain words and concepts used in international relations. Amid's dictionary of the Persian language reflects an enlargement of perspective by emphasizing the national ethos as well as the range and richness of Persian by focusing on Persian names.

Inherent in these dictionaries, then, is an intellectual act of transcending traditional thought by breaking out of the conventional levels of language and meaning—an act that entails an enlargement of perspective by reclaiming Iran's cultural past as well as its interpenetration with the West's cultural heritage.[56] A deep interest in the western heritage is reflected in the various programs on state-run radio and television, where works of such literary figures as Goethe and Gunter Grass[57] are discussed extensively, where Shakespeare is hailed "as great a literary figure as the Persian mystic Hafez,"[58] and where the Italian playwright Pirandello is bracketed with Tolstoy and Sadi, the thirteenth-century Persian moralist. Other examples of cultural osmosis include the "export" of traditional Iranian music to the West and its experimental fusion with western classical music, symbolized in the concert of a symphonic orchestra "Azargoon" in the southern provincial capital of Shiraz during September 1994. Its theme, *on su'ye merzha* (Beyond Boundaries), is indicative of a general trend for expanding one's life horizons, a tendency that some forces within the religious establishment seem to share. One example of this is an ongoing series of international symposia between Islam and Christian orthodoxy held alternately in Tehran and Athens each year, a dialogue that Iran's Islamic feminists are also pursuing. A recent issue of *Farzaneh*, a journal published by the Tehran University Women's Study Centre, examines the "suitability of Mary as a universal role model for the women of the world."[59]

Contrary to the popular notion of the Islamic revolution marking a wholesale repudiation of western culture, postrevolutionary Iran reflects a complex and vibrant picture that includes the interpenetration of Iranian and western literary heritages.[60] That such a cultural osmosis forms part of official policy is reflected in the theme of a popular television series shown during the spring of 1991: the homecoming of an Iranian student from France and the circumstances surrounding his traditional family's acceptance of his European wife, which is eased by her Greek nationality and

her fascination with Iranian culture. Appropriately entitled *Mehman* (The Guest), this light-hearted serial ends to everyone's satisfaction after the *mehman* takes a new name, the not-so-foreign Maryam, and starts a new life in Iran.

The emergence of new awareness through the reclamation of a primordial past has been captured in the film "Bashu: The Little Stranger" (1986).[61] Set against the backdrop of the Iran–Iraq war, this highly acclaimed film is about Bashu, a little boy who flees the war-torn south after his family perishes in a bombing raid and ends up in the calm surrounding of northern Iran amidst people who speak a different language and taunt him for his dark skin. Rejected by the villagers, he is adopted by a defiant young mother "because we are all children of the sun and the earth." The film's scant dialogue heightens the sense of a breakdown of formal structures, while its archetypal motifs underscore the healing to which a reversion to primordial experience leads. Its message is that "through love and friendship, empathy of cultures and negation of ethnicity, race and linguistic barriers, it is possible to connect."[62]

Various cultural programs broadcast by Radio Iran also reflect the theme of a primordial reclamation. For example, the epic of *Gilgamesh* is praised as "an indisputable masterpiece in mankind's literary experience,"[63] and papyrus fragments found in Egypt are hailed "for enriching the present."[64] The message is loud and clear: "There is hope in precious reclamations. New forms of consciousness are gained by reclaiming past cultures. This gives human life continuity."[65]

The manifestation of postrevolutionary discourses is not without tension. A case in point is the controversy surrounding the works of Abdul Karim Soroush, a professor of philosophy at Tehran University. Taking Iqbal's *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*[66] as a point of departure, Soroush's magnum opus, *Theoretical Contraction and Dilation of the Shari'ah*,[67] seeks to provide an epistemological breakthrough in Muslim scholarship by underlining the relativity of knowledge. Following the controversy generated by this book, Soroush lost access to his hour-long prime-time Islamic issues broadcast on national radio and came under conservative fire in the national media. The debate remains alive in theological seminaries and universities, as well as in the print media.[68]

