Subversive Mundane:

Pop Music & the Islamic Republic of Iran

Niloufar Motaref

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in Humanities

York University

Toronto, Ontario

September 2021

Abstract

The thesis claims that the expansion of a grand ideology to the practices of everyday life by a authoriterian/ interventionist regime endows popular culture an explicit emancipatory power, elevates the mundane, and transforms it to an implicit political statement uttering against the initial ideals of the grand narrative which becomes shattered, depoliticized, and fragmented on a daily basis. For proving this claim, the study explores the cultural impacts of illegal popular music on the Islamic Republic of Iran's cultural grand narrative ignited in 1979.

The ostensibly uneven cultural battleground between the culture-maker and its consumer, between the ruler and the ruled, is discussed through the prominent scholarly insights of John Fiske on what is popular, Theodor Adorno on what must be popular, Paul Ricoeur on what is the passive utopian imagination, and Michel De Certeau on the ruled, the ordinary hero whose "murmur" progressively trespasses the dominant voice of the society. Shahram Khosravi and Yousef Abazari are introduced as the representatives of the power and range of this "murmur" or "trespasser voice" in Iran's society.

Adapting theories with the cultural conflicts between the ruler and the ruled over the main theme in popular songs sturctures the chapters. Pursuing the ever-changing conceptualization of legal/illegality through four decades reveals that Praising Home in 1980s, Praising Happiness in 1990s, Praising Voice and Silence alternatively in 2000s, as the main themes in popular songs break the regime taboos not just on the main themes of popular songs, but on all aspects of popular culture and eventually in everyday life.

Preface and Acknowledgment

I believe there is no academic research in Humanities which does not have a personal emotion as its backbone notwithstanding the researcher's utmost endeavor to treat it cautiously or clandestinely. My personal obsession was adapting the everyday life of my son, as a rock musician when rock was forbidden in our country. The experience was harsh, as was transforming it to an academic approach purified of motherly bias and personal/political/emotional entanglements.

I would not be able to pass this ordeal without the supervision of Victor Shea. He stood by me through all this text and conducted me word by word. Victor Shea taught me how to think academically. My gratitude for him is not a routine acknowledgement requested of a student at the beginning of a dissertation. I will always cherish the experience of witnessing the embodiment of academic proficiency and humane nobility in one person.

I will always be grateful to Steve Bailey for his kindness and understanding during the first steps of the thesis until its end.

I will always be grateful to Mehraneh Ebrahimi for her exemplary sympathy and exceptional generosity with this text and me.

I will always be grateful to Kodi Najm who patiently and numerously read the text and advised me on the youth culture.

I will always be grateful to Yael Seliger. Her love and support through the years made living and graduating in a new country seem delightful.

Through all these years, I was blessed with a friendship that I lost when I was writing this dissertation. The memory of Priscila Uppal will always be with me as it was through all our friendship, happy and beautiful.

Notes on Transliterations and Translations:

The system of transliteration used in this dissertation follows the modified *Iranian Studies* system. For proper names [names of the authors, artists, scholars and public figures] I've used their own preferred version as has been used in the title of their works.

The translations from Persian to English in the whole text, passages in books, essays, video files, and the songs' lyrics, are mine.

The lyrics' transliterations order follows the order they have in the text. The page numbers are indicated both in the text and in the transliteration.

In the text, dates are all Common Era. In bibliography, the Persian texts that had been produced in Iran and not in diaspora, are given both in the Iranian calender and the corresponiding Common Era date, separated by a slash.

Table of Contents

Introduction

There is almost no claimed possession as conditional as “I have a voice”. Once it is uttered, an implicit reciprocity has already made the possession a contextual one. While the immutable presupposition of a bilateral context, individual, public, private, or political designates an “on what” for the statement, the not -yet negotiated “how far” delineates the influence and the power of the claimed possession and makes it a precarious one.

In 1979, a revolutionary voice possessed Iran’s political landscape in less than a year. The cultural negotiations between the interlocutors, between the ruler and the ruled over “how far”, proved to be a continuum for four decades. A westernized political power was dismantled by an ideological totalitarianism. Weighed down under its political implications, westernization was equated with cultural subordination to an American style of imperialism with its cultural invasion into Iran. Therefore, the previous regime’s cultural habits were invested with political signification. Nailing its power over the voice, the state media went as far as eliminating any hint or tint of westernization, for which a Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, was launched to control any form of artistic activity, and a moral squad, Enjoining Good and Forbidding Wrong [*Setād-e ehyā-ye amr-e beh m‘aruf va nahy az monkar*] was introduced to be responsible to cleanse the country of its westernized appearances. Assigning a ministry with an absolute power over what to see /what to hear, and a moral police to monitor the mundane both in the public

and the private spheres, led to a cultural battle between the ruler and the ruled. Since 1979, the domain of the voice, with all its multifarious implications is designated through a hide and seek game between the ruler and the ruled, between people's achievements and the government's retreats.

This cultural battleground and the regime's ever- changing policies have brought about a scholarly inventory on the Islamic Republic's political and cultural intricacies whereby the achievements and negations of the possession of voice proved to be highly unsettling and controversial. Reading the texts and scrutinizing the diversities and controversies among the scholars, I realized that in regard to my main idea, which was evaluating and sacling people's achievments and/or the ruler's retreats, to an extent one can roughly speak of two groupings. One group believes that by politicizing pop culture, the regime has inevitably endowed it with a defiant power. The other group does not see any resistance in popular culture and firmly asserts that in a totalitarian regime any resilience is nothing but a governmental plot for depoliticizing people.

Inspired by Michel de Certeau, the first group believes that if there is a power, there is a resistance against it. Therefore, any resilience over the restrictions on popular culture is the regime's retreat and the people's achievement.

Understanding De Certeau's theoretical assertion entails his way of perceiving the power play as it happens in the strategies and tactics (De Certeau 1984). According to him, strategy is the power of the ruler over space. The powerful has all the space as its own marked territory. Tactics are the power over time and belong to the ruled. Deprived of the space, the ruled has all the time for poaching around the ruler's marked space. Although it is fragmentary and opportunistic, the ruled leaves its trace on the ruler's monopolized space. Based on this demarcation, for De Certeau tactics are embodied in the most mundane practices of everyday life such as talking, walking,

shopping, reading, etc. Therefore, by monopolizing the space, the ruler can try to dictate culture, but the people are not passive consumers. For De Certeau " these doers, these players, these heroes of everyday life, are the society's silent majority" (18).

Young and Defiant in Tehran (2008) by the Swedish-Iranian sociologist Shahram Khosravi is a six-years survey of tactical maneuvers of this silent majority in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Khosravi argues that the Islamic Republic's initial cultural mantra was one of self-abasement. This means the government tried to transform the society into a commune of the concordant, zealous believers; an *Ommat*. Simultaneously, the people, specifically the youth, through their tactical maneuvers transformed the regime's ideal cultural mantra, the self-abasement, into their version of self-assertion. In doing so, they used improperly what the government provided and considered proper. In Khosravi's observation, Iranians, specifically members of the younger generation, practice on a daily basis improper veiling, talking [improvising an argot deriding the regime], humor [making political jokes], gathering in shopping centers and coffee shops [occupying the public space], transforming ancient national and religious rituals into carnivals, playing rock music in basements, and substituting the state-run media with alternative media, the Internet, video, and satellite TV channels. These are subversive acts of resistance to the regime's hegemony over the mundane and underline a great achievement on the people's front and a consistent retreat on the regime's.

The other group of theorists sees neither any gain for the people nor any tolerance or truce on the government's front in this mundane cultural battleground. For them, any change in the Islamic Republic's cultural approach is regarded as a political plot for depoliticizing people while safeguarding the regime's power and longevity. From an Adornoian perspective, popular culture is always an industry. It is produced in mass to foment a harmonized, desensitized mass that has no function other than being a cog in the industry's machinery.

Following Adorno's critique of culture industry, the Iranian sociologist Yousef Abazari believes that the young generation's tactical maneuvers are nothing but the regime's plot for abolishing the youth's time and energy over trivialities. In his opinion, popular music did not slowly become legal after the revolution because of people's resistance. It simply happened because the regime realized the power of popular music to manipulate, entertain, and thus depoliticize the youth. By the same token, for Abazari there is no difference between this and that political agenda in the presidential campaigns, as there is no difference between this and that singer who has gained the regime's approval. Both candidates will do their best to depoliticize people and thus safeguard the regime's longevity.

Unable to believe in a single solution for the above-mentioned concurrent intellectual entanglement, my study of the cultural intricacies in the Islamic Republic of Iran with a focus on the lyrics of the legal/illegal popular songs in each decade suggests arriving at a truce between these divided theorists. I argue that reviewing the main themes of lasting popular songs in the Islamic Republic shows that the totalitarian regime's indubitable power on what and how far of the claimed possession "I have a voice" dramatically shrinks in each decade. In this dissertation, I demonstrate how the popularized themes for the people and forbidden by the regime in each decade evolves into a governmental promoted theme in the next one.

The reviewed songs/lyrics in the dissertation are chosen based on their popularity, not their genres. Their popularity is evaluated through their circulating through blackmarket, releasing through satellite dishes, and also the official musical website in the Islamic Republic.

In the following chapter summaries I explicate what I mean by the conflict between what was popular for the people and what the regime prescribed and propagated as the popular over the decades from 1979 to 2021.

Chapter One

In Praise of Home: Khomeini's Leadership 1979-1989

In this chapter I follow cultural and political formations and transformations occurring from 1979 to 1989, the years of Ayatollah Khomeini's leadership. The period spanning from February 1979 to September 1980 is best known as the establishing period in which people voted in support of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Under Ayatollah Khomeini's authoritarian command, Iranian society began to be cleansed of the "idolatry residues" [*tofāleh-hā-ye tāghut*], a coinage made by the Ayatollah for categorizing the new regime's others. I argue that labeling the Shah and his era as idolatry by Khomeini facilitated the elimination of what he defined as "idolatry residues" throughout the period of establishing the Islamic Republic from February 1979, until the beginning of the war in 1980. Reviewing some scholarly literature and memoirs of the era reveals how castigating the era functioned as an all-encompassing ideological policy to include all aspects of everyday life of Iranian people – from what to wear, what to read, what to watch and what to listen to. It will also argue how resistance took shape against these policies particularly by those who resented the regime's invasion into their private lives and as they came to see the new government for what it was: an innovative and unprecedented dictatorship.

Among the invasive cultural transformations, the National Iranian Radio and Television changed to The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, and in its capacity as the regime's cultural agent, a ban was imposed on pop music of the Shah's era. Categorized as idolatry residue, many pop musicians went into exile, taking refuge mainly in Los Angeles from where they began to produce songs in praise of their homeland. In turn, this exiled music created a booming underground/black market within Iran itself. The main theme of the first imported songs from exile was a nostalgic praise of home and they corresponded in terms of a shared nostalgia with the

few songs produced inside Iran. An analytic comparison of the songs imported from Los Angeles along with the songs produced in Iran is provided in this chapter.

The second wave of cultural transformations occurred from September 1980 to June 1988, the eight years that overlap with the Iran-Iraq war. The regime utilized music to recruit new forces and arouse citizens' patriotism for the purpose of keeping up with the war. At the same time as governmental eulogies were produced and released from the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, IRIB, the exiled musicians' war songs were smuggled into Iran. The main theme of these songs remained in praise of the home that was, with an added theme of being under siege from both internal [the regime] and external enemies. Comparing state-produced eulogies and songs written in exile will shed light on the conceptualization of home as imagined by the regime on the one hand and exiled musicians and its audience inside Iran on the other.

Chapter Two

In Praise of Happiness: The Construction Era 1989-1997

This chapter delves into the cultural intricacies of the Islamic Republic in the aftermath of the war and the demise of its first leadership in 1989. Under the leadership of Seyyed Ali Khamenei and the presidency of Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a new era- best known as the Construction Era [*dorān-e sāzandegi*]- began in which a new form of bourgeois/Islamic lifestyle and consumerism sprung up and was promoted by the government. The range and extent of cultural and social restrictions shrunk considerably during this decade. Happiness and entertainment were not shunned. The IRIB, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting that held a monopoly over radio and television in Iran after the revolution, began to produce and broadcast the first wave of Islamic pop songs with a happy undertone. By way of assessing their success in attracting audiences, Islamic songs of joy produced in this decade will be reviewed and compared with songs and music cultivated in the diaspora and smuggled into the country.

Among the regime's endeavors for reconstructing the country after the war was the launch of the semi-private university studies across the country, a move which resulted in inadvertent and interrelated cultural outcomes. The university's ever- growing branching out, even reaching distanced parts of the country, helped settle the 1980s' baby boomers. The more members of the young generation were enrolled at these universities, the more enhanced the rate of graduate and postgraduate academic education. Seemingly, one result of this academic blossoming was the popularization of philosophy among the young generation. The reasons of this phenomenon will be discussed as a way of showing how far the regime's academic and cultural innovations were based on one of its inevitable cultural defaults, namely, reconstructing an ideological base for a bourgeois/consumerist edifice.

Chapter Three

In Praise of Voice: The Reform Era 1997-2005

"Iran for all Iranians," Seyyed Mohammad Khatami's slogan along with his reformist agendas- meritocracy, democracy, and the dialogue between the civilizations- were well heard by the baby boomers of the 1980s. The popularity of a religious figure demonstrated through a carnival-like form of resistance ignited by the youngsters since the presidential campaigns, cut both the regime and its opponents off guard.

Researchers point to the novelty of those born to the 1980's baby boomers as now being able to cast their vote for the very first time in the presidential elections. By voting for reforms this generation was backing the slogans of tolerance and meritocracy put forth in the race for presidency but also claiming rights and merits of youth itself.

Unbridgeable divides were being created in theorizing about political, social, and cultural realms in Iran's modern history. Among some theorists Khatami was considered as an agent of

depoliticizing the people, most specifically the youth. President Khatami's intention vis-à-vis the youth was preserving the regime's cultural and political hegemony and longevity. Others regarded the baby boomers of the 1980s, better known as the third generation or the products of the Islamic Republic, as both the main target and the agent of any cultural reform in the Islamic Republic. From this standpoint, members of the third generation during the Reform Movement were considered to be the facilitators of democracy in Iran and as such became the subject of many scholarly studies.

Beyond recognizing this intellectual/political debate, the analysis I provide in this chapter weighs in on what was viewed as the youths' spirited and vibrant, everyday resistance against the regime's repressive restrictions. The Iranian adaptation of the method of De Certeau's The *Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) by Shahram Khosravi in *Young and Defiant in Tehran* (2008) will be discussed in this context as a means of evaluating the depth of day-to-day defiance.

Cultural transformations over several decades brought about unprecedented musical formats. First, digital production and the Internet gave musicians who were not able to gain governmental approval the ability to record and release their music. Pop music lost its defiant power to rock. Second, for the first time in the Islamic Republic, pop music was exported from Iran to Los Angeles. Now the Islamic Republic had to fight its battle of control over music on two fronts, within the country's borders and outside its borders. Finally and gradually, state produced pop songs became first and foremost about earthly love while former propaganda music on religious devotion and mystical, heavenly love became the exception. Reviewing everyday resistance along with the multifariousness of the voice of the decade sheds light for the upcoming decades on the Islamic Republic's cultural agendas with its categorization of legal/ illegal.

Chapter Four

In Praise of Silence: Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's Presidency 2005-2013

As the winner of the controversial elections, Ahmadinejad represented the hardliner candidate in terms of making changes in the Reform Movement. The first round of his presidency emulated the cultural constraints of the 1980s. Resentment of this new social order resulted in the formation of a resistance best known as The Green Movement which coincided with Ahmadinejad's second round of running for presidency. The Green Movement was suppressed by the government on such a scale that opponents labeled the second term of his presidency an electoral coup d'état. Officially endorsed by the country's leadership as the elected president, Ahmadinejad along with the hardliners regressed back to the 1980s cultural values with the supreme leader engaged in constructing a whole new gamut of policies on what is to be considered legal and what is to be deemed illegal. The president would be the ultimate enforcer. Through numerous public speeches, the leadership declared a full-blown war against foreign cultural invasion of the country. Stanley Cohen's theorizing in *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (2002) pertaining to midcentury England is applicable to Iran in that society was scrutinized through moral panics and the wrongdoers depicted as folk devils. Cultural deviation was transformed into political transgression. It was during this time that the media participated in introducing new folk devils on a daily basis.

Now portrayed as folk devils, independent or underground musicians of Khatami's era either remained in Iran by molding themselves into law-abiding, compliant singers or sought refuge in other countries. As a result, the third generation's voice was added to the defiant songs imported from abroad into Iran. Shahin Najafi's trilogy will be analyzed revealing what his unbridled anger was aimed at. The taboo contravention resulting in his death sentence had nothing to do with religious divinity but with the regime's political extremism.

Chapter Five

Breaking Taboos: Hassan Rouhani's Presidency 2013-2021

In comparative terms, Iran's current presidency could be perceived as an era of breaking taboos. What was considered a cultural crime over several past decades did not merely diminish in types and scope; it has ostensibly collapsed. Nowadays, permissible pop songs are produced in bulk and are commonly performed by rising stars in countless concert halls throughout the country. This legal package is also parceled to the parts of the world that have the majority of exiled Iranians, mainly Los Angeles and Toronto, albeit, government news outlets are in the habit of broadcasting latest information about such concerts claiming the local, legitimate singer outperforming his veteran counterparts in exile.

The broken taboos along with the startling popularity of the Islamic Republic's pop singers, both inside and outside Iran, deepen previous unbridgeable variances between social and political theorists. The debates seem unbridgeable but the categorical changes in musical expressions as a continued form of resistance practices in everyday life in Iran weigh in as an indication in favor of the people's struggle over their rights in their private and public life.

Chapter Two

In Praise of Home

Khomeini's Leadership 1979-1989

In the winter of 1979, a revolution dethroned Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the last Shah of Iran, putting an end to two thousand and five hundred years of monarchy. In the spring of 1979, on April the first, through a national referendum the country changed from Iran to the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the fall of 1980 began the eight years of the Iran-Iraq war.

Reviewing some scholarly literature analyzing this transitional period will show that the political, social, and cultural transformations during the time between winter 1979 till summer1989, the year of the end of the war and Ayatollah Khomeini's demise, were so unpredictable and unprecedented that there is almost no accordance among many Iranian historians and sociologists in labeling and defining the new regime. Retrospectively and mostly written in exile, the reason for these diverse definitions and lablelings seems to be the abrupt changes the Islamic Revolution and as its aftermath the Islamic Republic brought about and enforced on Iran's political, social, cultural and artistic scene.

Kaveh Basmenji, an Iranian writer and journalist living in exile, recounts how these transformations ignited on the very day that Khomeini came to Iran and made his first speech. Basmenji informs his readers that during Khomeini's speech, the attendees who were born and

raised in the Shah's period applauded after every sentence they found exciting or significant. Meanwhile, the new leader's entourage orchestrated the people to recite *allāh o akbar*, god is great, instead of clapping. Basmenji points out that "what began at Tehran's cemetery in February 1979 was a firmly established truth by the mid-1980s: the cult of Khomeini" (Basmenji 170).

Although in the speech Khomeini harshly criticized cinema as the den of prostitution, his primary target was not culture but politics. At the time, country was officially governed by Shapour Bakhtiar, Iran's last prime minister appointed by the Shah. Pointing to the Shah's designated government, Khomeini said: " They are criminals and must be prosecuted. I will slap this government on the mouth. Since the nation approves me, I will assign a government" (Khomeini "Speech"). The speech was delivered on February the first. Three days later, on 4 February 1979, Khomeini complied with his promise and introduced his own appointed government to the nation, which meant Iran was reigned simultaneously by two governments from 4 February until the victory of the revolution on 11 February 1979. Just three days after the official victory of the revolution, on 14 February 1979, Khomeini fulfilled his promise. Four major army generals were executed on the rooftop of Alavi school, the temporary residence of Khomeini at the time.

The Iranian historian Mahmoud Fazeli reports: "their trial was conducted on the same day in the Revolutionary Court, their verdict deemed the army generals as the corruptors on the earth" (Fazeli "First Round"). The headlines of the next day's newspapers were fully dedicated to the news of this revolutionary justice, albeit with some nuances. Some read: " The Revolution's platoon pulls the trigger on Shah's allies". Some read: " The allies of the toppled Shah were executed". In an unprecedented attempt, the newspapers also published photographs of the corpses, yet again with some nuances: some were close ups of their faces, some showed them in the mortuary refrigerators and others pictured them laying on the floor and drenched in blood.

Fazeli concludes his report: “until mid-March of the same year, more than 70 other military generals or SAVAK members were tried and executed in the same vein” (Fazeli “First Round”).

The historian Anoushiravan Ehteshami, scholar of Middle Eastern studies, has labeled the period the “First Republic, characterized by the authoritarian reign of a charismatic leadership” (Ehteshami 79). The sociologist Saïd Amir Arjomand sees the same period as “the transformation of a nation into an *Ommat”*- the Arabic word for a commune of devoted believers (Arjomand *Turban* 56). Human rights activists, such as Shirin Ebadi, name it the “government of terror” (Ebadi and Moaveni 160), while artists, such as Azar Nafisi, regret “the all-round defeat of the people’s creative imaginations to the government’s” (Nafisi 34).

The researcher of religion Reza Aslan has named it a “Mullahcracy”. He believes that what the Ayatollah had in mind and finally accomplished in the name of an Islamic Republic is neither a republic nor Islamic, not just a theocracy and definitely not a democracy. Aslan belives, Iran is a unique hybrid of fascism and religious autocracy or, worse, it is an eccentric and disconcerted embodiment of an awry populism (Aslan 42).

Abbas Milani, the director of the Iranian Studies at Stanford University and a scholar of Iran’s modern history, analyzes this hybridity by stressing the “Islamic republic uses modern institutions- a parliament, a president and modern bureaucracy- without applying a modern political approach” (Milani “Iran” 4).

Asef Bayat, the Iranian-American professor of Sociology and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Illinois, goes further and claims “this unprecedented Islamic state cannot simply be defined as stubbornly pre-modern, totalitarian, or as an absolute dictatorship. It is deeply authoritarian, patriarchal and ideological, and it deprives millions of citizens of participation in the decisions concerning public life” (Bayat 41).

Reza Afshari, the professor of history at Pace University, who has surveyed the *Abuse of Cultural Relativism in Iran* (2001), a volume in the series of Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights, acknowledges this view, but he believes that this amalgamation of totalitarianism, patriarchy, and dictatorship can be packaged as political Islam. He believes what Khomeini and his entourage did was what any traditional and ideological ruler would do. In fact, what happened was completely predictable and culturally authentic. Politically, if a government is Islamic, then no one is more knowledgeable for establishing and forcing the rules and laws than grand ayatollahs. Culturally, if the government is Islamic, then no one could be more authentic than the custodians of the faith. There would be no one more reliable for having the last say on adoption and adaptation of Shiite culture to current affairs of our time. Therefore, as Afshari asserts, Islam is/was transformed to what state officials might decide about the state's relation to its citizens. For Afshari, this is why this peculiar state has a completely innovative task, not protecting the rights of its citizens, but protecting individuals from their own religious and moral lapses. As a result, an unprecedented form of Islamic human rights emerged in which the emphasis is on the human and not on his/her rights; freedom and independence are achieved when the citizen is a perfect human, mindful of God and released from all mundane attractions. In fact, freedom and independence, two pivotal slogans during the revolution, became an obligation and not a right.

In Afshari's definition, since the dawn of the Islamic Republic until now, a sharp demarcation has been drawn between the government and the people: us versus them. Since the advent of the Islamic Republic in 1979 until now, in their everyday talking, for those people who are not the supporters of the regime, "them" refers to the government. In the government's eyes, those who submitted, the true Muslims are us, everybody else is the "other." The other covers a vast range from infidels, hypocrites and apostates and are treated as non or sub-humans. Since *taqwā*, the Arabic word for virtue and chastity, is the noblest moral value, the last say on who is us and who is not, belongs to the ayatollahs (Afshari 4- 9). They have the advantage of their *fatwās,* clerical

edicts by which an ayatollah can declare any undesirable person an apostate and condemned to death, as in the case of Salman Rushdie in 1988, and the Iranian singer Shahin Najafi in 2012. Others could also be subjected to Islamic punishments such as flogging (in the case of drinking alcohol, for example), amputation (for theft) and stoning (for adultery). Afshari concludes that through elevating *taqwa*, chastity, to the noblest moral virtue, the more enduring curses are the rules that invade the citizens' mundane and private lives (11). Afshari explains that in the 1980s, the lifestyle in Tehran was specifically seen as deeply demonic in the eyes of the ayatollahs:

> *Hezbollāh* groups roamed the streets and screamed 'whores' at non-properly veiled women and beat-up young men who didn't look 'weighty' enough. Young men with stern, bearded faces, brandishing their guns, became a fixed element of urban centers. They descended on parties to arrest the sinful 'polluters of the environment', installed stop-posts at cities' crossroads to check hijabs, the positioning between the women and men in cars and smelt their breath lest they had drunk alcohol (Afshari 20).

The result, was that

> color in clothing was banned, rouge was outlawed, cheers were silenced, and fun was exiled. Nightclubs and bars were already burned down during the revolution.
>
> Alcohol, music cassettes, videos, gambling and prostitution were driven into a thriving underground. Secular teachers were dismissed and universities closed (Afshari 22).

Despite all these cultural transformations which had started in the winter of 1979, the "cult of Khomeini" was not completely fulfilled until the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88. The American-Iranian historian Ervand Abrahamian stresses that other than self-abasement and the cult of poverty, Khomeini's other agenda was formulating the centrality of grievance. One of his most quoted and famous mottos was "it is the lament which keeps us alive" (Abrahamian *Khomeinism* 75). Concordantly, in Basmenji's estimation, the most instrumental means to this end was the Iran-Iraq War. Saddam Hussein was called Saddam Yazid, [after Yazid, the caliph who killed the third

Shi'ite Imam], Khomeini was called Imam, and "the war was transformed to an end in itself, martyrdom overshadowed victory and defined every aspect of social and private lives of the Iranian citizens" (Basmenji 170). Thus, as Arjomand points out:

> mass media engaged in promoting the culture of weeping. Iranian holidays were replaced with mourning dates, as colors took symbolic significance, the dark colors showed respectability and light colors were deemed as literally 'light', without 'weight', disgraceful, jaunty and equal to its user's deviant character (Arjomand *After* 42).

Mehrangiz Kar, an Iranian lawyer and human rights activist, gives an account of the changed face of the cities by comparing the transformation imposed on women and the mannequins in the Islamic Republic. She explains that by sending young boys to the front, their testaments became the divine command for the others. A common sentence in these testaments became a motto and appeared on the walls of the cities: my sister, your veil is even more powerful than my blood. Signature: the martyr. Kar relates how mannequins in shops' windows, first displayed wearing small triangular headscarves, as did women but as women started hide their hair under the veil, the mannequins showed no hair and the color of the mannequins began to fade away. Eyelashes, rouge and lipstick vanished and the same was expected of Iranian women. Mannequins were to dress in four colors only: black, brown, dark blue and dark gray. These four colors invaded all of Iran. Still, authorities found the mannequins to be voluptuous, so shop owners were instructed to decapitate mannequins and amputate their breasts, which Kar compares with what was happening to women's bodies in the early years of the Islamic Republic (Kar 30-38).

Among numerous efforts on defining the cultural ethos of the era, there is almost no definition as concise and more to the point than a young girl, Maryam's account for Basmenji, in his all-encompassing survey on Iran's culture from 1980s until the Reform Era. Born in 1979, Maryam recalls her childhood in the 80s (as quoted in Basmenji):

> what I clearly remember about my school is that before going to our classes in the morning we had to chant: God is the greatest, Khomeini is the leader, Death to the opponents of the government of jurist, Death to America, Death to the Soviet Union, Death to hypocrites [the organization of Iranian Mujahedin] and Saddam, Death to Israel. Through years, the slogan became even longer: O God, O God, keep Khomeini alive until the revolution of Mahdi, Shorten our lives and add it to his life, Grant victory to the combatants of Islam. Then we had to pray for Imam's wellbeing. Every week, we had to memorize and recite a new *hadith*, Prophet's quotes. We have also been instructed by the "cultivating teachers" [*mo'allemin-e parvareshi*]. They were young people from lower classes who wore black chadors and were very harsh on keeping us in line with Islamic principles. We had to wear black veils that covered our chins. Wearing color stockings and wearing perfume were forbidden. We were pretending that we are zealous Muslims because we were afraid of the spies among us (quoted in Basmenji180).

The same rules were applicable for the university students, albeit with some nuances. Each class was started with the same chanting, which means that in practice, the university students had to repeat the chanting many times a day. Although there were no cultivating teachers at the universities, there were moral guards at the gates to check the girls' appearances for letting them into the university.

As for the leisure time, Maryam recounts:

> television, our only source of entertainment was dominated by war propaganda and religious sermons. Families were waiting for Friday afternoons when a Japanese cartoon called 'The Brave Boy' was shown, albeit heavily censored. There was also a Japanese soap opera that lasted three years and made a big hit. It told a story of a woman who managed to become a successful businessperson against all odds. Albeit, all mention of earthly love and sexual relationship were cut. After a while we realized

that in part of her life, she was a prostitute! (quoted in Basmenji180).

Confirming his informant, Basmenji adds to Maryam's account that during a live radio reportage, the reporter asked a woman a typical question: How do you think that Fatima, Prophet Muhammad's daughter, can be a role model for our women? Surprisingly, the young woman answered that although she held Fatima in high esteem, she thought that Iranian women must emulate Oshin, the female hero of the above-mentioned Japanese TV series. Basmenji adds: "Khomeini was quick to issue a death sentence for the interviewee and order the dismissal of the producers of that radio program. The first sentence could not be carried out because the interviewee could not be identified" (Basmenji 192).

Basmenji is not alone in stressing on his informants' memories. The human rights researcher Reza Afshari also believes that there is no better way than reading the memoirs of the period. For Afshari, these memoirs, or better still, these life-writings, are the best testaments that could envisage the image of the first decade of the Islamic Republic and its brutal and unprecedented ways of imposing upon Iran a radical cultural transformation.

For understanding this climate of fear, one of these memoirs is by Sahar Delijani**.** In her memoir we read that she had been raised in Evin Prison in the 1980s, because both her mother and father were political prisoners and the regime took steps to eliminate all its opponents. When in custody, children were kept in prison with their mothers, and after the execution of the parents, grandparents or public orphanages took custody of them. What is most striking in her remembrance is not just living in a morbid political prison, but the fact that for her there was no difference between living inside or outside of the walls of the prison. She recounts, "everyone carried fear, like a chain, carrying in the streets, under the familiar shadow of the sad, glorious mountains. And in carrying it, they no longer spoke of it. The fear became intangible, unspeakable. And it ruled over them, invisible and omnipotent" (Delijani 26).

For Azar Nafisi, as shown in her bestselling memoir *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2004), transforming a whole country into a jail happened by imposing figments of the imagination of the governmental preachers upon the everyday lives of Iranian citizens. In depriving people of ordinary pleasures of life, they engraved a not-to-do list on each individual's mind. Nafisi remembers that details that would seem so mundane and trivial for others became the subjects for calculating measures of sinfulness and scaling punishments and payments:

> Ordinary pleasures of life, trivial, miniscule acts such as licking ice cream in the street, walking hand in hand with a beloved one and caress of the sun on the skin or the wind in the hair, all became part of a long list of scrutinized behavior. Thus, the simple act of leaving the house on a daily basis needed self-made court, with the gaze of a cruel judge through the mirror, projecting a tortuous and guilty lie, an alien image that the government had fabricated for people (Nafisi 34).

Ramita Navaei, a British- Iranian journalist, believes that the Iranian government transformed the trivial, but punishable acts of everyday life, specifically in the first decade of the Islamic Republic, into an unspoken, omnipresent gaze of the government overshadowing the whole society, resulting in all private decision making of personal lives going underground. Navaei introduces her survey on Tehran by illuminating a key point to her reader: "Let's get one thing straight, in order to live in Tehran you have to lie. Morals don't come into it: lying in Tehran is about survival" (Navaei xi). She believes that by putting Iran's society under the constant panoptical and disciplinary gaze of a divine government which precludes any private space for its citizens: "the truth has become a secret, a rare and dangerous commodity, highly prized and to be handled with great care. When a truth is shared, it means an act of absolute mutual trust" (xi). She concludes that through lies and secrecy, people find a way to cope with the harsh and imposed reality on them.

Shirin Ebadi, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize as a human rights activist, writes in her memoir: "After I was arrested for having bad-hijab, I concluded that there was little one could do for protection against a state that simply wished to impose a climate of fear" (Ebadi and Moaveni160).

The overall impression that memoirs and information provided by informants on the socio-cultural conditions in Iran in the 1980s is that of a society in line with Foucault in which "the whole ceremonial notion of punishment is nothing but exercising the terror" (Foucault 49). The impression is accurate and it is not. It is accurate when in line with Foucault the impression is that it is a society in which a "suspect always feels deserving of punishment and there is always a dissymmetry between the sovereign who makes the law and subjects, who are in a constant state of being outlaws" (Foucault 49). Concerning the everyday lives of the outlaws, the impression is not precise. As De Certeau has shown, the sovereignty of terror brings about the evasive secrecy and pervasive lies as a tactical defiance against itself. As we read in the memoirs, in the dissymmetry between the sovereign regime and its citizenry, while "everyone carried fear like a chain" as Delijani accurately expresses, everyone also "had a highly prized secret truth and shared it as an act of absolute mutual trust" as Navaei pictures it. Thus, although Nafisi reminds us that "the simple act of leaving the house on a daily basis needed self-made court, with the gaze of a cruel judge through the mirror", at the same time, she was reading *Lolita,* the forbidden story of a pedophile in Tehran with her students at her own home. In De Certeau's definition of such society, if all-encompassing discipline is imposed on everyone, then "there will also be pockets of resistance everywhere through the same miniscule and quotidian mechanisms in order to evade them" (De Certeau 14).

One of these miniscule mechanisms was the Islamic Republic's dubious policy on legality/ illegality of music and the tactical defiance against it. On the one hand, in the very letter of Islam,

music is not forbidden. In other words, there is no guideline about music if the guide is the Qur'an. On the other hand, there is Khomeini's approach to music, both as a grand ayatollah who is emulated by the followers and also as the leadership and the decision maker of the country's cultural policies. In the *Religious Problems* [*Masāel*] (2013), a collection that contains Khomeini followers' concerns and questions in regard to the correct adaptation of their religious obligations to their everyday lives, there are twenty-nine questions about music. Each question targets one aspect of music on which the follower needs Khomeini's guidance. Some refer to the lyrics, some are about the difference between the western and Iranian music, some even have his own doubts about the music approved by the regime and broadcast by the IRIB [Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting]. Khomeini's answer to twenty-eight of these questions is "the minstrel's [*motreb*] music is forbidden but dubious [*mashkuk*] sounds are ok" (Khomeini *Religious* 577-590). The only question that Khomeini answers differently is: "What kind of music is forbidden in Islam?" Khomeini answers: "Music is absolutely forbidden" (Khomeini *Religious* 590). When reigning over Iran, Khomeini's musical policy followed the same trajectory of his answers in his book. In practice, the phrase "music is absolutely forbidden" sustained as an odd exception and his repetitive answer: "the minstrel's music is forbidden but dubious sounds are ok", became the rule. What he meant by "the minstrel's music" is nowhere more obvious than in a video in which the Ayatollah is addressing his own appointed government. Next to him is Sadegh Ghotbzadeh[1], the director of the National Radio and Television. The ayatollah says:

> You have to reform this system and eliminate anything western and westernized. A youth under the siege of music is not able to think seriously, therefore cannot function correctly. This is why I insist on eradicating this music. I have asked this again and again. Mr. Ghotbzadeh says it's not possible. What is that supposed to mean? I don't

1 Sadegh Ghotbzadeh (1936-1982) was Khomeini's close aide and spokesman during his exile in France. In February 1979, he was the first appointed director of National Iran Radio and Television and in 1980 as the Foreign Minister by Khomeini. In 1982, he was condemned for plotting a coup d'état against the Islamic Republic. Allegedly the plot was to assassinate Ayatollah Khomeini and overthrow the regime. He was executed in 1982.

> understand. Why is it impossible? Don't be afraid that bunch of journalists with suspicious intentions call you a fanatic. Never be afraid of being condemned or criticized (Khomeini "Imam's").

Khomeini's command dated back to the very first days of the revolution's victory until the beginning of the war, known as the establishing period in which an ample amount of the state's television programs consisted of partial or full-length interviews with the newly arrested officials of the last regime who were being introduced as the "corruptors on the earth". The other programs were mostly political debates between the theorists of diverse political parties and organizations that participated in the uprisings resulting in the revolution. At the moment, anyone who thought that his command on music was not merely a cultural prescription but it was also a political demarcation was right. After the leadership's admonition, the political debates were replaced by numerous instructive Islamic programs performed by a variety of clergymen. The vast crackdown on the cultural and intellectual front naturally facilitated the elimination of any hints or tints of the Shah-era's pop music as the embodiment of the minstrel music from the state media. First, the voice of female singers was deemed absolutely forbidden and was eliminated from Iran's music consequently. Male pop singers of the Shah era were also eliminated from the national radio and television since there was evidently neither a place for pop music with its rhythmic, upbeat or sad love songs in the new era of Islamic programming. Iranian pop musicians either took refuge in exile or were summoned to the Revolutionary Court ("Artists").

During this decade, 1979-1989, not only Khomeini's musical conditioning/command became an enforceable law, it also resulted in an inadvertent categorization of music which is commonly referred to as the Islamic Republic's musical policy. Based on Khomeini's command, the sanctioned dubious sounds, or the legal music/songs, were and still are attributed to any form of music approved by the government. This kind of sanctioned music was - and still is- taken over the national Radio and Television. Any song that failed to gain official approval from the

Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance is dubbed minstrel and is doomed to stealth production and consumption. It must be produced either outside of Iran, and then smuggled back to the country, or produced clandestinely in the undergrounds of Iran. Notwithstanding the production's geographical situation, it is doomed to be enjoyed in private spaces.

The novelty of this cultural conditioning was the reason that in the spring of 1979, a song entitled "Homeland" ["*Diyār*"] by Shahram Shabpareh, a well-known musician and pop star of the Shah's era, was merely heard in private, and thus went unnoticed and somewhat ignored. However, "Homeland" could fairly be considered as the starting point of a new wave of Iranian pop music in diaspora, a music that turned out to be profoundly controversial and problematic for the Islamic Republic and its unrivaled musical nemesis in the years to come. The wave was dubbed as *musik-e- los anjelesi* or "Los Angeles music", referring to the fact that a large number of Iranian pop musicians sought refuge to Los Angeles after the revolution. Shabpareh, acclaimed for his uplifting music such as "Two doves" ["*Do kabutar*"] (Discography, Shabpareh 1976) and "Hot Kiss" ["*Dāgh-e buseh*"] (Discography, Shabpareh 1975) in the Shah's era, sang "Homeland" while in exile in Los Angeles after the revolution. Rhythmically, "Homeland" follows a vibrant 6/8 drum pattern and strikes familiarity with Shabpareh's previous works. Lyrically, it was a brand new conceptualization. Instead of musing on a lover, he had now turned his attention and affection to homeland and the Shah himself; a music was born that was simultaneously entertaining and political. In his own words, the song's story began in the United States when one night in the passing news on TV he read: The Shah fled (Shabpareh "We Iranians").