This tension between an "emergent consciousness" and a "dominant consciousness" underscores the risks inherent in new discourses. Some of the publications discussed reflect an awareness of the sense of defiance entailed by an act of intellectual expansion. Moshiri mitigates this defiance by acknowledging her respect for past authors while stressing the need to press on with the new. For his part, Arastehkhou situates his dictionary of social sciences in terms of North-South tension at one level (by identifying with Third World writers) and between spirituality and science at another level. Arastehkhou's awareness that his works amount to an "act of defiance"[69] is partly because of the attempt to extend the bound-

aries of social sciences by including gnosis and mysticism in a new social scientific discourse. Clearly, then, the discourse flow in postrevolutionary Iran could be seen in terms of a defiance that groundbreaking works entail and a broadening of meaning they represent.

Conclusion

Our discussion of various postrevolutionary cultural manifestations suggests a broadening of intellectual discourse marked by a critical reclamation of the Persian–Islamic past and a cultural osmosis with the western heritage. As with the Enlightenment, Iran's Islamic revolution has caused changes that include elements of social transformation in political institutions, in ways of producing and classifying knowledge, and in projects of knowledge rationalization.[70] While critical thinking and historical consciousness, as generalized attributes of any society, could be seen as marking the intellectual correlates of modernity, the underpinnings of gnosis distinguish Iranian modernity from its conceptualization in the West.

In drawing upon condensations of the West's civilizational experience in the wellspring of a Persian–Islamic culture, discourses in postrevolutionary Iran reflect a broader universal appeal than in other parts of the Muslim world on the plane of literate intellectual culture. With the contours of a critical approach and historical consciousness, the new discourses suggest the onset of "gnostic modernity," given the spiritual underpinnings of modernity as an attitude in contemporary Iranian experience. However, unlike the western experience, the mode of production in postrevolutionary Iran remains largely unchanged, an industrial revolution does not appear imminent, nor does there appear to be any possibility for a colonization experience of the type that primed western modernity.[71]

In this sense, the Iranian experience may well indicate the intellectual transition to modernity of a Muslim society without a linear traversing of the historical past of the West. Moreover, if in the western experience the onset of modernity was accompanied by an erosion of religious faith and a secularization of society and worldview, the emergence of an Iranian modernity has been mediated by religion as a spiritual force and as a self-transforming technique.[72] While violent change is a common denominator shared by the Iranian revolution with other revolutionary pathways in the modern age,[73] what marks the Iranian experience is the spiritual transformation of subjectivity underlying the new discourses.[74] In this sense, a "paradoxical" linkage between the new discourses and a degree of official repression of such activities appears to form an inner dynamic discourse irruption in postrevolutionary Iran.[75] The ground-swell of such discourse irruption, some manifestations of which have been discussed above, distinguish Iranian modernity from earlier attempts at a benign synthesis between Islam and modernity.[76]

If, during 1978-79, the Iranian revolution reflected an ethics of resistance formulated largely in the context of Islamic spirituality, a broadening of the intellectual discourse(s) rooted in such a spirituality in postrevolutionary Iran may yet initiate a mutually healing dialogue between the Muslim world and the West.

Endnotes

1. Such relaxation is, at best, erratic. For example, in August 1993, Abbas Abdi, editor of the daily newspaper *Salam* and a devout Islamist, was arrested on a Tehran street on unspecified charges. The mouthpiece of the radical Association of Militant Clergy, *Salam* has been outspokenly critical of the government. See "Blueprint for an Islamic Press," *Index on Censorship* 22, no. 10, p. 39. In January 1994, the government authorized 1,400 shops specializing in video rental and sale, an activity previously punishable by imprisonment, fine, and flogging. *The News*, 26 January 1994, 9.

2. According to Zubaida, "the most comprehensible similarities" between Muslims of the Middle East are to be found at the level of literate intellectual culture: philosophy, mysticism, poetry, and music. This cultural realm constitutes the common universe of discourse in which the educated elite of the various parts of the Middle East region participate. However, as used here, the term also includes literature, the media, and academia. See Sami Zubaida, *Islam, the People, and the State* (London: Routledge, 1988), 115.