Shabpareh desperately sang:

I saw, with my own eyes
My beloved is leaving

While he is going

My face is withering,

I'm trapped in the love's stormy sea

My beloved

As if embarked on Noah's ship

Is leaving me (Discography, Shabpareh "Homeland". Transliteration p. 234)

In the Shah's era, Shabpareh's lyrics were revolved around unquenched love. While on the lookout for a "Hot Kiss" from his beloved, he played with fairy themes of white horses and princesses. In "Two Doves", although with a broken heart of not yet having the darling one, he was sure that they would live happily ever after in each other's arms. Now, after the revolution and in "Homeland", the beloved has gone forever and there is no hope for reunion.

If "Homeland" was the first dissident song produced in Los Angeles and smuggled into Iran, "Bright Days" ["*Ruzā-ye rowshan*"] (Discography, Haydeh 1982) by the acclaimed female singer Haydeh was the first song that had been written in Iran but was smuggled to Los Angeles to be performed. While in exile in L.A., Ardalan Sarfaraz, the lyricist of "Bright Days," recounts:

> We were fiery revolutionaries. We were busy chanting in the streets, crying *allāh- o akbar* from our rooftops. Just after a week [of the revolution's victory] we realized what was really going on in our country. I wrote the song at the beginning of 1980 in Iran. All that you hear in the song truly happened and I was a witness. It was as if I saw the judgment day by my own eyes. I was a witness to the decadence of me and my country. In fact, I was living that decadence. It was as if suddenly I had woken up from a deep sleep. To tell the truth, "Bright Days" should have been named Farewel My Bright Home (Sarfaraz "With Ardalan").

The poet's bidding farewell to his bright home or his depiction of the decadence is as follows:

> Everyone mourns
> Everyone twists in themselves
> Men are hanging on gallows
> Women are in prison
> We're not in heaven
> We're not on earth
> We are asleep
> Witnessing a nightmare
> Dazzled and beguiled
> Waiting for our turn
> You have to be in line
> Even for your own death
> For us, this is the course of time
> They twist and turn us as they wish (Discography, Haydeh "Bright Days". Tranliteration p. 234)

Seemingly, what Shahram Shabpareh started emotionally in reaction to the Shah's departure from Iran was continued by L.A.'s other musicians systematically. Although it had never been officially acknowledged, the effectiveness of the music imported from Los Angeles was such that the Iranian government called it "idolatry residue" [*tofāleh-ye tāghut*]. This derogatory term was used to humiliate, categorize, and condemn the exiled pop singers as the advocates of the Shah whose support was deemed as idolatry; not only musicians in exile but the ones who had not left the country but were not considered the revolutionary ones were also stigmatized. These domestic singers who were not deemed idelogically committed, were also called idolatry residues. Finally,

in the early years of the 1980s, when the state-run media was "purified" of those who were considered to be non-conformists, the coinage was monopolized for naming the exile singers and opposition for the years to come.

The first underground music in the Islamic Republic was produced almost concordant with the importation of the "Homeland" from L.A. into Iran. Shortly after the victorious election of the Islamic Republic and its official establishment in the spring of 1979, the one exemplary endeavor for preserving the autonomous or non-committed voice happened by a group of dissident artists /intellectuals and musicians who produced and released numbers of audio cassettes labeled *Letter from Homeland* [*Vatan nāmeh*], but better known as *Nocturnal with the Nightcrawlers*[1][*Shabāneh bā shabzendedārān*]. Among all the literary and poetic efforts rendered through this collection, the song "Iran Iran"[2] stood apart and enjoyed a massive popularity. In a combination of Mazyar's sad voice as its singer, Alireza Meybodi's heartbreaking eulogy for homeland as its lyricist, and melancholic music of Emad Raam as its composer, "Iran Iran", even today and in retrospect, seems strangely dismal and apocalyptic in the prime of a new and supposedly democratic elected government. The song depicts the country under the siege of total annihilation. First, Mazyar announces that he would rather live in exile as opposed to live under tyranny. Then the lyricist Alireza Meybodi declaims that this is the breaking news in Iran: those who love it the most, have left it.

In July 1979, while *Nocturnal with the Nightcrawlers* was being produced, Ayatollah Khomeini asked Abdol Hassan Bani Sadr- Iran's first president- to cleanse the public offices of

---

1 For seeing the design of these underground-produced audio cassetts, go to https://esam.ir/item/17613526/ ، one of many Iranian versions of ebay on which one of the audio cassetts is available for sale. For hearing the collection, this link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1Ynwz8H8_8 leads to the available versions of *Nocturnal with the Nightcrawlers.*

2 Full lyrics Appendix A, p. 255. Transliteration p. 234.

the “idolatry residues”. Much like all Khomeini’s other requests, the project started to be effective immediately. On 5 July 1980, hijab became mandatory in all public offices and any person diagnosed with the least tint or hint of idolatry was cleansed from society. In July 1980, the last cassette of the *Nocturnals* was released, since the dissident/literary collaboration was no more possible even clandestinely. On 22 September 1980, the prediction in the song “Iran, Iran” became a tangible fact. Iraq invaded Iran, beginning eight years of war. Alireza Meybodi sought refuge in Los Angeles. Emad Raam, first imprisoned in Iran, then sought refuge in the People’s Mujahedin of Iran, a guerilla organization, which at first was an ally, then the opposition of the Islamic Republic. Mazyar never left Iran, never got permission to sing, died out of grievance and loneliness according to Meybodi who frequently makes homage to him in his TV shows in Los Angeles. The bitter irony is the fact that “Iran, Iran” as the first of underground songs produced inside Iran after the revolution was well heard in diaspora, covered by renowned Iranian singer Sattar[1] in Los Angeles and returned back to Iran as a semi-national anthem.

The acclaimed Iranian musician Mohsen Namjoo defines the Islamic Republic’s musical policy:

> through all these years, music has been like a child witnessing the ambiguous gaze of its father and never knowing for certain whether this serious, stern stare is one of approbation or reproach because its father’s reactions have always been contradictory. This child, unable to live independently has no choice but to coexist with the father yet with such a father the child never has complete security of body and soul

1 Abdolhassan Sattarpoor, known as Sattar (b.1949), is an iconic pop singer in Iran. His ardent advocacy of the royal family caused him to be nicknamed as ‘court singer’. In 1976, rumors had it that one of his famous songs “*Shāzdeh Khānum”,* “The Princess”, (Words and music by Mohammad Saleh Ala and Manuchehr Cheshmazar)was a dedication to Princess Farahnaz Pahlavi. Despite Mohammad Saleh Ala, the song’s lyricist’s, firm denial, rumors became verifiable after the revolution when the Queen Farah recounts in her memoir that the only thing Princess Farahnaz kept as a souvenir from Iran during their exile was Sattar’s poster that she hung it in her room. In exile, Sattar continued his career by singing many songs in favor of the royal family and many more in criticizing the status quo. His fame and popularity can fairly be considered unique since it has covered the royal family’s fans and foes.

(Namjoo “The Revolution” 182).

In *Soundtrack of the Revolution: The Politics of Music in Iran* (2017) Nahid Siamdoust explains that the father’s reproachful gaze took an aimiable turn soon after the Revolution when he heard a song “Pure Martyr” [“*Shahid-e Motahhar*”] (Discography, Golriz 1980) in praise of his life-long friend and companion Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari. Siamdoust mentions that “Khomeini was so moved that he vowed to support this beautiful music committed to the revolution” (3). As Siamdoust defines, according to the song’s composor Ahmad Ali Ragheb, in a meeting with the song’s producers Khomeini told them that he was so impressed by the song that he could not control himself not to cry. According to the song’s singer Mohammad Golriz, “Imam Khomeini’s approval of this piece… and his consequent statements led to the freeing of the hands of musicians in the creation of enduring and exceptional songs so that we could witness the creation of everlasting pieces during the time of the Holy Defense [the Iran- Iraq war]” (quoted in Siamdoust 90).

Namjoo firmly believes that Khomeini’s approach must not be construed as a gesture of tolerance. Music proved to be useful in mobilizing people during the revolution. So, it would be also useful to stir up people for accepting, enduring and participating in the “Imposed War” [another governmental label for Iran-Iraq war]. As Namjoo explains,

> rather quickly, the ulama, specifically Khomeini himself, realized the fact so they did what ulama do in similar situations. They re-interpreted music from the forbidden [*harām*] to the conditionally permitted [*mobāh*]. The main reason for this so-called compromise was the war and the realization that there is no slogan, speech or sermon that could play a greater role in guiding public opinion, keep the flame of the revolution, kindled and generating enthusiasm across the nation in order to keep the
>
> people engaged whenever the government needed them (Namjoo “The Revolution” 180).

Reviewing the repertoire of Sadegh Ahangaran as the government's official war singer/superstar proves Namjoo's point about the ulama taking advantage of music as a mechanism for mass control and shows how far the regime used music for guiding the public opinion during the war. Defining his career, Ahangaran praises his lyricist/eulogist Habibollah Mo'allemi, whose repertoire on war was endorsed and acknowledged by Khamenei in an appreciation letter graced with the leadership's signature as: your humble brother. Ahangaran recounts:

> Mo'allemi was a farmer and a poet. His son, my close friend, suggested that his father would be able to write my eulogies. On a piece of paper, I wrote down what I had in my mind which was no more than Khuzestan and the names of a few martyrs. The next day, the lyrics were ready. I sang the eulogy for the soldiers. They couldn't stop crying for twenty minutes. They asked me to sing it for the Imam himself. My answer was: Going to Jamaran [Khomeini's residence]? Who would let me in? (Ahangaran).

Contrary to his belief, they let him in and a religious music star was born. The very next day the mentioned eulogy was broadcasted from the IRIB numerous times, in which he repeatedly sent his greetings to the withered red tulips of Iran, the symbol for Iranian martyrs in the war.

Endorsing his lyricist, Ahangaran explains that their collective effort materialized into two categories: first were the epics in order to attract and recruit new fighters; the other was the creation of encouraging melodies intended for use in the frontlines while the soldiers awaited the incoming battle. He concludes that they did not have the time for anything else besides performing for the troops in different cities and till the end of the war. This was his only duty and vocation (Ahangaran).

Ahangaran's statement is to some extent accurate. For the years to come, kindling fiery emotions in the hearts of people to endure eight years of war and most importantly to recruit

volunteers to send to the frontline became a prioritized task for the government and the media. This does not mean that no revered musican did not make music for the war[1]. As Siamdoust reminds us: "Ahangaran- 'Imam Khomeini's nightingle' as he was called- came to embody those years more than any other" (Siamdoust 95).

Simultaneously, the propaganda and promotion of martyrdom, lament, and terror led to the birth of a blossoming underground art scene. In the middle of the war and despite the fact that one of the most prominent cultural mantras of the 1980's forbade the creation and promotion of any form of stardom and fandom, the exiled music imported via the smuggled audio cassettes and videotapes from Los Angeles to Tehran and was circulated clandestinely among close friends and families. The smuggled videotapes became an indispensable refuge and an integral part of people's mundane leisure for almost a decade while the national television's programming was limited to reports from the frontlines, Khomeini's lengthy speeches and the war's eulogies/anthems.

Newly exiled, the first wave of Los Angeles singers yearned for a lost homeland. "Bright Days" is an illuminative example of this period. In shock and wounded, the lyricists penned dismal songs yearning for the days past, but with an optimistic hope that the cloudy veil of this nightmare [new regime] would be lifted and those bright days would soon reemerge. The most common notion with the poetry of that era was the nostalgia for homeland. Inevitably the war faded nostalgia, so another voice became dominant: the beloved homeland was under the siege of both internal and external enemies. Lamentation over and farewell to "Bright Days" transformed

---

1 Among the body of works produced by the acclaimed musicans, two songs as the emblem of the war stand apart. One is Hossein Alizadeh's "Ney-Nava" (1983). Defining the song's popularity, he says "I told the officials who asked me to produce music for the war, that our opinions on the war are too diverse. What I see in the war is its aftermath, the atrocities and ruins" ("Maestro"). The other song is the co-work of Hushang and Bijan Kamkar "Where Are You Godly Martyrs" ["*Kojāyid ey shahidān-e khodāyi*"] (1980), which had been produced for the Revolution but enjoyed a great fame due to its numerous broadcasting during the war by the IRIB.

to mourning for a tribe, trapped in a seemingly endless, obviously fatal war. What had remained intact was hope. The change was evident in Ardalan Sarfaraz's "The Housemate" ["*Ham-khuneh*"] by renowned singers Haydeh and Vigen:

In the middle of this total ruin
Don't ask me where my home is
What should I say, my fellow compatriot, my fellow tribe
The whole tribe wanders
A homeless tribe
One drift further than the other
All homesick in our own country
The bloodiest, the most wrecked of all the ruins (Discography, Haydeh and Vigen "Housemate". Transliteration p. 236)

The song's music video dates back to 1982, the second year of the war. The video clip's picture is divided into two parts. In one half there are scenes of uprisings, in the other scenes of the war. Showing the descending Shah and the ascending Ayatollah alternatively, the song continues:

Wandering was your omen, but it became our destiny
Our unborn child was buried by our own hands
Don't ask me of my heart, the patient stone is broken
Memories are but ruins,
Stories are all buried alive
All dreams withered
All hearts burnt
No one ever sewed a wedding dress on that soil (Discography, Haydeh and Vigen "Housemate". Transliteration p. 236)

Considering the two phrases “wandering” and “unborn child” in the opening verses as the representation of the desperation the poet must have been through at that time, he considers Khomeini and the people both responsible for Iran’s current miseries would not be a baseless interpretation. Both phrases refer to the factual events, albeit poetically. In 1964, Khomeini was exiled by the Shah to Turkey. In 1965, he was relocated to Baghdad, Karbala, and Najaf. In 1978, he was sent to Kuwait, and from there he finally was settled in France. After years in exile, he flew from France to Iran in 1979 to overthrow the Shah. Understanding who is the one whose omen was wandering does not need much imagination. But mourning for the unborn child is not so straightforward. In Iran’s political argot, depending on the speaker’s political inclination, the unborn child or Iran’s aborted child is a metaphorical description for describing Iran’s modernization. In his ceremonial speech for Nowruz 1976, describing the country’s achievements at the time, the Shah pictured Iran at the threshold of civilization. He also described all his plans for Iran’s future in his book *Towards the Great Civilization* [*Beh Suy-e Tamadon-e Bozorg*] (1978). The phrase had been used by his adversaries for deriding Iran’s deficiencies. The unborn child also refers to the revolution. These politicians and political theorists believe in the revolution as a democratic act and attribute all the country’s shortcomings not to the revolution, but to the regime it brought about[1]. Maybe by listening to the song per se, the listener would be able to interpret the unborn child as the revolution. But watching its video clip would not give such a conclusion. The video pictures Iranians, both inside and outside of the country, as captives, foreigners and wanderers regretfully in search of a once familiar and secure homeland. Despite the poet’s anger and frustration, the song comes to its end by a wishful invitation:

Believe me my co-crooner

1 More information about this political approach is to be found in: Bazargan *Iran’s Revolution* and “Manifestos” 1979-1980.

The wings to fly are still unbroken

Let us build that home once again (Discography, Haydeh and Vigen "Housemate". Transliteration p. 236)

The wishful invitation of the "Housemate" to rebuild the home was watching clandestinely through smuggled video clips, on national television, the non-smuggled and official invitation came from the war's superstar Ahangaran:

You, the Saheb Zaman's troop! Get prepared, be ready

For a relentless fight, get prepared, be ready

You, ready to die fighters

Now is the time for bravery

You, the troop of god's soul

It is the time for martyrdom (Dicography, Ahangaran "Saheb Zaman Troop" ["*Ey lashkar-e Sāheb Zamām*"]. Transliteration p. 237)

If Sarfaraz uses "the wanderer" as a degrading but metaphorical hint to Khomeini, Mo'allemi, straightforwardly elevates him up to the level of *Saheb Zaman* [lit. the owner of time, one of many names for the twelfth Shi'a Imam] with no poetic hesitation. He packaged and parceled all Iran's fighters as the troops of Khomeini by the simple translation of his Arabic name Ruhollah to its Persian version: god's soul. One invites his housemates to rebuild; the other invites the troops of God's soul to martyrdom. The stark contrast between the two songs validates the sharp demarcation made by the government between us and them and it is almost nowhere more blatant than the contextualizing of the war itself. For them, the state, or better still for the Ayatollah and his followers, it was "the sacred defense[1]". Nothing was sacred in it for Khomeini's others, whether outside or inside of the country. It was merely the war, the longest war in the 20th century. For

1 For more information on introducing the war as "sacred defense", see Arjomand *Turban.*

them, the holy and sacred target was Karbala, the place of Imam Hossein's battleground with the Caliph Yazid, which was now in the siege and disposal of Saddam Yazid, a term publicized by the regime's propaganda to personify Khomeini as the Imam and Saddam as Yazid. Thus, the Imam's troops had to redeem Karbala. The never literally happened dialogue between us and them over the reason, significance and duration of the war, was manifesting itself in the songs of both fronts. While Ahangaran sang:

> We are going towards the lovers' land
> We are going towards Karbala
> Sacrificying our lives bravely (Discography, Ahangaran "Towards the Lovers' Land" ["*Suy-e diyār-e āsheqān*"]. Transliteration p. 237)

The exiled front's response came from Dariush[1] by singing "Karun" (1983) based on a religious/eulogist melody. While the melody followed Ahangaran's eulogies with no discernible blemish, the defamiliarization of the words work to show the disjunction. The subject of mourning, the omnipresent holiness that is always witnessing the ordinary from above was not a religious figure/place/concept. It was Karun, the fountainhead of the river at the border of Iran and Iraq. Dariush calls Karun as a witness to people's agonized history, to the "past laments" and "today's mourns". What he is praying for is not Iran's victory or redemption. It is Iran's liberation. For him the enemy is not merely an external one, it is the homely tyranny. So, he asks Karun:

> Till when the dark thread of servitude
> Would knit our entity?
> Till when the tyranny's thorn

1 Dariush Eghbali (b.1951) is one of Iran's most popular pop singers living in L.A. Along with his music, his fame is based on his defiant songs both in the Shah's era and in the Islamic Republic's.

Would tear apart our barefoot lives?

All the misfortune is ours

All the fortune is theirs

All the misery is ours

All the mercy is theirs

You! Who are witnessing our budding miseries

Through days and nights

You! Our sorrowful, heartsick, heartsore Karun

Our Karun,

Hear our miseries

Our yesterday's laments, our today's mourns (Discography, Dariush "Karun". Transliteration p. 237)

In this musical battleground over the war, if one's priority was solely the land of Iran versus the Islamic aspirations sung by Ahangaran, the victors were the "idolatry residues". The people under the pressures of a seemingly endless war received their words and messages wholeheartedly. It seemed that the lyrics had a healing effect on the wounded souls of those Iranians who were enduring unprecedented humiliation/ discrimination: the bitter fact that it was not just a religion that was sacred for the Ayatollah but the prioritization of other Muslim countries over Iran. The more the Ayatollah pushed his political Islam, the more the singers adhered to nationalism, the only way at the disposal of a nation to bear Ahangaran's lamentation over the redemption of Quds:

To free Quds we must pass through Karbala

We have to pass the shrine of the beheaded

You the militant lion, rise up!