3. See "Roedad hae Farhangi," where Shaheen Tavassolli quotes an official of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, in *Kelk* 39 (August 1992): 301. See also Gholam Hossein Zakeri, "Tose'ea matbu'at der lava'ea yak miage mihan'i" (The Program of the Press within a National Covenant), *Adineh* (Persian) 55-56 (March 1991): 24-25.

4. Hamid Naficy, "The Development of an Islamic Cinema in Iran," *Third World Affairs* (1987): 447-63.

5. Omid Rohani, "Sinamae melli va rahe hal hae sadey" (National Cinema and Simple Solutions), *Adineh* 55-56 (March 1991): 41-43.

6. See Hoshang Golmakani in *Film* (Persian), special Nowrooz issue (March 1991). Conservatives reject the postrevolutionary cinema and filmmakers for "'pseudo-intellectualization': . . . all our film makers have become either sociologists or psychologists, teachers, philosophers or mystics. None is a film maker any more. Is it possible for all the films of a nation to speak of philosophical issues?" See "Bar re sie doushvari ha'e sīnāma'e Iran" (Analysis of the Problems of the Iranian Cinema), *Aineh-ye-andishay* (May 1991): 39.

7. In 1979, a fatwa by Khomeini declaring music to be "un-Islamic" led to a virtual ban on the playing of music on the national radio and television. Revolutionary anthems and Frédéric Chopin's "Funeral March" were exempted.

8. See "Dahe yeh shast-e-mouseqi" (Music of the Sixties) (1980 of the Jualin Calendar), op cit., p. 34.

9. Prominent Iranian literary critic and editor Ali Dehbashi points out, while noting the unprecedented rise in sale of postrevolutionary fiction, the "new values, new experiments and the new language in Iranian fiction today." He claims that postrevolutionary Iranian fiction is different, for it uses new categories and forms to convey contemporary Iranian experience born of the revolution. BBC Persian Service, interview with Ali Dehbashi, 4 December 1992.

10. Reza Barahani, "Post Revolution Iranian Fiction" (Lecture at the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, 19 February 1992). For an official view on the phenomenal transformation in literature and the arts since the revolution, see *Kayhan Farhangi* 85 (June 1992), special edition on "Thought, Art, and Literature of the Revolution."

This rosy picture of the cultural scene has its detractors, both in and out of the government: Engineer Aminzadah, a deputy minister of culture and Islamic guidance, considers the number of periodicals being published currently unsatisfactory. His criterion for comparison is that over one thousand periodicals began publishing right after the Islamic revolution. See "Khabere Junoog" (News of the South), *Shaz* (13 May 1992): 1. An article in the radi-

cal daily *Salam* criticizes Iranian publishers for lacking the "agony of the intellectual quest" and succumbing to commercial interests, which is responsible for the "poor quality of publications in Iran today." See "Negahe Koli bay vazeiat ketab der Iran—2" (An Overall View on the Situation of Books in Iran, Part 2," *Salam*, Tehran (24 May 1992): 5. Increased economic pressure following the removal of government subsidies appears to be affecting adversely the publications boom. See special report on books, their sale, and readership (Ketab darim, Ketab Khan nadarim? Ya ketab Khan darim va ketab naradim?") *Gardoon*, nos. 23-24 (May 1993): 14-27.

11. See Faraj Sarkuhi, "Bay ser amadane hounar" (Art's Coming of Age), *Adineh* (March 1991): 33-34.

12. Abbas Mar'ufi (editorial), *Gardoon* 23-24 (May 1993): 4-5.

13. Abbas Amanat, "The Study of History in Post-revolutionary Iran: Nostalgia, Illusion, or Historical Awareness?," *Iranian Studies* 22, no. 4 (1989): 3-18. Amanat's explanation for this turn to primary sources is that, in the past, because "polemics had replaced balanced historical research, the distrustful readers had to go behind the rhetoric and explore something of the reality for themselves" (p. 8).

14. Ibid., 6.

15. Tchangez Pahlevan, "Negahi gozara bay Khaterat nevisi der Iran," *Zamineay Iranshenasi* (An Anthology of Iranian Studies), compiled and edited by Tchangez Pahlevan (Tehran: Behnar Publications, 1991), 12.