Regain home from the enemy (Discography, Ahangaran "To Free Quds" ["*Bahr-e āzādi-e*

Quds"]. Transliteration p. 238)

The homeland had rarely had such a diverse meaning in Persian. Using religious symbols, emblems and myths for elevating Khomeini to an Imam and comparing the current war with the Imam Hossein's war in Karbala, was hardly ignorable, but somehow understandable or at least bearable for Iranians as propaganda in order to recruit young soldiers, kindling the fire of the war and making the imposed war tolerable for eight years. Still, the transformation of defending the homeland to conquer Jerusalem was far beyond Iranians' imagination. Reviewing and comparing the lyrics, it seems that the two fronts- the dissenters and the regime- were fighting a different war, mourning for two different lands, with just one thing in common: the Persian language. As a result, the more the regime insisted on the redemption of Jerusalem, the more the lyricists took shelter in an innovative appropriation of ancient Persian myths with reality. One illuminative example of this lyrical dramatization of the nation's humiliated soul was Dariush's "Salute" ["*Salām*"] (1983). Remarking Iranians as the Aryan tribe, the grandiose lyrics salute almost all glorious heroes and events in Iran's mythology. The lyrics ended with questioning Iran:

When was the last time you were afraid of an inferior enemy?
Had Genghis, Teymour and Alexander
Dared to fight with you the noblest gallant?

Instead of Iran, he answers his own questions in the closing verses:

No wonder!
When light dies
Voice seeks refuge in silence (Discography, Dariush "Salute". Transliteration p. 238)

In the lyrics, the absolute denial of Alexander and Genghis Khan's brutal reality makes the sheer racism in the Aryan tribe or for that matter any heroic mythology seem to be excessively desperate and more fictional. Nothing in the lyrics refers to a factual event other than the fatal reality of the

war, which had forced any counter-voice to be silent. Therefore, during the war, Dariush's voice became the clandestine, smuggled, but self-assured bravado.

However, it must not be concluded that the regime was insensitive to the nationalistic emotions of its citizenry. When in need, it would completely ignore any religious symbolism and directly target the Iranianness of Iranians. Thus, when Iran was under siege, when the regime was desperately in need to justify the longevity of war and make a reasonable excuse for the parts under the siege, the IRIB repeatedly played "Ey, Iran", an unofficial anthem in which no one, no government, no king or Imam is praised but Iran. The anthem/song had been written by Hossein Gol-Golab and composed by Ruhollah Khaleqi in 1944, when Iran was occupied by the Allies, as a nationalistic response. The song transformed to a popular national anthem in the passage of time and dubbed by many Iranian singers. The lyrics croon for Iran: "My bejeweled land, your soil is the muse of art; your soil is more precious than gold; your love is my vocation, and I cannot erase you from my thoughts for a moment". It also addresses the enemy by emphasizing the inconceivability of a defeat for Iran: "if it is of a solid rock, an Iranian is made of steel". The song/poem concludes with the ultimate promise: "Compared to you, my life is worthless. Long live eternal Iran*"* (Discography, Banan 1944).

When crisis was averted and the sieged part of the country was relieved, IRIB, with a drastic change of tone, resumed to broadcast its own produced song/anthem in celebration of the victorious days. The song was named "This Victory" ["*In piruzi*"] (Discography, Golriz 1982). Originally, the song was produced to celebrate the liberation of the port city Khoramshahr on 24 May 1982, after its occupation by Iraqi forces on 26 October 1980.

As Hossein Bastani, the Iranian researcher and journalist, recalls, the liberation of Khoramshahr was Iran's most substantial militant victory during the eight years of the war. Iran no longer had any occupied land and had proven the power of its military. But there was no consensus among the

militant officials and the decision makers over ending the war. Comparing memoirs and interviews of the officials of the time, Bastani explains that those in favor of the ceasefire believed that with no occupied land the war was over for Iran. But the ambitions of those in favor of continuing the war went far beyond the mere defense of the land. What they had in mind was toppling Saddam and occupying Karbala and Basra. Those who believe in this were the winners of the dispute over the war's longevity[1]. (Bastani "Rereading").

The war continued for eight years. Inevitably, "This Victory" did not have a happy ending, both in its tangible and musical performances. The song faced a backlash over the passage of time for the very reason of its commemoration of "This Victory". When Khoramshahr was liberated, in "This Victory" the redemption of terror, oppression and the dark days of fighting and occupation were expressed in the simple past tense which meant: the turmoil had passed once and for all. Through the repetition of the song for six more years after the liberation of Khoramshahr, from 1982 to 1988, the song's time practically transformed into a continuous present tense. "This Victory", transformed to these victories, a continuous reminder of repetitive occupations, terrors, and perished lives; seemingly, not a happy song anymore.

Although under the safe veil of secrecy, happiness did not vanish. It was not delivered by the state and once again the exiled artists assumed it as their own responsibility. The numerous dance songs smuggled to Iran were produced and performed by the musicians in the diaspora. The immense volume of the songs produced in Los Angeles pioneered a new wave of post-revolution Iranian pop and became a synonym for Iranian dance music [*musik –e- los anjelesi*]. Whether one considers this a new wave or fad depends on the judgment of the audience towards this music.

---

1 The longevity of the war is still a controversial and ongoing dispute among the regime's officials. Bastani's article provides an inclusive introduction of the rare resources in which the war's decision makers give their narrative of the time. For more information on the reasons for the war's longevity, also see: Bashiri *Hard Days*. Bastani, *Poisoned*. Bastani, *Stealth Coup*. Lotfollahzadegan *Passing*. Rafighdoost "Unread". Rezaii "Unread".

Besides following the global form and modern production styles of the 1980's, the music itself was so prevailing that it had transformed the musical style of some of the veteran musicians who were acclaimed for their somber and ever-sad songs. Hassan Shamaizadeh could be considered as the archetype of this musical transformation. This well-acknowledged and appreciated Iranian singer/composer was responsible for some of the country's pop music in the Shah's era saturated with harsh political criticism of the status quo such as "The Hearth" ["*Ojāq*"] and "The Swamp" ["*Mordāb*"] (1974).

According to these songs' lyricist, Ardalan Sarfaraz, "The Hearth" is a poetic narrative of the CIA coup d'état against Mossadegh's government in 1953. Sarfaraz remembers that his mother, a devotee of Mossadegh, once in a while went to the basement in which she had hidden the pro-Mossadegh newspapers that her brothers had published when Mossadegh was the prime minister of Iran. She would gently caress the surface of the papers as if incarnating the memories and the hopes of those days and would tell her son that the fire is alive underneath the ashes. Soon, the ashes will blow away and the fire will be kindled once again (Sarfaraz *From Root* 48). The lyricist son mingled the reality with memory. "The Hearth" transformed to refer to both the mother and motherland. In his lyrics the coup, which had happened in just a few hours, is transfigured to a rain. Although not pouring more than a night, the rain left nothing of the hearth but a pile of ash. In the closing verses, the son repeats what he has learned from the mother: their realization that very soon, the fire will be kindled once again and will put an end to this endless icy winter. "The Swamp" was Iran that was "undergoing a gradual but brutal cessation of existence" (Sarfaraz *From Root* 54). According to Sarfaraz, the calamity was the westernized consumerism that was systematically promoting during the Shah's era (Sarfaraz *From Root* 54).

During the first years of the war, Shamaizadeh's songs became one of the staple dance-hits of the inevitably secretive parties across the country. Other than their happy and danceable tunes, they

were popular and famous for their simplistic lyrics. One instance of these songs was "More and More" ["*Bishtar- o bishtar*"] (1984). The opening verses of the lyrics announced the song's message: "whenever I wanted to tell you that I love you, I stumbled, so, with this song I'm telling you that I love you" (Discography, Shamaizadeh "More and More"). The only thing that this song- and many other Shamaizadeh's songs produced in Los Angeles- had in common with his repertoire in Iran before the revolution that consisted of semi- political and defiant songs such as "The Swamp" and "The Hearth" is Shamaizadeh's name and vocal.

While a number of people were dancing to escape and temporarily put a Band-Aid on the uncertain future that awaited their lives, this specific type of music garnered a diverse multitude of interpretations. For the regime, this was a cultural invasion by the enemy. For the connoisseurs this "music lacked depth" (Fatemi "From"), it was "the rotten sound of cabarets" (Chavoshi "Harsh Attack"), and, the "crap musical diarrhea" (Hemmasi *Tehrangeles*). However, for Vartan Avanesian[1], the owner of Taraneh Records, the company that produced this music through all these years, the reason for producing these songs was to alleviate the listener of the devastations and exhaustion of experiencing two successive disastrous events in their lives, the revolution and the war. After the first years of bewilderment, Iranians, both in the homeland and exile, gradually learned that this is the reality of their lives and they gradually learned to cope with it. The reason for the mass production and mass appreciation of the songs was simply the fact that they made people feel better (Avanesian). Comparing "Popular Music and Memory Construction in Iranian Diasporic Context" (2011), Sarah Auliffe's opinion is in concordance with Avanesian, although in a more philosophical approach and tone: "Forgetting is not erasure, just as silence is not absence of

1Vartan Avanesian (n.d) is an Iranian-Armenian music producer. He started his career in Iran in the 1960s. After the revolution by launching his music company, Taraneh Records, he continued to produce and release Iranian pop music in Los Angeles from 1982 until now.

sound, but rather a resonating space, teeming with the ineffable. Music can serve as a means of escaping or making sense of silence and detachments" (Auliffe 62).

Among the promoters of happiness, one singer and his career stands apart for more than half a century. In the Iranian pop scene there is hardly a counterpart for Shahram Shabpareh's repertoire of happy/dance songs. Shabpareh candidly and repeatedly says: "The real and whole meaning of life is happiness. I will make people happy as long as I live" (quoted in Namjoo "Honesty"). Analyzing the effects of Shabpareh's music and the concept of happiness of the era in one of his lectures, Mohsen Namjoo says:

> This discussion would be useless for two groups. The first is his fans. They love Shahram Shabpareh as he is and don't need any musical or philosophical theory for backing it. The second are the intellectuals of my generation. They are judgmental towards pop music. As for myself, I was his fan when I was in Iran. Indeed, in Iran everyone is his fan. He is the icon of happiness (Namjoo "Honesty").

But for Namjoo, this happiness is dubious. There is and has always been a sad sound in Shabpareh's songs. Theoretically, by analyzing 163 songs of Shabpareh, Namjoo realizes that eighty percent of the songs are in the minor scale. This means, although danceable and uplifting in terms of rhythm, the song has a melancholic sound. In practice, the story is completely different. Namjoo recounts that in the beginning of the war, in private parties, hearing the song "Pariya" [lit.fairies] made him cry. He asserts that "Pariya" (1984) is nothing but a love song, but grasping its true meaning would not be possible through the usual conceptualization of love songs. Far from it, it needs the listeners' contextualization.

> It needs the listener's imagination. You have to listen to it – imagine it- in the Islamic Republic, a thoroughly biased and ideological government, which has forbidden all kinds of music and plays military marches from dusk till dawn. Iranian pop and

> classical music have both been eliminated from the public scene and Los Angeles was the embodiment of heaven from which the sound of music was audible. The cities are under the incessant bombardment. All this lasted for eight melancholic years. In the midst of misery, there was just one icon of happiness by which Iranians were dancing in their secret but happy ceremonies. It was "Pariya". Now you can realize when there was no Internet and all tribunes were monopolized by the government, how precious this song was (Namjoo "Honesty").

Namjoo is right. "Pariya" is a simple love song. It also needs to be contextualized. In its videoclip the love story happens in a neighborhood in L.A. in which the rival gangs decidedly want to have their fair share of the fairy's love. The singer, the love-song's hero, firmly announces that the fairy opens her window just to see him, a fact that the whole neighborhood is well aware of. But in Iran the love and life are not as simple as that. In the 1980s, the whole neighborhood was also well aware that no flirtation could be so blatant and explicit for the public's awareness. In the Islamic Republic, not only could there be no neighborhood gang rivalry, but also no fairy was permitted to have an open window for her lovers. Boys had to participate in the war. Girls had to cover under the veils. Thus, "Pariya" was not merely danceable, it was also simultaneously imaginative, eliminative, and constructive. Sharam Shabpareh's "Pariya", Hassan Shamaizadeh's "More and More" or Siavash Shams'[1] "Iranian Girl" ["*Dokhtar Iruni*"] (1985), to name just a few among numerous love/dance songs of the era, were not popular solely because they were able to make people dance at the heart of their everyday miseries. In other words, it was not the danceable rhythm per se that had the most powerful tranquilizing effect. It was also the lyrics. Intentionally or completely inadvertently, almost after the first year of the war, any hint or tint of the current misery had been eliminated from the imported happy songs from exile. In this music,

1 Siavash Shams (1964) is an Iranian singer, songwriter and record producer. He started his career in Los Angeles and became known and famous in Iran through his album *The Neighbors* [*Hamsåyeh-hā]* in 1985.

the homeland's misery had vanished. There came neither any word to picture the status quo, nor any advice for an imaginary future in which everyone would be happy once again. The bleak reality lost its ground in the dance songs. An imaginary nowhere land took its place; a la la land in which anything would be possible, doable, but never punishable. The bombardment from la la land outnumbered the tangible bombardments. Thus, the L.A. land overshadowed the Islamic Republic's morbid reality for decades to come.

In this chapter I followed cultural formations and transformations occurred from 1979 to 1989, the years of Ayatollah Khomeini's leadership, along with the people's resistance against it. Considered forbidden by the new regime, the pre-revolutionary music and musicians were exiled or went underground. The exiled music created a prosperous black market within Iran. Reviewing the themes of the songs produced in diaspora and comparing them with the eulogies/anthems produced in Iran, showed that the regime and the people were not accordant in the main theme of the songs, the homeland. We will see that by the demise of Ayatollah Khomeini and the end of the war, in the next era the regime would conduct new cultural policies and will compromise over the popular themes in its own produced songs.

Chapter Three

In Praise of Happiness

Construction Era 1989-1997

Naming the decade "the second republic", as Anoushirvan Ehteshami (146), or "the end of an era" as Basmenji (170) and Ebadi and Moaveni (160), researchers of the Islamic Republic and its cultural intricacies concur that the end of the war, along with the demise of Khomeini in 1989, ended the chapter of charismatic revolutionary leadership in Iran. A different era began that replaced revolutionary ideology with pragmatism.

The acendency of the second leader Seyyed Ali Khamenei began in 1989 based on an anecdote narrated to the parliament by Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani[1]. In an available video of the day, the amused Hashemi recites a private dialogue with the deceased leader. In Hashemi's tale, while he was wondering that the regime had no replacement for leading the Islamic Republic after Ayatollah Khomeini, the Imam reproached: " Sure we have. We have Seyyed Ali Khamenei!" ("Ayatollah").

This was how on 4 July 1989, the new leadership of the Islamic Republic was appointed. Lacking Khomeini's charisma was not Seyyed Ali Khamenei's only hindrance for maintaining

1 Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (1934- 2017) was one of Ayatollah Khomeini's closest confidants, one of the founding-fathers of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and one of the most influential politicians in the Islamic Republic. He was Iran's fourth president from 1989 until 1997.

the deceased leader's sovereignty. He was also not a *faqih*- an Islamic jurist. Thus, the parliament, which accepted his leadership based on hearsay, took the chore to amend the constitution[1]. Therefore, the term faqih was corrected to the Absolute Faqih, which means, endowing the new leader an unlimited and unconditional power (Arjomand *After*). Playing with words was not merely a violation of law to compensate for Khamenei's ineligability as a grand ayatollah. In practice, it brought about a profound and somehow irrecoverable transformation in the regime's ideological policies and cultural mantras.

Carl Schmitt defines dictatorship as "a legally organized instrument that one can resort to in case of emergency in times of war and under siege" (34). Schmitt notes that " from the historical development of the regulation concerning the state of emergency, it is obvious that essentially two types of dictatorship exist: namely a dictatorship that, despite all its extra-legal authorization, remains within the prescription of a constitutional order and in which the dictator is constitutionally mandated (commissary dictatorship); and on the other hand a dictatorship in which the whole existing legal order is rendered obsolete and a completely new order is intended (sovereign dictatorship). This sovereign dictatorship is exercised by a national assembly that has at its disposal state power without legal limitations when the existing constitutional order has been abolished- say, after a revolution – and the new constitution has not yet implemented" (Schmitt 34-35).

Based on Schmitt's categories, Khamenei's shortcomings for sovereignty were twofold. First and foremost, the new leader did not have his predecessor's charisma and popularity. As a populist sovereign par excellence, neither the Ayatollah, nor his followers, needed any constitutional endorsement for supporting his rendered decrees. The Ayatollah's words sufficed

1 The amendment had been ordered by Ayatollah Khomeini but had not been accomplished during his life. After his death, and during transferring the power to the new leadership, the Parliament fulfilled the task. For a detailed information on this topic see Arjomand *After Khomeini* 36-37.

for orchestrating a revolution, destroying the previous constitutional order of a country, substituting a whole new one in its place, and also conducting a war. Furthermore, he was practically confronting/combating with tangible enemies: a monarchy, the dissidents and rival parties during the establishing period of the new regime, and an actual war. If one accepts Schmitt's definition of dictatorship as governing during the period of exception, Ayatollah Khomeini was a soverign dictator and had all the capital. In other words, Khomeini's charismatic and populist leadership, well accepted by the majority at his own time, was not the Ayatollah's only tangible capital for sovereignty. Moreover, as a grand Ayatollah who must be emulated by the followers, he had absolute power over them, regardless of any civil law or constitutional amendment. Even a random reading of Khomeini's decrees and disciplines illustrates the degree to which he or any other grand ayatollah is able to invade and delve into the lives of their followers. Through these all-inclusive instructions a believer's everyday life transforms to the meticulously calculated and prescribed on-going rituals. As a grand ayatollah, although his version of Islam was the most innovative and militant one, Khomeini's main concern in his treatise was Islam per se, so his job was the adaptation of Islam in all aspects of life. Accordingly, he delved into the most private matters such as eating and drinking, urinating and defecating, marriage, sodomy, lost and found, pure and impure things, and other acts[1]. Politics was not an exception among his all-inclusive adaptations.

Khomeini's encyclopedic pontification took a dramatic turn with his successor Ali Khamenei. Without a treatise he was deprived of Khomeini's full- scale power to be emulated ritually and spiritually. As a political leader, he also did not have Khomeini's charismatic, original, and brutal decisiveness, the very characteristics that made a sovereign dictator based on Schmitt's definition.

---

1 For reading the decrees in his own words, see Khomeini *The Treatise* (1980): On Eating and Drinking, article 2633, p. 420; On Men and Women, article 2433, p.384; On Matrimony, article 9, p. 257; On Breasfeeding, article 2493, p. 393; On Beheading Animals, article 2594, p.413; On Lost and Found, article 2581, p. 409.

Lacking all of Khomeini's capital of sovereignty but reluctant to be a "commissary dictator", his grand ideal was transformed from saving Islam to saving the government. Ascending to the leadership of a government deeply rooted in religious beliefs and instructions forced Khamenei to carry, count and even gamble on the "revolution's values" and Islamic standards. By mingling, distorting, and thus blurring the borderline of the religion and politics, the sacrosanct cultural crimes of Khomeini's era became terrestrial. Therefore, cultural crimes became both more usable and abusable at the same time. Previous taboos such as having a westernized appearance in public started to break down. A whole new era, best known as the Construction Era [*dorān-e sāzandegi*], began under the leadership of Khamenei and his president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who assumed the title The General of Construction [*sardār-e sāzandegi*]. The appellation implied that after eight years of war, the damaged country needed to be mended. Supposedly, this was to be done by improving the country economically, and assimilating the new generation, or better still, avoiding making new dissidents. However, Hashemi Rafsanjani's construction could fairly and squarely be considered as a gradual deconstruction of what Ayatollah Khomeini had constructed and for which he was nicknamed as the Architecture of the Revolution. Reviewing some parts of Iran's modern history will shed light on the profundity of this deconstruction.

Analyzing the political and cultural formations and innovations after Khomeini, Arjomand stresses that this deconstruction started with the growing elements of civil society within Hashemi Rafsanjani's developmental state, which was in stark contrast with the ideological state during Khomeini's leadership in the first decade. According to Arjomand, during Hashemi Rafsanjani's presidency, the mayor of Tehran, Gholamhossein Karbaschi, took the most influential steps in cultural developments. Transforming Tehran's biggest slaughterhouse in the southern and less affluent part of the city to a cultural house that includes movie theaters, sport complexes, art galleries and concert halls, was one of them. For the first time in Tehran's history, people residing

in the traditional and less affluent southern parts of Tehran witnessed modern artists' exhibitions and pop concerts (Arjomand *After* 125).