16. Ibid.

17. Abbas Millani, "Tehran va Tajadudd" (Iran and Modernity), *Iran Names* 9, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 441.

18. Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, "Foucault and the Critique of Modernity," in *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 53.

19. Millani, "Tehran va Tajadudd."

20. See Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin, 1985), 39-41.

21. Ibid.

22. See Stuart Hall and Bram Geibin, eds., *Formations of Modernity* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1992), 291.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. M. Cousins and A. Hussain, *Michel Foucault* (London: Macmillan, 1984), 84-85.

26. Hall and Geibin, *Formations*, 293.

27. Ibid., 293.

28. Zachary Sayre Schiffman, *On the Threshold of Modernity: Relativism in the French Renaissance* (London: John Hopkins, 1991), 8.

29. Esmail Ashuri, comp. and trans., *Farhange Estelahate Joghraphiae* (Dictionary of Geographical Terms) (Tehran: Cultural Section of the Central Office of University Crusade, 1985). Preface by the Geographical Committee of University Crusade, p. 1.

30. Ibid.

31. Mashid Moshiri, *Farhang-i-Zaban-i-Farsi* (Persian Dictionary: Alphabetical Analogical) (Tehran: Soroush Publications, 1991). The author had earlier published the innovative *Persian Phonetic–Orthographic Dictionary* (Tehran: Kitab Sara Press, 1987).

32. Ibid., p. 7.

33. Abol Qassem Radfar, *Farhang-e-Ballaghi Adabi*, 2 vols. (Literary Dictionary of Rhetoric and Eloquence) (Tehran: Ettelaat Publications, 1989), 7-8. For a compilation of literary terms, see Rezvan Shariat, *Daftar-e-estalahat-e-Adabi* (Tehran: Heermand Press, 1992).

34. *Farhang-e-Amid* (Amid Dictionary) (Tehran: Amir Kabir Publications, 1986). According to the publishers, a "complete list of historical and geographical names" is forthcoming in a separate volume. See publisher's note on p. 1225.

35. Mehdi Nowroozi, *Farhang-e-Loghat va Estalahat-e-Siasi* (A Dictionary of Political Terms) (Tehran: Ney Publishing House, 1991), 1.

36. Mohammad Arastekhou, *Naqd-o-Naqaresh bar Farhang-e-Estellahat-e-Elmi-Ejtemai* (Observations et critique sur quelques aspects des notions scientifique-sociales) (Tehran: Gosteresh Publications, 1990), 31-33.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. As a spiritual quest beginning with refining of the psyche (*nafs*) and self-formation as a life task, gnosis (*'irfān*) is characterized by its emphasis on an experiential knowledge of the divine. It entails a constructive struggle against all obstacles to spiritual development, including social, economic, and political. See Arastekhou, *Naqd-o-Naqaresh*, 253-54.

40. *Farhang Loghat va Mafahim Doktar Ali Shariati* (Dictionary of Words and Terms in the Works of Dr. Ali Shariati) (Tehran: Qelam, 1992). An earlier version of this edition was published in 1984.

41. Ibid.

42. Syed Mehdi Fahimi, *The Battle Front's Cultural Lexicon: Phrases* (13 vols.); *The Battle Front's Cultural Lexicon: Ethics and Manners*; *The Battle Front's Cultural Lexicon: Humorous Remarks* (2 vols.); *The Battle Front's Culture Lexicon: Leisure Time*; *The Battle Front's Cultural Lexicon: Signboards and Inscriptions* (2 vols.). (Tehran: Islamic Publicity Organization, 1990). Also by the same author are *The Battle Front's Culture: Placards*, *Culture of the War Front: Phrases* (Tehran: Islamic Publicity Organization, 1989).

43. Bahman Keshavarz, *Farhang-e-Huquoqi: englesi bay farsi* (English–Persian Law Dictionary: Legal, Political, and Essential Economic Terms) (Tehran: Amir Kabir Publications, 1991).

44. Juan Cartenberg, *Farhang-e-Film Negari* (Glossary of Filmographic Terms) (Tehran: Ministry of Islamic Guidance, 1987). Translated by Bahram Raipur and Abul Hassan Alavi Tabataei.

45. M. Mehrabi, *Ketab Shenasi Cinema Der Iran* (Bibliography of Cinema in Iran) (Tehran: Cerandeesh Publishers, 1988).

46. Mansoor Rastager Fasai, *Farhang-e-namhae-Shahnameh* (Dictionary of Names in the Shahnameh) (Tehran: Mousase Motale'at va Tahqiqat-e, Farhangi [Institute of Cultural Studies and Research, Ministry of Education and Culture], 1990), 2 vols.

47. Ali Jehangeri, *Farhang-e-Namhae Shahnameh: harmah ba Tatbiq-e-namha-e-Shahnameh va Avesta* (Dictionary of Shahnameh: With a Comparative Study of the Names in Shahnameh and Avesta) (Tehran: Barq Publishers, 1990).

48. Mohammad Jafar Yahaqi, *Farhang Esatir va Esharat Dastani der Adabiyate Farsi* (Dictionary of Mythology and Symbolic Stories in Persian Literature) (Tehran: Sourosh Publishers and Institute for Cultural Studies and Research, 1990).

49. Abdul Rafi Heqiqat Rafi, *Farhang-e-Sha'eran-e-Zaban-Farsi* (Dictionary of Persian Poets) (Tehran: Sharkate mo'alefin va motarjamane Iran [Iranian Writers and Translators Publishing Company], 1989).

50. Ahmad Golchin Ma'ani, *Karevan Hind* (The Caravan of India: Life and Works of the Poets of the Safavid Era who Emigrated to India) (Mashhad: Astan-e-Qods Razabi Publications, 1990). 2 vols.

51. Mahmood Ruhani, *Farhang-e-Amari-e-Kalmat-e-Qoran* (Statistical Dictionary of the Words in the Holy Qur'an) (Tehran: 1990).

52. Mohammad Javeen Sabaghian, comp., *Farhang-e-Tarjame va Qeseha-e-Quran* (Dictionary of the Translation and the Stories of the Holy Qur'an). Based on the commentary of Abu Bakr Ateeq Nishaburi (Mashhad: Astan-e-Qods Razabi Publications, 1989).

53. B. Khorranshahi, ed., *Farhang-e-Estlahat Uloom va Tamadun-e-Elsami* (A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms), Persian–English (Mashhad: Islamic Research Foundation, Astan-e-Quds Razabi, 1991), 6.

54. Tehran Studies Research Group, Nasser Takmil Homayoun, *A Bibliography of Tehran* (Tehran: Cultural Studies and Research Group, 1990), 1.

55. Ibid.

56. Cultural interpenetration features as a theme in some of the highly acclaimed works of fiction in postrevolutionary Iran, e.g., in merging a Beethoven symphony with tra-

ditional Iranian music in a leisurely Tehran neighborhood, as in "Shahrnush Parsiopur, Tooba va ma'ani Shab" (Tooba and the Meaning of Night) (Tehran: Espark Publishers, 1988), or in the emotional labyrinths of a Christ-like Muslim carpenter, the intensity of whose love for his Armenian wife blurs the boundaries between her internalized images and the reality of her absence. See Abbas Mar'ufi, *Samfoni-e-Mordegan* (Symphony of the Dead) (Tehran: Gardoon Publishers, 1989). For an academic analysis of the debate on cultural synthesis in Iran, see Abdul Karim Soroush, "Sae Farhang" (Three Cultures) in *Aineh-ye-aindishay* 3-4, 50-59.

57. Radio Iran, "Der Entehai shab" (Late Night Literary Program), 12 August 1992.

58. Ibid., 17 October 1992.

59. Monir Gorji, "A Study on the Life and Status of the Virgin Mary: The Chosen Woman," *Farzaneh: Journal of Women's Studies and Research* 1, nos. 2-3 (1994): 67-80.