Furthermore, Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, the minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance in Hashemi Rafsanjani's cabinet, removed some of the restrictions on the press, music and filmmaking. According to Arjomand, the number of newspapers and journals rose from 102 in 1988 to 369 in 1992. *Kian* magazine began publishing in 1991 and soon became the leading reformist periodical until its closure in 2001. In this magazine religious intellectuals such as Abdolkarim Soroush[1] and Mojtahed Shabestari[2] promoted their own hermeneutical version of Islam. Theoretically, they were rendering a moderate interpretation of Islam; in practice they were targeting and attacking the very concept of the Government of Faqih.

Therefore, as Arjomand concludes, Hashemi's policies were not limited to the economy. Adhering to his economic advisors, Hashemi considered an overhauled expansion of higher education a precondition for economic development. Two-thirds of the cadres of universities were purged during the Cultural Revolution and many youngsters had been deprived of higher education for they could not pass the mandatory Islamic/moral exams necessary before entering university. As Arjomand remarks, by making students sign a promissory note not to challenge the universities' authorities, Hashemi put an end to the Cultural Revolution. The Azad Islamic University was launched under his supervision; the semi-private, semi- governmental universities expanded not only in central urban locations but in remote and rural areas. According to Arjomand:

---

1 Abdolkarim Soroush (b.1945) is an Iranian Islamic philosopher whose main idea on relativism has made him to be arguably labeled as Islam's Martin Luther. He has been a visiting professor at Harvard, Princeton, Yale and Columbia. In 2005, he was recognized by Time as one of the most influential intellectuals in the world.

2 Mohammad Mojtahed Shabestari (b.1936) is an Iranian philosopher, theologian and hermeneutist. His most noted idea is that religion is perfect, but not all-encompassing, i.e., it does not have the answer to all questions of life.

> The number of students in institutions of higher education tripled from 1986-1987 to1991-1992, surpassing pre-revolutionary numbers and doubled yet again (to over 1,200,000) by 1996-1997. Statistics (*The Country's Statistical Yearbook, Statistical Centre of Iran,* 1997) show consistent growth in literacy rates among the younger population. In 1996 some 84 percent of young males were literate, 32 percent of whom were studying at the time of the census. According to the same census, 65 percent of all young females were literate, 25 percent of whom were studying. By 1997 literacy rates for the young reached 95 percent and 90 percent for males and females respectively. The figures show a faster pace of literacy among women, one reason being the large gap between the two groups in previous years. In 1997 some 59.6 percent of the population in the 20-24 year age- group attended higher education learning institutions registering a 24.1 percent increase compared to a decade earlier (Arjomand *After* 178).

Reading the whole transformation as the regime's default, Ebadi believes that the regime had paradoxically put itself into an impasse. She reasons: "if in the Shah's era, the universities were demonized in the eyes of the traditional families, the purified and segregated universities after the Cultural Revolution were not. The 'healthy' atmosphere of the universities left the traditional families off guard. There was no reason for preventing girls from having higher education. And thus, it started to be fashionable for the traditional families to send their daughters to universities" (Ebadi and Moaveni 106).

Having a higher education did not become fashionable just for traditional families. Having a branch of Azad University almost everywhere in Iran in practice transformed higher education to an appendix of high school. Having a university student in almost every household became the rule rather than the exception. Many anthropologists, sociologists, and journalists who had launched field research on youth culture in Iran, such as Khosravi, observed that statistics show a

considerable number of translations of modern philosophy and weekly lectures took place in Tehran and continued to be held in other big cities during the Construction Era. All the works of Roland Barthes, Foucault [except the "History of Sexuality", which was published as a summary containing parts that were within the Islamic guidelines], and many other philosophers were translated. As Khosravi clarifies, in the youth culture's tactical territories, shopping malls, cafés, parks, and others philosophy was spreading by the alpha users as one of the cornerstones of how to be in, shoulder to shoulder to the latest fashion trends, films and music (Khosravi 138-148).

One of the popular philosophers and influential figures introducing western philosophy to Iranians was Ramin Jahanbegloo, who was later detained and served time in prison for allegedly plotting a velvet revolution [*enqelāb-e makhmalin*] and soft demolition [*bar-andāizi-e narm*]. In his reasoning of the popularity and influence of philosophy, he stresses that unlike, or better still, in contrast to the solid ideologies of the previous generations, the new way of thinking in Iran, specifically amongst the young generation rejects any grand narrative. The very belief, or in fact this type of disbelief, made a sharp demarcation between this new generation and the previous one. The former neither believe in the traditional hero/savior as the last resort, nor do they share any prophetic utopian ideals preached by any modern ideology. Jahanbegloo stresses:

> The point is that Iranian intellectuals are no longer entitled to play the role of prophet or hero. Their public role is to demystify ideological fanaticisms, not to preach them. What all this means is that Iranian intellectualism has finally returned to earth, to the here and now, after decades of looking for salvation in ultimate solutions. This is why philosophy is now so fashionable among young Iranians (Jahanbegloo 35-86).

The main or initiative inspiration of this new fashion, this philosophical trend, or how to be in philosophically as Khosravi would call it, can be attributed with full credit to a philosopher who single handedly won the hearts and imagination of the youth for the years to come. Babak

Ahmadi's domination in the intellectualism in Iran and his popularity among the youngsters in the 1990s were such that even after all this time the regime and in a bitter irony, some part of Iran's intelligentsia, were struggling to deal with the after-shock of his dire impact on Iran's intellectualism and every now and then they launch foreordained meetings defaming his oeuvre.

In 2017, *Farhang-e Emruz* [Today's Culture], one of the supposedly dignified periodicals, had assigned its 20th volume to Babak Ahmadi. Although the editorial claims analyzing Babak Ahmadi's fame and its ebbs and flows can be viewed through many angles, its title betrays both the outline of the survey and its conclusion: "The Superhero of the Burnt Generation: Babak Ahmadi's Service and Treachery in Iran's Contemporary Thought". The editor explains that Iran's social and cultural position in the late 1980s, due to its limited access to the foreign/original sources and the widespread dearth of knowing languages, along with the typical characteristics of Ahmadi such as his familiarity with foreign languages and impinging on a vast range of philosophical and cultural topics, were able to transform Babak Ahmadi to the intellectual superhero for one of Iran's young generations.

The editor further argues that Ahmadi's work and classes in the 1990s, the decade in which he was at the peak of his fame, had a significant function for a generation that was neither up to date with the latest theories, nor had the least communication with the active canons that were producing the new Humanities ideas around the world. According to the editorial, in the lines of Ahmadi's books and in his classrooms, this generation was enchanted to never-heard names and theories. Todorov, Barthes, Derrida, Dilthey, Jacobson, Saussure, Lyotard, Deleuze, Post Structuralism, Hermeneutics, Bataille, Gadamer, Semiotics, Umberto Eco, and many others were easily able to induce the writer/speaker's knowledge to his audience. Simply ignoring the fact that by his own claim, then Ahmadi must have been the first one who had introduced these enchanting names to Iran, he pictures Ahmadi's audience "the ones who wholeheartedly learned from its

master while Babak Ahmadi in his prophet-like gesture, generously divided the alms of his knowledge to his followers" (Jamebozorg 3). He believes that Ahmadi had observed a void in Iran's intellectual society, a void that was more psychological than intellectual. According to him, it was a void in which the pretentious knowledge was more cherished than the true one. It was a fertile situation for Ahmadi who possessed the asset and was able to "launch a prosperous business". In the end, he asks:

> What has to be analyzed pathologically in Iran's contemporary thought? Although none of those booming classes are held nowadays and Babak Ahmadi wanes, but he is still present in Iran's intellectual scene, his works are available and compared to the more serious and more profound works of others on Hermeneutics and Literary Criticism, Structuralism, Heidegger, and Marx … Ahmadi's works are still at the center of attention and attraction. What is wrong? Maybe three decades ago and under the time's circumstances his works were innovative, but what about today? Does the referral and application of an expired oeuvre have any meaning but an ominous copulation of the producer's lag and the consumer's ignorance naivete? (Jamehbozorg 4-5).

Presenting the crude tone of the tabloids in a supposedly dignified philosophical and cultural periodical has been normalized since the Construction Era, the decade of Ahmadi's occurrence. The bitter irony is that the label celebrity which is used to disgrace Ahmadi seems to be suitable in describing him. He was humanely charismatic and he became the younger generation's idol through and through. They packed Ahmadi's seminars and classes, fought their universities' officials and decision-makers to have him supervising their graduate theses, and above all they devotedly consumed his words, written or verbal.

Theoretically, Ahmadi's innovation was introducing literary criticism and critical philosophy to Iran. Therefore, his doctrine was not confined to philosophy's faculties but encompassed sociology, political science and above all art. Dragged and dismayed by the conservative and outmoded aesthetic doctrines of the official professors at that era, art students enjoyed the best of Ahmadi. Gadamer's dialogical Hermeneutics and the "fusion of horizons" in a monolithic society functioned as a breath of fresh air. For the first time, university students had the opportunity to make their own voice heard endorsed by a philosophical theory. His books became the cornerstone of the undergraduate and graduate theses' bibliographies. Realizing his influence on the young generation, the universities' officials started first to ignore, then to censor and then to devalue him. Thesis proposals under the supervision of Ahmadi were almost always declined. In one rare case the thesis- Ingmar Bergman's Cinema: a Hermeneutical Reading, for obtaining Masters degree in Art Research, Art Unisity, 1994- got the approval under one condition: there had to be a regime-approved theorist in the committee so as the director of the faculty believed "he can counteract Babak Ahmadi once and for all". Started in Hashemi's presidency and well continued to the Reform Era, what do you have to say for yourself other than recycling Babak Ahmadi's ideas became a common accusation in the graduate theses defense sessions.

All the while, the editorial's reasoning, "the producer's lag" and "the consumer's naiveté" (Jamehbozorg 5), was not an overall point of view. The same as the other tricks and innovations in the Construction Era for "channeling the youngsters into productive manners" or "preventing the production of new dissidents", as Basmenji has named it (217), engaging young people with education can be considered as one of the enormous backlashes the Islamic Republic has experienced since its advent until now. For the Supreme Leader, the philosophical influence was as serious and considered to be so dangerous that from the 1990s, he routinely made premonitions of spreading western Humanities in Iran universities.

Defining the cultural formations/deformations of the era, Basmenji believes after the successful crush of the opposition in the 1980s, the last thing the government needed "was a new hoard of dissidents that could hinder the normalization of the country. Baby boomers of the 1980s, now entering their teens, represented a lucrative target for the subversive opposition in exile. This new generation needed to be depoliticized. Thus, the whole society must have endowed with petty freedoms. In other words, society must be depoliticized and the energy of the general public, and specifically the younger generation, must be channeled in productive manners" (207).

One of these productive manners, according to Basmenji, was that through expanding his free-market policies, Hashemi transformed Iran to a consumer society, which was in stark contrast to the Islamic Republic's propagated agendas and the ideals of the revolution. Big cities' scenery was changed dramatically through the abundance of previously much forbidden foreign/western goods and the streets were roamed by luxurious, western cars (211).

Shirin Ebadi's analysis of the time argues that after establishing the new government and gaining the political power, the clerics and the officials of the new regime started to inhibit the luxurious villas in the northern part of the capital. Thus, the previously ardent revolutionaries became the *nouveau riche*. This new revolutionary elite in their chauffeured cars along with their children in their latest models of sport cars which no family without close relation with the regime would be able to afford, changed the face of Tehran (Ebadi and Moaveni 106).

Khosravi confirms these claims but stresses the fact that it was not merely the revolutionary elite's children who changed the face of Tehran and other big cities. He stresses that since "the scope of what the Islamic government considered a cultural crime considerably shrunk" (17). In this decade, young girls and boys started to break what in the 1980s considered to be a taboo: trivialities such as wearing colorful stockings and sneakers or wearing makeup and perfume.

What Basmenji adds to these new petty freedoms is the regime's apparatuses thrives to introduce and promote this new and cheerful appearances. A sport channel was launched by the IRIB. A new radio channel, Radio Payam, was launched to play music twenty-four hours. The appearance of the TV personalites also changed dramatically. The stern bearded men changed their places with their cheery clean shaved counterparts. New foreign TV series added to the IRIB's programs, albeit heavily censored. National TV series started to be produced with a romantic theme, albeit the love affair was doomed to end to marriage in the last episode (211).

Among these cultural adjustments and modifications, the strangest was a new type of music, best known as the governmental pop. As the label betrays, the first characteristic of this music was its harmony with the regime and its ideological agendas. The same rule was also applicable for the musicians. The composers, lyricists, and singers as the representatives of the Islamic Republic must be weighty, serious, and mindful of both the revolution's values and the era's ethos. As Fars News Agency, the website related to the IRGC [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps], explains, there was almost no celebratory occasion in which they were not present. Wearing suits, having microphones in their hands, they were walking solemnly, while dubbing their songs on the stage. Their appearance in IRIB had its own difficulties. Some were definitely against such performances. For them, there was no difference between these shows and the famous pre- revolutionary TV show Rangarang[1].

Those in favor of this music believed and supported this as a tool to counter L.A.'s cultural invasion. The website stresses that launching the state's third TV channel and Radio Payam were also instances of such endeavors ("What Happened").

---

1 Rangarang [Colorful] was the last of highly popular music shows produced by Farshid Ramzi (1941- 2006) in the late 1960s. Best known as the father founder of pop music shows in Iran, Ramzi introduced many pop icons. After the revolution, he moved to Los Angeles. During the Reform Era, he went back to Iran. Whether it was for directing the entertaining musical shows, or directing the Shah's coronation ceremonies, or because he was Baha'i, which is the most condemned and prohibited of all faiths in the Islamic Republic, or all three of them, he did not get permission to work in Iran or leave it. He died in a public home when he was 75.

Although governmental pop is used to cover the legal music in the Islamic Republic as a bulk, the pop songs of this specific period are profoundly different from their successors. Musically, the first governmental pop songs were in fact an innovative amalgamation of Iranian classical music, being arranged as a pop song, performed with both modern and classical instruments. Lyrically, as a rich repertoire of mysticism, Iran's classic poetry turned out to be the safe and secure source for talking about heavenly love. Mohesen Namjoo stresses that this music was neither Islamic, nor pop: "the first impression that hearing these songs generated in the mind of the listener more than anything else was of being taken for a fool. Lies… big and official (Namjoo "Revolution" 191).

Namjioo is right. It was big and official. But it was not a lie. Through this use, or abuse[1], depending on the listener's viewpoint of Iran's classic art, in practice the Islamic Republic produced a precise expression of its very hybridity. It was a completely new and innovative form in which love was in an everlasting oscillation between heaven and earth.

On 13 April 2015, the legal/state sponsored music website, musicema.com, held a poll to determine the top one hundred hits of the four decades of the Islamic Republic. The organizers explain that the reason for producing the list was to answer two questions. First, how and under what conditions the song was produced? Second, what was the reason that made it a hit? Defining the condition and the reasons that made one of the greatest hits of the 1990s, the website claims:

> In the immediate years after the war, the officials gradually realized that people need happiness. In fact, in the Construction Era, a happy society was a must. They realized that there is a place for anyone who is able to deliver the task *logically and calculatedly* [my emphasis]. One of these people was a justified youngster from

1 In *From Tradition's Whisper to Pop's Fuss* (2018), Mahmoud Khoshnam mentions that one of the singers who has used Iran's classic literature the most is Mohsen Namjoo, but in his opinion, Namjoo uses the repertoire innovatively to express what is going on in the society (462).

> Mazandaran [a province in the north of Iran] who had experienced the supervision of Iran's classical music's maestros. The song was absolutely professional while maintaining a happy rhythm. Therefore, it was attractive. Days and again it was broadcasted by the IRIB. Very soon, everyone knew the singer's name ("Introducing" 7).

The singer's name is Abdolhossein Mokhtabad. The song, "Longing for Union[1]" ["*Tamannā-ye vesāl*"] (1991) is an arbitrary selection of one of the well-known poems of Sheykh Bahaei, the 17th century Safavid era mystic and scholar. Although the website's definition of how the regime treated happiness "logically" and "calculatedly" is precise, it never explains what it means when it defines the song as the result of "absolute professionalism while maintaining a happy rhythm".

The singer became popular, and the song turned out to be a hit, albeit not as happy as the website claims. Perhaps, the song's happiness was too calculated and logical. Or perhaps, the song's "professionalism" wards off any imbrication between what the song's producers had in mind of happiness and the youngsters. As for the elder ones, the song could fairly be interpreted- accepted or rejected- based on the listener's political inclination. For the regime's others, at best, it could be considered as an awkward nostalgic reminder of one of the hits in the Shah's era, sung by the pop icon Haydeh. At worst, it was a hybrid invasion to a cherished and popular collective memory. In their hastiness to produce happy/heavenly love songs, along with a crude rivalry with their counterparts in L.A. over happiness, the decision makers of IRIB forgot or deliberately ignored the fact that another version of the same poem, much more famous and adored than Mokhtabad, already existed.

---

1 Full lyrics Appendix B, p. 257. Transliteration p. 239.

Although Haydeh's "Sign[1]"["*Neshāneh*"] (1974) and Mokhtabad's "Longing for Union" are based on the same poem, their choice of verses and selection from the original version differs. The result is that the two songs have only two things in common. First, both were incessantly broadcasted from media in their own different eras. So, both had the best opportunity to enjoy the rule of repetition as one of the cornerstones of turning a pop song into a hit. Second, based on the mutual lyrics, both are based on one itinerary: a lover's agonized journey to find and join the beloved, a fact that made Haydeh and Mokhtabad's final destinations one and the same. In the end, both wholeheartedly confess that their wandering was futile since the beloved is everywhere. It is omnipresent. In other words, in the end they have learned the very first lesson of love in Iran's classic mysticism: love is not physical, but spiritual. However, although the beloved and the destination are the same, the route is totally different. Haydeh is stubbornly progressive, but adaptable. Her journey is an autonomous odyssey. She narrates that when in a tavern, she was befuddled; when at school, alert; when in a monastery, a devotee. Wise and experienced, in the end she would share her epiphany:

> The mad **is**[2] [my emphasis] me who is wandering after you
> Door to door, place to place
> You are everywhere (Discography Haydeh "Sign". Transliteration p. 239)

Mokhtabad narrates his journey whisperingly. Sitting motionless, he nags to the beloved about the flood-like tears running down his face. He also asks for the exact day and date that this misery would come to an end. Then, as if he does not have the least hope for receiving any answer, he abruptly starts to depict what nightingales, butterflies and the mystics would do for joining their

---

1 Full lyrics Appendix C, p.220. Transliteration p. 258.

2 The original verse is: "The mad is not me who is wandering after you".

beloved ones. Nightingales would see the face of the beloved in the lawn, butterflies would mate with the beloved into the fire, and the mystic would be content to see his own beloved in the faces of the whole population. Finally, Mokhtabad concludes that he *is not mad* in his wanderings after the beloved. Although in the entire song, he never mentions when and where he was in search. Unable to contextualize Haji, K'aba, mosque, and tavern in the same way as Haydeh, Mokhtabad's selection underwent decisive eliminations. First, these verses have been eliminated in Mokhtabad's version:

I desired the beloved, so I went to the tavern
The ascetic desired the showroom, so he went to the mosque
Haji is on his way to K'aba
I'm on my way to the tavern (Discography, Haydeh "Sign". Transliteration
p. 239)

If considering circumstances is ever able to justify censorship, then maybe eliminating the Sheykh's original version's obvious criticism of the fake and pretentious religiosity, i.e., equating a mosque to a showroom could be understandable or ignorable under the circumstances of the Islamic Republic. Haydeh had also changed the original version. She made a decision that wandering after the beloved is madness and she *is* mad. The original decision has been made by Mokhtabad: I'm *not* mad who is seeking after you everywhere. The reason is that the mystic also "sees the beloved in the face of the young and the old". Haydeh does not need a wise man [mystic] to seek love. So, she changes one of the categorical foundations of Iran's classic mysticism: having a master and being a disciple in a mystic journey. She is even one step ahead of the Sheykh's disciplined journey. In other words, as a self-governing lover, her passion is needless of any wisdom as its alibi. Furthermore, Haydeh eliminates nagging. She does not ask. She acts. Her progressive mobility in her journey makes her voice as a lover seems considerably resounding and powerful.