60. A measure of this complexity is reflected in the continued imposition of an official ban on the violin, a "western influence," despite the formal rehabilitation of the Tehran symphony orchestra. See Mahmood Mirzazadeh's interview with prominent Iranian violinist Assodallah Malek, "Zabene Mouseqi Kamel Tarin Zabanha" (Language of Music, the Most Complete of Languages), *Adabestan* 4, no. 5 (May 1993): 49-50.

61. Described as "the most Iranian of Iran's film makers" Behram Bezai, the film's director, is a much venerated artist. Bashu's exceptional premiere on national television was underscored by the fact that Bezai's films were banned in Iran for some years after the revolution. See *Majmue maqalt der naqd va marafi ye asare, Behram Bezai* (A Collection of Critical Reviews and Articles about the Work of Behram Bezai), edited by Zawan Kokasian (Tehran: Agah Publishers, 1992), 9.

62. Ibid., 471.

63. Radio Iran, 15 May 1993.

64. Radio Iran, "Der entehai shab," 21 December 1992.

65. Ibid.

66. Mohammed Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.* First published by Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1930 and as a revised edition by Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1986.

67. Abdul Karim Soroush, *Qabz-o-Baste Shariat* (Contraction and Dilation of the Shari'ah), 2d ed. (Tehran: Serat Publishers, 1992).

68. See, for example, Sadiq Larijani, *Marefat-e-Deni* (Religious Knowledge) (Tehran: Markaze Terjome va Nashre Ketab, 1991).

69. Arastekhou uses the term *kar-e-gostakhaneh* for his defiance as a "task." See Arastekhou, *Naqd-o-Naqaresh*, 16. For new discourses as an act of defiance, see Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?," in *Modern Criticism and Theory*, ed. David Lodge (London: Longman, 1988), 209.

70. This follows a view of the Enlightenment as an event. However, what lay at "the basis of an entire form of philosophical reflection characterized by the Enlightenment" concerned "the mode of a reflective relation to the present." See Michel Foucault in *The Foucault Reader*, 44.

71. The colonization experience seems to have been central in the diffusion of an instrumental analytical approach in the West, given the powerful motivational basis of markets and capital in shaping manipulative strategies for control and domination of the colonized. See Richard Falk, "Culture, Modernism and Postmodernism: A Challenge to International Relations," in *Culture and International Relations*, ed. Jongsuk Clay (New York: Praeger, 1990), 268-77.

72. This view of the Iranian revolution reinforces Maurice Furret's reinterpretation of the French revolution. Furret separates the structural ensemble of economic and social process of transformation from the revolution, arguing that these transformation had taken place long before 1789. See Georg Stauth, "Revolution in Spiritless Times: An Essay on Michel Foucault's Enquiries into the Iranian Revolution," *International Sociology* 6, no. 3 (1991):259-80.

A factor in the diffusion of intellectual modernity in Iran was the urban guerrilla movement against the Pahlavi regime. Waged between 1963-78, armed struggle became a poli-

tics of ethics blending critical thinking and heroic action. For an example of the intellectual crisis that the guerrilla experience entailed, see a letter to Ayatollah Taleqani by his son in Arvand Abrahiman, "The Guerrilla Movement in Iran: 1963-1977," *MERIP* 10, 3 (March–April 1979).

73. Moore approaches the transition from preindustrial to the modern world in terms of the three routes of capitalism, fascism, and communism. The common denominator of each route is the violent change that marked the transition. He gives the example of the French revolution, the American civil war (which he considers to be a revolution), and the Bolshevik revolution. See Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (London: Penguin, 1991).

74. For a view of the Iranian revolution entailing a spiritual "transformation of subjectivity of the people," see Michel Foucault, "Iran: The Spirit of a World without Spirit," in *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture, Interviews, and Other Writings*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (London: Routledge, 1988), 211.

75. This follows an argument in which discourse formation is viewed as part of the process for the control of discourse "as irruption, as an unpredictable event," a control effected within the discourse itself by "classifying, ordering (and) distributing" the promotion of knowledge. See Alan Sheridan, *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth* (London: Routledge, 1984), 124.

76. See 'AbdulḤamīd AbūSulaymān, editorial, *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 11, no. 4 (Winter 1994).