In comparison, Mokhtabad stammers, not just because of his pious hesitance for expressing a Haji or a mosque goer as a fake. His sterility comes from the lover's regressive passivity. For Mokhtabad there is no chance for trial and error. He practically cuts off all the autonomous ways and experiences the Sheykh has gone through in his original journey. Deprived of the Sheykh's original independence, unable to make any personal choice, the lover's multifarious experiences and voices have been limited to a truth that is verifiable by nightingales and butterflies. Mute and invalid, the lover, the one who in the Sheykh's version had a say based on a comprehensive knowledge achieved through a mystic odyssey by experiencing both the terrestrial and the celestial, has been transformed into a docile witness for others to learn the love's lessons in Mokhtabad's version. If there is happiness, there must have been a little bit of a frivolous liberty. Through dismantling the Sheykh's original text, Mokhtabad has not just cut off any possibility of happiness and made his own love sterile in itself, but also castrated Sheykh Bahaei's evolving and mystic journey.

The Islamic Republic's cultural transformations, better still, its conceptual confiscations, were not limited to Iran's literary mystic repertoire. After its establishment, the Islamic Republic's cultural priority was to eliminate the non-Islamic aspects of Iran's culture. During the first decade a non-Islamic cultural behavior was easily condemnable, thus, erasable, simply by labeling and degrading it as "idolatry residue". Whether the reason for such an animosity was favoring and prioritizing Islam, or Khomeini's personal antagonism towards the Shah, or both, he and the state under his reign started to introduce, conduct and confirm Islamic rituals as Iran's cultural mantras. Inadvertently, the war as a befallen omen played a crucial role in this mission; the bleakness of war overshadowed love and happiness. Iranian heroes, real or mythical ones, gave up to their Islamic counterparts.

Accordingly, almost all Islamic festivities were considered as a substitute for Nowruz [Iranian New Year]. In practice, almost all the endeavors for eliminating Nowruz were rendered futile. Nowruz proved to be irreplaceable. Therefore, as any other non-Islamic aspect of the culture, if it was not replaceable, it must be adaptable. Among the many rituals of Nowruz is a belief in the good omen of the scenery. From time immemorial, the ceremony of Nowruz happens at the exact moment of the spring equinox in which the current year gives way to the new one. The common belief has it that in that specific moment, where a person is and what she/he faces determines the happenings of the year to come. Therefore, being in pleasant scenery at that moment is deemed to bless the New Year ahead with joy and prosperity.

During the eight years of the war, the scenery assigned by the state television for Iranians at that specific moment was the shrines of the war's martyrs, while the soundtrack released mourning eulogies. After the war and in the Construction Era such heavy mourning seemed irrelevant. Unable to eliminate Nowruz, from the Construction Era onward, the regime started to acknowledge and celebrate it in its own way. As in the case of all other cultural concepts, the Islamic Republic followed its own unwritten but well-applied rule. Whatever cannot be eliminated must be confiscated. Nowruz must be celebrated in the style of the Islamic Republic.

Introducing the first Nowruzian celebrating song among "One Hundred Hits of Four Decades", the reporter recounts: "Farid Shabkhiz[1], the producer, commands the singer to start. A tall young, bearded man in a black leather jacket with headphones on his ears and a serious face sings: flower blossoms... His name is Abbas Bahadori[2] with four years' experience working in the music

1 Farid Shabkhiz as a composer and TV producer is officially employed by IRIB. There is no biographical information on him, since far from being acknowledged by his own achievements, his name is mentioned in the state media to make a comparison in favor of Farid who is working with the state television against his brother Hamid, who owns an Iranian TV channel in Los Angeles.

2 In his own words in an interview with Tasnim, the news agency related to the IRGC, Bahadori has started his career in the IRGC's department of propaganda as a singer, composer and playwright. He claims that the ones who are familiar with pop music's history after the revolution are aware that 'the first pop singer after the revolution' is attributed to him; a label that he has humbly accepted. Nowadays, he is researching Islam's history.

department of the IRIB. He now gets to perform on Nowruz72[3] a comedy show produced to celebrate the Nowruz holidays" ("Introducing" 4). Thus, the first Islamic pop song was born; an amalgamation of the mystical lyric and the synthesizer-produced melodies with a stark similarity to the Shah's era tracks. Predictably, the "frowning bearded man" was singing in praise of spring:

Flower blossoms in the garden, flower blossoms
Washing its face by dawn's dew
Flower is an emblem of our beloved's beauty
The nightingale praises it in her song
Clouds pour down jewels on grass
Dew pours on tulips' chalices
This spring's messenger, this herald of the beloved's place,
Pours belief in the mystics' soul
Get up and sing the song of unity
At the top of the world, like the sun
Sing feverishly, as a lovebird
Sing a song in praise of the eternal beauty (Discography Bahadori "Flower Blossoms". Transliteration p. 240)

The problem in the Islamic Republic's mystic songs is not that the music decision makers of the regime were/are using it as they wish. The problem is that they were/are abusing it as they will. In the case of "Flower Blossoms" ["*Gol miruyad*"], not only Bahadori did not dare, or more precisely was not permitted to maintain the word-taboos' equivocality, but he, as his predecessor Mokhtabad, as well as all other employees/singers of IRIB, have also cut and ended the mystic poem's freeways to a *cul de sac*. In their adaptations, the mystic's polyphonic voice that explains,

3 Nowruz 72 was a comic TV series directed by Dariush Kardan, Ali Omrani, Mehrdad Khosravi, and produced by Abolfazl Jahani Moghadam for Nowruz 1993. The program joined an exemplary popularity and some of its actors became the acknowledged comedy producers in the years to come.

expresses, or better still, reveals his own journey, has been dramatically transformed to the monotonous prescriptions of IRIB's singers. With no mystery or free way of approach and without ever mentioning Iran or Nowruz, which supposedly must have been the main reason to produce the song in the first place, Bahadori's audience is not sure how to answer the song's call for unity. Oneness or unity [*towhid*] is the first pillar of Islam. A Muslim is the one who believes in unity, the prophet [*nabovvat*] and the resurrection [*mo'ād*]. Since both heaven and earth do their best to pour reason and belief merely into the mystics' chalices, then one wonders with whom he/she must be united? Or better still, ignored, drifted, and discriminated against, what would be the rationale for the listener to imitate lovebirds wholeheartedly? All in all, the song truly had a "calculated but justified" happy and danceable rhythm. The clash between the holiness of unity and the song's upbeat rhythm leaves the audience conflicted whether to ponder on the message of the song or give way to their natural bodily reactions.

Interestingly and in a bitter irony, while the national television was keeping up its appearance through sugar coating its programs and had Farid Shabkhiz as one of the main producers of the state-approved pop songs, his brother Hamid, a Shah era singer and TV personality, was persistently promoting exile pop songs in Los Angeles. First from the basement of his home in Los Angeles, then in cooperation with JAAM-e JAM- the first Iranian cable TV in the United States- Hamid Shabkhiz gave a rostrum not just to the pop musicians of the Shah's era but also created a launching platform for many of the new-comers who had started their career in exile. Through JAAM-e-JAM and Hamid Shabkhiz's endeavors, the Iranians back home were given the chance to celebrate Nowruz in the manner in which they did before the revolution, although belatedly, since they had to wait for the videotapes to be smuggled into Iran ("Nowruz" 69). In the same Nowruz that IRIB broadcasted "Flower Blossoms" as its first Nowruzian pop song, "Fresh Spring" ["*Nowbahār*"] was also smuggled from L.A. to Iran.

Defining popular art, Stuart Hall argues:

> it is essentially a conventional art which re-states, in an intense form, values and attitudes already known, which measures and reaffirms, but brings to this something of the surprise of art as well as the shock of recognition. It is an individualized art of the known performer. The audience as a community has come to depend on the performer's skills, and on the force of a personal style, to articulate its common values and interpret its experiences (qtd. in Storey 53-54).

If we accept Hall's argument, considering the two songs can fairly be evaluated as the two opposite ends of this competence; "Fresh Spring" had it abundantly and "Flower Blossoms" lacked it completely. To be fair, Abbas Bahadori had to compete with a variety of singers, some who were the Shah's era pop icons and others who had started their careers in L.A. but garnered popularity through the smuggled videotapes. Both songs are in the praise of spring. As for the lyrics, Mahmoud Shahrokhi[1], the lyricist of the Islamic Republic's official anthem, had to compete with Homa Mirafshar[2], a veteran lyricist most famous for her love poems before the revolution. In retrospect, exactly twenty years after the song's production, Mirafshar said: "I wrote it so people can once again imagine the true meaning of Nowruz. I was sure that it would outlive me, so, I hoped people would get to know how an exiled poet feels for her country. While the poem was being sung in the studio, I was in solitude, crying my heart out for Iran" (Mirafshar).

As an expert eulogist mainly obsessed with Islamic mysticism, for Shahrokhi spring comes, affects, and acts merely on the Islamic Republic's limited range of possible meanings. Everything happens for the united people, to realize and appreciate the signs of the eternal beauty. Nothing

---

1 Mahmoud Shahrokhi (1927-2009) was a seminarian first in Najaf Seminary and then in Fawziyyah School at Qom. He quit his seminarian position after the revolution and started a new career in the state radio as a poet.

2 Homa Mirafshar (b. 1946) is an Iranian poet, songwriter and musician who had written more than two hundred songs for many famous Iranian pop singers.

tangible has the least significance, so does Iran. As an adept sonneteer, Mirafshar made a tapestry threaded with spring's beauty, hope, and love for Iran. Tearing one strand would tear apart the whole. For her, spring's consequence, awakening Iran's beauties, is not merely natural; it is also national. By reminding the blossoming beauties in Nowruz, her spring must and in effect does awake and heal Iranian's wounded souls. Through portraying the whole country's beautiful scenery in the spring, Mirafshar reminds her compatriots that they have every right to be both happy and proud. Spring spreads its scent, its beauty, and freshness in Iran and because of Iran. If each country is beautiful in the eyes of its citizenry, Iran is the apple of the world's eye for this poet:

> Nowruz is in Iran
> Heaven is envious of our soil
> Orange, bergamot and willow's fragrance
> Rises up from Hafez's shrine
> Love's purity flows in our veins
> Has its roots in Iran's soil
> Nowruz be blessed to you dear compatriot
> Everyday be Nowruz for you, dear country (Discography "Fresh Spring". Transliteration p. 241)

The song's only call is for Iranians to awaken their fortune from its forced dormancy:

> Dear compatriot it's spring once again
> Tulips have spread all over Iran
> The breeze of Nowruz has made the earth young once again
> Redbud has opened its flowery umbrella
> Heaven embellished love's beauty
> The whole world is filled by love's beauty and fragrance

If the fortune is asleep, wake it up

Enjoy a rendezvous with it, once again

From now on

Our days will be the best and blessed,

Our Nowruz will endure till eternity (Discography "Fresh Spring". Transliteration p. 230)

The ineffectiveness of the IRIB's pop products was not merely based on the difference between the lyrics. It also had put its singers/employees in an uneven competition with pop music's superstars in exile. At first the competition was perhaps inadvertent, but surely indirect. Soon, the supremacy of L.A. veterans forced IRIB to imitate them directly and intentionally. IRIB cloned and promoted its own versions of the legendary exiled pop singers such as Ebi and Dariush. Most adored and famous for their love songs, Ebi and Dariush have been labeled and acknowledged as the sound of generations by the Iranian media in diaspora, whenever they broadcast an ad for their latest concerts. There is almost no interview in which they were not obliged to explain how their music was consumed, memorized and transmitted by one generation after the other. Aside from the uniqueness of their voices, the two singers considered the professional team consisting of the best lyricists and composers of the time the main reason for their success.

Ignoring this very fact, IRIB found clones to imitate the very voices of these pop icons for numerous eulogies in praise of the Shia Imams and Islamic figures. The result turned out to be both shocking and ridiculous mostly among the young generation[1]. When they had been asked for their opinion on these clonings, their answers had a deriding tone in common and a range of

1 I conducted research comparing the influence and impact of pop music produced inside Iran and in L.A. during the years 1997 to 2009, in which I was a member of the faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran. The quotations mentioned here are a few examples among those dialogues and interviews with the students.

diversity as: “As if Dariush is reproducable!” [*fekr kon Dariush besheh tekrār besheh!”*]; “They broadcast this garbage all the time and we are forced to hear it in taxis” [*inā in āshghalā-row yeh sareh pakhsh mikonan mā bichareh-hā ham majburi mishnavim, unam tu tāksi*”]; “Just think you make love while hearing *pāsdār* Ghasem!”-refering to Ghasem Afshar- [*faqat fekr kon bā Ghasem- pāsdār āsheqi koni!*].

Their grudge holding over Khashayar Etemadi was twofold. First, it was based on fandom. Dariush fans refute all Etemai’s musical talent and called him by degrading labels which implied that he deliberately is imitating Dariush [“*meymun-e Dariush-e”*]. The second one which went further than a mere fandom’s bias was a harsh criticism of Etemadi singing Ahmad Shamlu’s verses [*“Man o to, derakht-o bārun*”] “Me and You, Tree and Rain” (1998). One of the most acclaimed poets in Iran’s modern history, and most adored among the university students, Ahamd Shamlu had a bleak relationshop with the regime. His books either did not obtain the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance permission for publishing, or when published, the books were time and again confiscated at the Iran’s Annual Book Festival. The most concise and common criticism of the song was based on Shamlu’s censorship by the regime: “How is it that Shamlu could be good for you, but damagining for us?” [“*chetowreh keh Shamlu vāseh shomā khubeh, un-vaqt vāseh mā khār dāreh?”*]. The other most common opinion was: “They would do anything for preserving their power with no shame” [“*inā vāseh hefz-e qodrateshun har kāri mikonan, khejālat ham nemikeshan”*].

The grudge over the song for those who were familiar with the IRIB’s musical policies was not towards Khashayar Etemadi per se and harshly targeted Mohammad Ali Mo‘allem Damghani [best known as Ali Mo‘allem], the poet who was a decision-maker in the IRIB at the time. The common opinions went as: “ Score brownie points with Mo‘allem and enjoy its advantages” [“*vāseh Mo‘allem khod-shirini kon, hālesh-o bebar*”]; “It’s not his fault, he doesn’t know better,

Mo‘allem put these into his mouth” [“*gonāh dareh bābā bi-chāreh, khodesh keh ‘aqlesh nemireseh inā ro Mo‘allem tu dahanesh mizāreh”*]; “ The only thing that we hadn’t seen in our lives was Shamlu according to Mo‘allem, thank god now we have seen it” [“*tanhā chizi keh tu omremun nadideh budim Shamlu be ravāyat-e Ali Mo‘allem bud, keh khodā row shokr unam didim”*]. When they asked for more explanation on “Shamlu according to Ali Mo‘allem”, they rerferred to the song’s rhythmic melody and would clarify it by examples: “This is what they do when they pretend to be one of us [*mikhān began mā mardomi hastim*]. They transform a dignified music to its most vulgar version [“*band-e tonbuni mikonanesh”*] exactly as what they have done with “May Spring Be Blissful[1]” [“*Bahārān khojasteh bād”*]. Among the acclaimed musicians, the public announcement of Mo‘allem’s power over music’s policies at the time and the alleged abuse of Shamlu came from Shahin Najafi who sung (2014): “When Shamlu was deprived of his leg, Mo‘allem was a centipede” [“*Vaghti keh Shāmlu pā nadasht, Mo‘allem hezārpā bud*”] (Discography, Najafi “In a Time When…”).

It seems that the familiarity of the voice caused a backlash[2]. Fars, a news agency close to IRGC [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps], recounts that when the officials decided to compete with cultural invasion, some singers with strange voices gradually started to appear on TV. Many would still remember the halftime of the 43rd derby between the two biggest football clubs in Tehran, when an unexpected song took its audience by surprise. Its occasion was Imam Ali’s birthday, and the song was “Dust of Ali’s Thresould” [“*Khāk-e āstān-e Ali*”] (1997), better known as [“*Man āmadeh-am beh kuy-e Ali*”] “I’ve Come to Ali’s Alley”. When the singer started to sing, those old enough to have lived before the revolution thought that a known Los Angeles

1 “May Spring Be Blessful” was written by Karamtollah Daneshian, a member of the Organization of Fadāei Guerilla, while he was waiting for his execution in Evin Prison. The acclaimed musician Esfandyar Monfaredzadeh composed its music and sang the song at the eve of the Revolution. The anthem/song was released during the first days after the Revolution, became a musical emblem of the event, and was routinely broadcast in the Revolution’s anniversaries. During the Construction Era, a rhythmic 6/8 version of the song was produced and is broadcasted by IRIB since then.

2 As it is apparent, this harsh criticism comes from Dariush and Shamlu’s fans. For knowing Khashayar Etemadi and Ali Mo‘allem’s points of view on this matter see Siamdoust p. 121-122.

singer had come back to Iran and his voice was once again being broadcast from the national television. But the singer was Khashayar Etemadi, and not a Los Angeles singer ("What Happened").

The similarity between the two voices was so profound that Fars News Agency could not resort to their frequent method of degrading the enemy by using acronyms instead of mentioning their full name. "A Los Angeles singer" sufficed to hint at Dariush. Yet, the phrase must have nullified Dariush and kept Khashayar Etemadi intact. Therefore, "idolatry residue" must have been substituted by its synonym "Los Angeles singer". The very word Los Angeles with its rich implications in the Islamic Republic's argot was simultaneously a synonym for exile, idolatry and vulgarity.

Well familiar with these implications, the article's novelty for an Iranian is that it acknowledges the audience's perplexity. Fars News is right. For the majority, puzzlement must have been the first reaction to Etemadi's voice. The similarity between the two voices forced the listener, specifically a Dariush fan, to experience an uncanny sensation. It was uncanny, not only based on the mere similarity between the two voices, but also because of the arrangement of the song. In the opening chorus and with a chant-like repetition of the Imam's name, perhaps Dariush would be the last name that would occur to mind, being aware that the occasion is the birthday of the first Shi'a imam and considering the place the music is released is the Islamic Republic of Iran. Etemadi's voice emerges in the next verse followed by a short musical interlude. The aftermath of this specific interlude would lead the audience to a misapprehension. Of course, the transitory moment of music passes instantly and defies any suspicion of delusion. It is Dariush, through and through. But it is not. Those who were not fans, while hearing the Islamic Republic's musical nemesis Dariush on the state television, would have been amazed and perplexed to answer a simple question: What good could come out of reminding a past time, or imitating one's

own adversary?, a question which does not have a straightforward answer. But for a fan, this does not end with a simple feeling of perplexity. According to John Fiske, fandom has its very own rules. For fans, there is no substitute for the original. A copy, even a certified one, is still a copy. It can be gullible for others, but it is always recognizable for a fan as an insult to a preferred personal- and also political- identity and speech (Fiske 97).

In *Reading the Popular* (1991), Fiske reasons that any social system has its own cultural meanings that either hold the system in place or destabilize it (Fiske 1). In other words, since culture and its meanings are tangible social practices, and since according to Foucault the organized power in society needs its population to be normal in every way, this normalization would transform society into an extended prison in which discipline is an end in itself (quoted in Fiske 77). Inevitably, this everlasting endeavor for normalization transforms any social practice, specifically any desire, pleasure and entertainment inherently political, albeit in non-obvious and indirect ways. Fiske suggests that what makes any escape from the omnipotent or omnipresent norm is pleasure. For him, pleasure is the "agent of subversion" because it produces a privatized domain beyond, or better still, alongside, the sphere of power (55). Leisure then could be the time to assign meanings by oneself for oneself that the normalized and institutionalized society has denied it. If that is true, then far from being a naïve daydreaming, fantasy plays a political role in what is popular in a culture: it is the very resistance necessary for treating any social relation with self-assurance (64). It provides the fantasizer with the will to act upon unpleasant impositions. Based on these definitions, for Fiske, the culture of the subordinate and popular culture is one and the same; both are the provokers of fantasy (75).

Thus far, he is in complete harmony with De Certeau. The art of popular culture is the "art of making do" for both. Like De Certeau, he too believes that the ordinary or subordinated people cannot and are not the producers of the resources of culture and yet their culture stems out of

these very resources. Thus, what is popular in a culture is the subordinated or the ordinary people's modifications and adaptation of a culture molded for them by the very system that has disempowered them.

Most importantly, Fiske argues that if people cannot form their own meanings based on the reality of their lives, of identities and social relations, no cultural product would be popular and is bound to be rejected. Fiske reasons that popular culture's meaning- like any other text- is activated only when it enters the sphere of social and cultural relations. As clarification, he posits Madonna's stardom. Madonna or any other such popular text takes shape only as it is entered into the everyday lives of the readers. Thus, according to Fiske, Madonna is not a pre-destined product of a culture industry. She is the very outcome of a powerful system, but she is used by the ordinary/disempowered people to challenge the very system that has produced the phenomenon of Madonna in the first place. The illuminating point of these instances is that popular culture is not readable through its apparent texts. Madonna's or any other superstar's popularity cannot be judged based on straightforward intentions. They are culturally meaningful only when they are considered in the context of social relations, as well as in their relationship with other texts (97).

Fiske resolves that while not radical political achievements, these shifts create dynamics in social power. They are seemingly trivial, but they are effective. As the tactics of the ordinary, invisible and powerless people, in other words, the masses, they target the dominant system. They work against it, without any direct, aggressive, or subversive opposition. Fiske goes on to state that the label consumer society is inaccurate in terms of grasping what really transpired behind the outer function of the popular commodities. The fans who admire celebrities do not imitate them when buying, say, Madonna's fingerless gloves; they buy these items because it engages them in freedom of personal speech and lets them announce their own preferred identity (95-107).

Not that producing a new star by the system did not empower the ordinary/disempowered people to challenge the very system that had produced it, but the reproduction of Dariush by the Islamic Republic for his fans transforms it to the very experience of uncanny as Shelling defines it: "something that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light" (quoted in Freud 66). A Dariush fan in the Islamic Republic is deprived of his/her right of fandom. In other words, his fan was forcefully obliged to adore its object clandestinely. In practice, the star's commonly shared public pedestal was transferred to the private, in the secluded and preserved home safeguarded from the public eye. For Dariush's disempowered fan in the Islamic Republic, it was not just the hidden Dariush that had come to the surface. It was home, the only safe and secure place hidden from the regime's gaze that had been invaded. Home was no more felt as the safe and secure place in which the hidden/private would be able to take refuge.

Freud has explained it: "*Unheimlich* is obviously the opposite of *heimlich* [homely]- the opposite of what is familiar; and we are tempted to conclude that what is uncanny is frightening precisely because it is *not* known and familiar" (Freud 62). Thus, the uncanny feeling of it is Dariush, and it is not, seemed to deliver a straightforward message: you cannot preserve Dariush- and for that matter, almost anything- secretly and intact. In fact, what Islamic Republic wanted to do with Dariush was in line with what Fiske believes that Madonna's fans had done with her fingerless gloves. It tried to empower itself by transforming Dariush to its own personal speech, based on its own propaganda embodied in a preferred identity. More often than not, an Orwellian regime's policy is transforming the disempowered *heimlich* to *unheimlich*.

By bringing the hidden to the surface and depriving its citizenry of its last resort, the victor seemed to be the Islamic Republic, but it was not. "Dust of Ali's Threshould" was the archetype of the ensuing mass-produced music in the Islamic Republic. These songs are mostly labeled and known as Occasional Songs. The label, Occasional Song, encompasses a vast range from eulogies

for memorials to epical praises of religious/revolutionary figures in the case of Islamic festivities. Notwithstanding the occasion, in people's argot they are packaged as IRIB anthems. They are musical embodiments of the regime's propaganda.

What was hidden for the Islamic Republic was the fact that resurfacing Dariush singing one of the IRIB's occasional songs would nullify the song's propagandist intention. The opposition of *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, the uncanny amalgamation of familiarity and unknown worked as a double-edged sword, targeting both Dariush as the archetype of the idolatry residues, and Imam Ali as the innocent and holy. Experiencing an unprecedented uncanny, Dariush fans were occupied by their own *unheimlichness*. It would not allow them to grasp the message: the Imam's greatness. The mimicry remained crude; the object of their fandom preserved its holiness.

The same also happened for the Islamic Republic's advocates. Praising the object of their worship in the sound of an "idolatry residue" made the Imam's holiness -the song's message- secondary. Their Imam remains intact of the song's mimicked vulgarity. In the end, the song remained sterile. In a sustained oscillation between the holiness and vulgarity- depending on the opinions of the Islamic Republic fans and foes- Dariush overshadowed Imam Ali.

Legalizing or better still, Islamizing "the idolatry residues", was not limited to Dariush. IRIB continued to clone as many pop icons as it could. Another instance was Ebi and his clone: Ghasem Afshar[1]. In 1996, Ebi's fans also experienced the imitation/confiscation of the subject of their fandom. A video clip was broadcast incessantly by IRIB, showing a montage of nature scenery in which Ghasem Afshar admonishes the kind-hearted for polluting the earth and inviting them to heal the butterfly's wounds, to burnish the sky's blueness and to dedicate the seeds of kindness to the birds.

1 Ghasem Afshar (b. 1965) attended the IRIB's singing competition in 1996. He was accepted by the IRIB jury consisting of the poet Ali Mo'allem and the composer and musician Fereydoun Shahbazian. He started his singing career afterwards by producing albums and singing the song titles of IRIB's TV series.

If Dariush's deconstruction and de-conceptualization was a mutual experience for both his fans and foes, Ebi's resurrection was not. The reason was that reconstructing Ebi in "Dedication to Birds" [*Vaqf-e parandeh-hā*] (1996) was not completely irrelevant and without reference. The lyricist was Mohammad Ali Shirazi, a poet of the Shah's era. The bitter irony was that Shirazi's fame was mostly based on the defiant songs he had written for both Dariush and Ebi. Therefore, the comparison was not limited to the original Ebi and its double. It transcended to Mohammad Ali Shirazi before and after the revolution. As a well-practiced method, the lyricists of the Shah's era used movies to release their defiant songs. Most of these movies were mass produced blockbusters, almost irrelevant to the status quo, and seemingly without any hint or tint of a political inclination and implication. Lost in an enough pointless context, most of the time the metaphors remained unrecognizable and immune to censorship. One example of this trickery was the result of Ebi and Mohammad Ali Shirazi's teamwork. The film itself did not get much attention but its soundtrack "Hunting" ["*Shekār*"] became one of the most popular songs in Ebi's repertoire. Shirazi wrote and Ebi sang (1976):

When he arrived, the deer was still breathing
She was still bathing her fawns
When he arrived, a heart was still beating
But that too became a withered spring
I'm so blue, so blue, so blue of this tyrant's cruelty
I'm so blue, so blue, so blue of this hunter
This is a war with no notification
This is a war with no rules
This is an uneven war
A useless war
You are the reason for my heartache

Said the one

Who had returned from the deerless meadow

I want no more deserted meadows

I was in love with that deer

Who was killed by you (Discography, Ebi "Hunting". Transliteration p. 242)

Unhappy with the status quo, Shirazi addresses the Shah as a tyrant who knows no language other than violence and death. The tyrant's cruelty and the bleakness of time render any utopian expectations futile. If there is a savior, he is only capable of reporting the current misery: an uneven, useless, and seemingly endless war between the tyrant and his subjects in a deer-less meadow. Still through Ebi's voice, Shirazi dares to announce that he is heartbroken for the slaughtered deer- a never spoken but according both to the lyricists and the secret police, well-known metaphor of the political prisoners who had been executed in the Shah's era. According to the musicians who were famous for producing dissident song in the Shah's era, three events were their muse for their defiant songs. The first event was Siahkal movement, in which some of the personale of the Ornization of Fadaei Guirlla attacked a gendarmery headquarter in Siahkal, a village in North of Iran, in 1971[1]. The most famous and candid song about this event is "Forest" [*"Jangal"*] (1972), written by Iraj Janati Ataei and sung by Dariush. The other significant event according to these musicians was the execution of the poet Khosrow Golesorkhi[2] in 1973. The third happened in 1975, when SAVAK, National Information and Security Organization [*Sāzman-e Etelā'at va Amniat-e Keshvār*], took the imprisoned Bijan Jazani the leader of the Organization of Fadaei Gurilla's leader and nine others of his cellmates to the secluded area

1 For a detailed information on "Siahkal Movement" see "Siahkal's Epic".

2 For more information on Khosrow Golesorkhi, his trial and execution see Golesorkhi.

around the Evin Prison, shut them and claimed that they had been shot while they were escaping the prison[3].

According to the musicians who had produced songs for these events and were accused and detained by SAVAK afterwards, first the people and then SAVAK would be able to decipher their code (Monfaredzadeh "With Esfandyar"; and Janati Ataei "Interview"). Therefore, after each event and the popularity of the song related to it, SAVAK would give the lyricists a list of forbidden words (Dariush "Interview"; and Janati Ataei "Interview"). In 1972, jungle, forest, and massacre were among the forbidden words. After 1973 and the execution of Khosrow Golesorkhi, any usage or adoration of the red rose [*Gol-e sorkh* in Persian means red rose], along with using the word night if it had the implications of grief and regret, were absolutely forbidden [Janati Ataei "Interview"]. The musicians' counter-attack was that they wrote dissident songs, but as the soundtracks of the blockbuster movies [Monfaredzadeh "Interview"]. According to the lyricists, even in such an irrelevant context, their metaphors or codes were realizable for the people[4]. For Shirazi, in 1976, a year after the execution of Bijan Jazani and his bandmates, the referent of the deer-less meadew was known to people (Shirazi "Interview").

After the revolution, Shirazi was still discontented and defiant. But he was not as candid as before. In 1996, Shirazi wrote and Ghasem Afshar sang:

Hey, kind people,
It's time to do something
It's time to heal the butterfly's wounds
It's time to burnish the sky's blueness
It's time to dedicate the seeds of kindness to the birds

3 For more information on Bijan Jazani see "Who Was Bijan".

4 See also: Hemmasi "Intimidating" and Sarfaraz "With Ardalan".

It's a pity if the sweetbriar's body,

Is worn out, exhausted

It's a pity if

Spring's pure rain, the mercy of god

Becomes muddy

We've polluted the world's purities

Going as it is

We'll surely be ruined

Hey People! Through your ignorance

You've delightedly killed life

Where is our blue sky?

Where are our duck ponds?

Why must our little golden fish die?

Transforming meadows to deserts

There would be no dandelion

No kinglet would sing the song of life (Discography, Afshar "Dedication to Birds". Transliteration p. 242)

Notwithstanding the fact that the straightforward points to the Shah as the "hunter" and his ruled as "deer" are now seem to be replaced by equivocal and hesitant hints to the status quo through the metaphor of a mismanaged ecology, the song pricks in its own twisted way. The song is effective not because of the obvious nature of the regime's tyrannical censorship and surveillance. It is heart wrenching because it displays how far the ruler is able to overshadow its subject's imagination. In other words, as Paul Ricoeur has taught us in *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (1986), how a dictatorship determines and at the same time changes the utopian imagination of its era. Shirazi is not changed because he lives and works in Iran, which means he produces under the Islamic Republic's direct surveillance and censorship. A decade earlier, in Los

Angeles, his counterpart Iraj Janati Ataei also had a changed mind. A veteran lyricist famous for his defiant songs for which he had been detained by the secret police pre-revolution, Ataei's definitions and aspirations for his homeland dramatically transformed after the revolution and in exile.

In 1973, through Dariush's voice, Ataei describes Iran as his "Home" ["*Khuneh*"] destroyed by the flood. He narrates that once upon a time, Iran/home was a place of security and affection, a delightful home in which the abundance of the windows defied the solidity of the walls. The home was neighbored by the stars and rainbows. It was a place for playfulness and joy. The brightness of its sun was the source for being awake but also had enough shadow for the indolent. Ataei recounts that his father used to tell him that since time immemorial, the father and his ancestors had built this ancient home with their own hands. Following the father, the poet-son testifies that the home was the love of his mother's life and his father's soul. Mother was always busy planting daffodils in its garden. For his father, nothing was more precious than this home. But this earthly paradise would not endure. One night, a flood, the slaughterer and the depredator, crushed the rivers, crashing the bridges and destroying his home. This brutality maddened the mother and killed the father. Now, alone and wounded, in the middle of the hatred and rage of madmen, he asks for any helping hand to rebuild the home. (Discography, Dariush "Home"). The time was 1973, the flood was the Shah.

In 1981, far away from home and in exile, Janati Ataei once again wrote a song for his home and once again Daruish sang it. This time the song title is "Take Me Back to My Home" [*Marā beh khāneh-am bebar*] in which, after almost a decade, he still asks for help. This time, the cry is not for building a new home, it is for taking him back to the same old wretched one. Now he realizes that his tribe/people are a self- terminating one, a tribe from which there had remained no one other than himself and an unknown you, whom he describes as a broken wing, a night

dweller, a daydreamer. To this miserable creature, Janati Ataei expresses that he is trapped in a nowhere land, in a utopia in which no one knows about sympathy and unity. Although nowadays the home is the darkest of the dark places, although the empire does not belong to the emperor anymore, he desperately wants to go back home (Discography, Dariush "Take Me").

Obviously, the changed tone is not on the place, but on the time. In other words, Shirazi's tone is not changed out of the fear of the direct consequences of writing a resistant song in the Islamic Republic. Janati Ataei does not live under such circumstances. He lives in Los Angeles free of that governmental surveillance. Both were dissatisfied in the Shah's era. Both are dissatisfied now. One calls the Shah a hunter*;* the other transcribes him as a catastrophic flood. When he is gone, one is in search after a humane sympathy and reconciliation; the other is desperate for returning to the same home, although it has been deprived of its *Shahryār*. Intentionally or inadvertently, Janati's playing with two words in Persian is hardly ignorable: *Shahr*, city, and *Shahryār*, the one who cares for the city, the king. What has happened for these artists in two different eras goes far beyond their personal intentions. The perverted utopia apparent in the comparisons has nothing to do with the expected personal/political bravery and persistence from a supposedly committed artist. Nor can it be interpreted as a deliberate and categorical waiver in favor of a dictator in comparison to the new one. At least, this is not applicable to Janati Ataei who rarely forgets to remind his audience that he had been detained during the Shah's era for his lyrics. It is about the profound difference between the dictatorships of the time, which leads to two different types of utopian resistance and expectations. In other words, how a dictatorship shapes a cultural imagination. In this confrontation, art plays a crucial and indisputable role on both fronts. On the ruler's front it plays the role of propaganda. In the ruled front, as Adorno has it, it could be the most illuminative expression of the dysfunctional status quo (Adorno *Aesthetic* 101).

In Adorno's merciless criticism of untruth, there would be nothing as determinate as art for negating it. In a society obsessed with its legitimate identity, art must function as the counter-pressure. It can seek to aid the non-identical, which is the very product of the reality that the obsessed society tries to impose on its members through its own ways of repression. When the lack is realized, utopian art initiates. In this sense, if art is original/genuine and not propaganda, then it is negative. It is the symbol of the whole untruthfulness of its society. By showing today's deprivation, art will open up to the future, the realm of hope (Adorno *Aesthetic* 102).

So far, none of Adorno's definitions is new. The redemptive power of art is as old as all aesthetic theories. The new point in Adorno's definition is the power of negation. Art opens up to hope not as an amiable messenger, but as a nemesis. By detaching itself from its external world, art encounters its reader through non-communication, through refraction of whatever in reality it deliberately or by force has been isolated from. Thus, the new is the image of the collapse and the unspeakable utopia could be embedded in the absolute negativity of this collapse. For him, naming the radical art as black art is not merely metaphoric. The picture of collapse *is* black (Adorno *Aesthetic* 102). Accordingly, "Home" is under the siege of a brutal hurricane. "The Hunter" is uprooting the deer in the meadow.

In his *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (1986), Paul Ricoeur studies both the opposite sides and the complementary functions of ideology and utopia to show their deepest roots in our cultural imagination. Criticizing all types of Marxist interpretations of utopia as a "distorted version of reality", he tries to show the role ideology plays in our cultural system. The existence of a social order raises the problem of its legitimation. At this point we need to interpret the concepts of authority, domination and the hierarchy of our social life. Thus, for him the privileged place of ideological thinking is in politics. Since no system of leadership could endure just by physical submission and it desperately needs to show the system is cooperative as well, then each

political system needs to bridge the everlasting gap between the legitimacy demanded by the ruler and the legitimacy offered by the citizenry. So, ideology has to go far beyond any deformed reality. It has to secure the integration between legitimacy claimed by the ruler and the belief provided by the ruled for justifying the existing system as it is. On the other hand, utopia is an imaginative variation on the topics of society, power, government, even family and religion. From the utopia's supposedly nowhere standpoint, the cultural imagination could for once have a comprehensive glance at the cultural system in a distance. At this standpoint, the radical functions of utopia and ideology are the same, the problem of authority: who has the power? Answering this question constructs the utopia of each era. The utopia of each era is the way in which the ruled human beings think, respond, or fight against the legitimate submission that they have been asked for.

In the 1970s, the legitimate submission most Iranians believed that they had been asked for was living in a West-invaded and semi-colonized country. One example of the permeation of this cultural romanticism as the source and origin of an anti-modernity strain in the artistic inclinations of the time is attributed to Jalal Al-e Ahmad with the full credit for his book *Westoxication* [*Gharbzadegi*] (1962). Al-e Ahmad, an influential writer and a public intellectual, re-defined westernization as Westoxication, an infectious malady as a plague-pest that ruins anything that attacks from within and leaves a hideous and shallow appearance:

> The westoxicated man is an effeminate dandy who plucks his eyebrows, is educated in the West, learns nothing other than the superfluous and returns home to contribute absolutely nothing to Iran's progress. In this westoxicated society, the weakest in calculation are the bankers, the weakest in science are the head directors of civic projects, the weakest in thought are within the academic domain. The whole country is run by a bunch of lumpens. Villages are attacked by tractors and transistors; cities by cinemas and the last news of the Nobel prize winners or the last rumors of the

vulgarity of superstars. Iranian homes are full of westernized instruments such as ovens, washing machines, and a piano in a corner, for the household's daughter (Al-e Ahmad 38).

This belief was as pervasive that it renders the prominent Iranian thinker Hamid Dabashi to define the artistic/intellectual activities of those years : "As Mohammad Reza Shah conspired with one imperial power after the other to maintain his own illegitimate and repressive reign of terror and intimidation it was our poets' and filmmakers', novelists' and short story writers', painters' and photographers' responsibility to tell a different story, to help us dream and hope for better days" (Dabashi 129) .

In this allegedly "westoxicated society" the utopia was an authentic/eastern identity. Then the ruled, the intellectual lyricist Shahyar Ghanbari, wrote "The Good Scent of Wheat[1]" ["*Buy-e khub-e gandom"*] (1974) attacking the ruler and claiming for his/people's national/original identity. Almost two decades later, inspired by an entirely different dictatorship in his exile in the West, Ghanbari's utopian standpoint changed from claiming the authentic identity into life itself. This time through "Forbidden" ["*Qadeghan*"] he reclaims what were the very basic and trivial liberties in the previous dictatorship (1999):

The blue color of the sea: is forbidden
The desire to see: is forbidden
The love affair between two fish: is forbidden
Being together is forbidden
Being alone is forbidden
Finding a new love?
No! No! It's forbidden!

1 Full lyrics Appendix D, p. 259. Transliteration p. 243.

Murmur and whisper: is forbidden

Shadows' dance: is forbidden

Wonders of a sudden kiss in dream: is forbidden

Having a new dream?

No! No! It's forbidden!

In this homely nostalgia

Say whatever you have to

Simply write your lyric

Say long live life

Permission for a new lyric?

No! No! It's forbidden!

Writing of you: is forbidden

Complaining: is forbidden

The sweet essence of woman: is forbidden

You, are forbidden

Me, is forbidden

A new day?

No! No! It's forbidden! (Discography, Ghanbari "Forbidden". Transliteration p. 245)

Comparing the utopias of the two different eras, two different dictatorships and two different types of resistance confirms Ricoeur's claim about the symbiosis between the utopia and authority. It also shows that there is no "nowhere- standpoint" of utopia from which the cultural imagination could have a comprehensive glance at the cultural system, in other words, at a distance or another place out of the reach of the ideology and utopia imbrication. The standpoint of utopian thinking is not an innovative point of view to be made by the ruled. This standpoint has already been created by the ruler's ideology. At this standpoint, the radical function of the

ideology of a tyrant- ruler-enemy doesn't merely make the utopian ideas of his ruled. It captured, formed and deformed their dreams, their minds, and their identity. Utopia couldn't be made as a mere antipode for the enemy's ideology. If there is a utopia, there has to be a hope. But the realm of this hope has been already blueprinted by the tyrant's ideology. So, one can never have *Great Expectations* of utopia, since each tyrant makes his own Dickensian Miss Havisham. In an everlasting expectation, she always sings the same song of her youth, whether it be in an industrialized society at the "threshold of civilization" or a regression from the very threshold and once again started to live its mockery during the Construction Era. The question is: in this seemingly perfect symbiosis of the ruled and the ruler, who is Miss Havisham? Is she the one who outlines utopian thinking or the one who lives it?

This chapter delved into the Islamic Republic's cultural intricacies in the Construction Era 1989-1997. Under the governance of the new leadership, Seyyed Ali Khamenei and President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a new form of bourgeois/Islamic lifestyle and consumerism was ignited and promoted by the government. Cultural and social restrictions considerably shrunk, and happiness was acknowledged. The state apparatus started to produce pop songs with happy undertones. The lyrics were mostly a deliberate choice from Iran's mystic literature. The amalgamation of the lyrical mysticism and pop music made the songs to be known as the Islamic pop songs. As we will see in the next chapter, this musical policy followed by the regime in the next decade, but the young generation added its own voice to Iran's musical scene.

Chapter Four

In Praise of Voice

The Reform Movement 1997-2005

The children born during the revolution and war have been given a variety of labels. The Supreme Leader Seyyed Ali Khamenei calls them "the most zealous, patriotic and political generation in Iran's history"; Prince Reza Pahlavi calls them "the most alert generation in Iran's history"; while the social activist and university professor Sadegh Zibakalam prefers the term "the most apathetic and laid-back generation in Iran's history" [all quoted in Basmenji 10]. The journalist Pardis Mahdavi recognizes them broken-down in morals under the constant surveillance and presence of the morality police (Mahdavi 36) and the musicologist Laudan Nooshin finds them urbanized, affluent, educated, a la mode youngsters singing their profound and eloquent lyrics in the basements (Nooshin "Language" 71).

In contrast to these short generalizations, in a collection put together by Nasrin Alavi of this generation's weblogs, there is an articulated self-definition:

> You have heard the story of my generation many times. A generation that grew up with bombs, rockets, war and revolutionary slogans… a generation that had battle-green grenade-shaped piggy banks…the girls of my generation will never forget their head teachers tugging hard at tiny strands of hair that somehow fell out of their veils to teach them a lesson. The boys of my generation will never forget being slapped five times in the face for wearing shirts with Western labels on them… all of us have

> hundreds of similar memories…my generation is the damaged generation. We were constantly chastised that we were duty-bound to safeguard and uphold the sacred blood that was shed for us during a revolution and a war. Any kind of happiness was forbidden for us…my generation would be beaten up outside cinema queues or pizza restaurants… punished in the public parks; kicked and punched in the centers of town by the regime's militia… I will never forget the militia's Toyota vans and the loudspeaker announcements in Valiasr Square: 'we will fight against all boys and girls!' – shouting those exact words! Who can forget? For my generation talking to a member of the opposite sex (something quite ordinary for the new generation) was akin to adultery and its punishments are better left unsaid. These are just partial moments in all of our bitter lives: each and everyone of us could write a book about them (Alavi 8).

If their memory is so bitter and gloomy, their self-portrait is not. More often than not, they ironically define themselves as "the product of the Islamic Republic". The implied sarcasm in the statement makes it obvious to what actions and in which situations it would be uttered: when they took both the previous generation and the regime off-guard. Since the 1990s, to answer the question of why the Islamic Republic's products transformed to its own nemesis, this generation has constantly been scrutinized by scholars and social/political experts, sometimes as the regime's victims, sometimes as the society's hero.

Victim or hero, the experts are relatively in concordance that this "third generation" [their label in many scholarly texts] has been generated and lived in a limbo, in an inbetweenness. Since Khomeini's cultural mantras seemed harmonious or at least seemed impenetrable at the governmental level during his own reigning over Iran from 1979 to1989, then this limbo, or in fact the Islamic Republic's dubious policies, is considered to be rooted in the Construction Era, an era in which a newly emanated bourgeoisie gained the permission to enjoy a calculated dosage of

entertainment and happiness, endorsed and promoted by the government. The policy's initiation and ambition was an Islamic consumerist society. Therefore, its instulation was a citizenry relentless fighting its enemy- western culture- while consuming its products.

In this innovative cultural mantra the previously clandestine inbetweenness of the illegal/private and the legal/social was now in public. In other words, during the Construction Era, what had previously happened at the level of the individual became social. On the one hand, as the cornerstone of the Islamic Republic, westernization was incessantly tarnished through the official tribunes such as IRIB; on the other, it was promoted ceaselessly elsewhere. The previously impeccable demarcation between the social/lawful and the private/outlaw was transformed to a nationwide hybridity. Practically, what happened was that westernization was endorsed and appreciated economically but was denounced and denied culturally. Therefore, the on-stage, off-stage daily life of a youngster transformed to a showroom with multiple displays. At school, among other propaganda, the Islamic Upbringing Conductors [*mo'allemin-e parvareshi*] made them to listen to "Journey to the West" [*Siyāhat-e gharb*], best known as "The First Night in the Grave[1]".

"The First Night in the Grave" is an audio horror show with an impeccable mortifying arrangement of the scenario and sound effects, narrated by a dead man resurrected in his grave. In the first sequence of this lengthy show, the dead man elaborately clarifies how two men torturing him just in the first moments that he had been put into his grave. The torturers started their examination by smelling his body, his heart, his liver, his eyes and his tongue. They wrote their conclusion on a slate and hung it over his neck. The dead man explains:

---

1 This horror show was performed at elementary schools. It aimed theatrically to engrave into the children's minds what the religion instructors taught them theoretically. It haunted the memory of the 'third generation' or the baby boomers of the 1980s as far as when in the years 1997 to 2009 I was asking the art students for one of their worst childhood memories, there would be almost none who did not mention it.

> It was so heavy that it broke my neck. They also put many metal boxes on my back and put me into an iron cage in which I couldn't move the slightest. I was mute and my heart was exploding. I was wondering why they had done this to me. They started to screw all the cogs and the cage started to get tighter and tighter. It pressed me so hard that I couldn't breathe anymore. They continued screwing the cogs and in the end the cage was as tiny as a tab of a samovar and it crushed all my bones. Black oil started to pour out of the tab, which I was certain that it was my soul and vital energy. I became unconscious and didn't understand anything anymore ("Journey").

Simultaneously, in the country's capital and in the way between school and home, advertising billboards were mushrooming at most of the main intersections on which the latest fashionable jeans, Calvin Klein accessories, and Chanel perfumes, just to name a few, were propagated. Under the same towering billboards, the moral police were also prepared to arrest the wrong-wearers. In practice, through those billboards, the Islamic Republic was mirroring its intrinsic contradictions and the third generation was not merely witnessing it. It was living the very contradiction. Most of the boys would have been arrested under the very billboards of trendy jeans and T-shirts for wearing the same attire. Most of the girls wore the propagated perfumes under their thick and two folded veils from which no scent would be sensible.

Meanwhile, at home, satellite dishes granted the freedom of choice that didn't exist on the IRIB. The endless stream of exiled Iranian TV channels broadcasting from abroad with programs ranging from informative political shows to simple music videos and lighthearted talk shows. They also had the opportunity to be up to date with western pop culture through channels like MTV, and TV series as diverse as *Jackass*, *Beavis and Butthead*, *Clueless*, *Friends* and later *Sex and the City*. Now perhaps, the bitter ironic tone implied in the statement "we are the products of the Islamic Republic" is more fathomable. Maybe the most concise definition of this inbetweenness belongs to the Iranian attorney Kambiz Norouzi:

> this ‘inbetweenness’, this everyday challenge with the government, has but one result: the majority of Iranian youth think of themselves as criminals. A major part of their daily practices are deemed as unlawful, be it wearing a T-shirt, a shirt with bright colors (particularly during religious mourning days), eating ice cream in the streets (especially during Ramadan), playing illicit music in the car, showing more hair or skin than is allowed, or just being in the wrong place at the wrong time- whatever that place or time happens to be (Norouzi 17).

But neither criminality nor inbetweenness has ever had the same definition for the famous third generation. Using the revolution as the axis for categorizing different generations in the Islamic Republic, the theorists have assigned the first generation or the parental generation who were mature enough to accomplish a revolution and the third generation, who are the heir of this revolution. In between, there is a whole skipped generation, those who were born in the 1960s and were obliged to pass their teenage years in the 1980s, which meant they had their upbringing during the Shah’s era. They could be fairly considered as the very youngsters the attorney Kambiz Norouzi has described. In practice, they were adapting and adopting the newly imposed cultural mantras. They conducted a dual life, one in the public, and the other in private. The abrupt transformation of a familiar culture to a completely new one was comparatively a cultural shock. Suddenly and through a revolution they have been transformed to a criminal confined in his/her own household, or better still, a foreigner in his/her own homeland. In a society that is supposed to be harmonized and unmixed, they were the only outcasts. If the ones who had accomplished a revolution were their parents, then they would have been mentioned and recognized as the second generation. But they are not assigned or acknowledged by any

confirmation. In their rare opportunities to be heard, if any, they refer to themselves as the burnt generation[1].

The dreadful fact is that there seems to be an endless controversy between the two generations on who is more deserving of the label. The first or the parental generation believes that it has every right to be acknowledged as such, reasoning that the revolution happened at the very moment of their maturity and fruitfulness, so it ruined their lives. In the eyes of the second generation, the more life lived before the revolution, the better. As an impeccable evidence for proving that they are the best nominees for winning "the burnt generation", they would enumerate the deprivations, prohibitions, and suppressions they experienced during their teens.

The third generation, with no memory of the revolution, of the war, or the Shah's era, never asks for any share in this self-victimization. In the 1980s, the outdoor was dreaded and morbid but so was the indoor. Everything done indoors had consequences unless done in secrecy. According to law, what a youngster did in private such as listening to western music, watching videotapes, having a party, and many other daily activities, was criminal. Therefore, under constant surveillance and the threat of immediate punishment for their wrongdoings, the observed were disciplining themselves. In other words, they were living in Foucault's panoptical society in which punishments were out of proportion in respect to the deeds. So, inbetweenness is meant to define this very entrapment in a panoptical society.

From the Construction Era onward, the inbetweenness has been shared between the third generation and the regime. Defining the situation in De Certeau's words would be that the third generation was poaching the laws but the government was a trespasser too. In other words, the

---

1 Jamehbozorg ("Superhero") is an instance of categorizing these youngsters as the burnt generation. Asummary of his opinion is available in Chapter Two.

Islamic Republic's persistence to keep both its achievements, i.e., ideological hegemony of Khomeini's era along with Hashemi's liberal policies, had but one result, neither the government nor the people obey the rules. The first wanted but couldn't; the latter did not want to obey, so they wouldn't. Since then, the individualized inbetweenness in the 1980s and mid 1990s has been mutualized between the ruler and the ruled. To be more precise, the third generation must have called themselves the brand-new product of the Islamic Republic.

Up until now, reasoning the regime's suppression as the cause and realizing a categorized generational cultural defiance in the practice of everyday life as its effect by Iranian theorists, could fairly be considered the Iranian version of De Certeau's theory. The theory is as matched with the defiant aspects of everyday life in Iran that if De Certeau's the ruled and the ruler change with their Iranian counterparts such as the regime, Islamic Republic, and the youngsters or the third generation, no Iranian anthropologist, sociologist or journalist, would need any quotation marks to own the statement. In defining the practice of everyday life one of De Certeau's substantial statements is "the oppressed cannot escape the system that has dominated them, but can continually manipulate events within the marked areas in order to accelerate fragmentary and fragile victories of the weak"(20). One of the frequently used opening statements in the researches done on youth culture in Iran is that youngsters cannot escape the system that has dominated them but can continually manipulate the regime's plots in order to accelerate fragmentary and fragile victories, such as gathering in shopping malls, or making *rendezvous* at coffee shops. Alternatively, depending on the speaker, the third generation and the youngsters would be replaced by Iranian people.

In De Certeau's view, these tactics are not necessarily political in the sense of an organized or institutionalized political plots and actions and more often than not, they are not political at all. They are petty tricks and distortions that subvert the repressive order in an individual level. These

everyday practices enable people to survive the oppressive structure of their society and achieve limited practical kinds of autonomy. De Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* has been dedicated to "the ordinary man, a common hero who is the murmuring voice of societies" (X).

What has made a demarcation between the researchers on the Islamic Republic's policies on the third generation's tactics is exactly the range of this murmur. For some, such as Adornoian sociologist Yousef Abazari, it has never gone further than a murmur, since a suppressed generation entertains itself by the regime's sugar-coated propaganda in the name of pop culture (Abazari "Controversial Comments"). For others, such as Abbas Milani, this murmuring voice is exactly the fundamental difference between the third generation and their ancestors. Theirs is far louder than the murmuring voice of a society (Milani "Iran" 3-12).

Murmuring or shouting, the landslide victory of Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, perceived in the role of the founder of the Reform Movement in 1997, proved that none of the petty governmental freedoms in the Construction Era were enough to appease the younger generation's demands. The parental generation bore witness how a *hojatoleslam's* popularity leaped overnight for/ through their children. The youngsters were conducting Khatami's presidential campaign single handedly. They conquered the cities, masking the walls with his posters, distributing his flyers in the streets from the evening until dawn, and enthusiastically applauded his electoral statement: "Iran for all Iranians".

Asef Bayat, an Iranian-American sociologist, believes that at no time in Iran's history was there such a potent demand for individual rights and civil liberties, and an overwhelming longing to be able to choose one's preferred lifestyle. In Bayat's opinion, for most young people, the major focus was reclaiming youth itself, what to wear, what to think or watch or listen to. Khatami's landslide victory – 70 percent of all voters in an 80 percent turnout- came from his platform of reforms, which Khatami stressed during his campaign for presidency and the days

that followed. These reforms were about democracy, meritocracy, the rule of law, and civil society. As Bayat claims, the very term reform, which in the 1980s would have meant betrayal of the ideals of revolution, became the catchphrase of the time; a symbolic gesture of the politics of hope (Bayat 41-52).

In an interview with Basmenji in 2004, Morteza Haji, the head of Khatami's campaign in 1997, said: “respecting people, dialogue instead of fighting, tolerance towards your opponent, rejecting violence… were among his slogans which were in the first place intrinsic of his character” (quoted in Basmenji 223). Above or alongside the personal characteristics attractive to youngsters was their ever-unspoken battle with hardliners and the supreme leader Ali Khamenei. As Basmenji observed during his stay in Iran at the time, one of the main reasons for choosing Khatami was that the leader supported the hardliners’ candidate Nateq Nouri. This had been announced through Mahdavi Kani, the chairman of the Society of Militant Clergy, who said he was guessing that the supreme leader would vote for Nateq Nouri. Meanwhile the Hezbollah gangs were attacking and disrupting Khatami’s meetings, which merely transformed the hearsay to a verifiable fact that strengthened Khatami’s position and increased his popularity even more. By June 1997, in and through youth propaganda, Hojatoleslam Khatami had been transfigured to a pop icon. Morteza Haji says: “when we started our campaign we didn’t believe that Khatami would win the election. We knew that he had a good reputation between the artists for the short period he was the minister of the Culture and Islamic Guidance. Naturally he had the backing of intellectuals, writers, filmmakers, actors and actresses but as the days passed his popularity soared” (quoted in Basmenji 224).

As Basmenji describes the climate, May 1997 was hot both literally and metaphorically. There was an unprecedented celebratory spirit in Tehran and other cities, which soon became something as a carnivalesque ritual that would occur regularly afterwards. The most striking fact was the

overwhelming presence of youngsters and women. Basmenji recounts that families in their best clothing swarmed the voting stations. Basmenji defines his interviews on that day as when talking to the parents, they would acknowledge that they had been made vote for Khatami by their children. When asking the kids, they would stress that Khatami is a lovable man and different from them all other cadidates and the regime's officials. Basmenji concludes: "Hundreds of thousands of youngsters encouraged, persuaded and even forced their parents and grandparents who would otherwise have stayed home to come out and vote for Khatami" (227).

Still, Khatami's popularity, the whole Reform Movement and the reaction of youngsters towards the social changes, cemented the borderline between the two diverse groups of the social and political intellectuals of Iran's modern history. If a before/after demarcation could ever be a reliable axis for theorizing cultural formations and deformations, the eight years of Seyyed Mohammad Khatami's presidency in Iran from 1997 to 2005 could fairly be considered as its embodiment. Both the cultural and political flaws and ebbs of the period were so hybrid and unusual that it has made a sharp demarcation between the theorists in favor of or against any reform in the Islamic Republic.

On one front, an amiable imposter merely insured the Islamic Republic's longevity by depoliticizing the third generation, who supported Khatami and were believed to be the main reason for his landslide victory. Khatami and his Reform Movement were a door being ajar calculatedly and momentarily for a "boiled and ready to burst society". The political upshot of this is that the Islamic Republic is irreparable. The regime must be overthrown. The diversity of the representatives of this viewpoint, from Iran's last crown prince Reza Pahlavi (Pahlavi.R. "Interview"), to the guerilla organizations, the Islamic Republic's archenemies fought both with the Shah and the Islamic Republic, and also sociologists such as Majid Mohammadi (Mohmmadi

"Reformism"), is so vast that other than demolishing the Islamic Republic, they have nothing in common.

On the other front, Khatami and the idea of reform were just the first practicing steps in the long way to democracy. With no belief in any grand narrative, for them any abrupt change was doomed to fail. Revolution proved it was not the answer once, so it would not be an ideal solution again (Ganji "With Akbar"). Then, if reforms continued, the regime eventually transforms to a democracy (Jalaeipour "Types"). This unbridgeable gap between the two fronts has also roughly bifurcated sociologists, anthropologists, and specifically political theorists on their approach to the third generation. On one front, the third generation is the Islamic Republic's prey. On the other, it is its unrivaled opponent. On one front, the new freedoms are nothing but trivial and petty; for others, since pop culture is inherently the Islamic Republic's ideological archenemy, any resilience over it is the regime's retreat, its unspoken announcement of its defeat. On the other, exactly because of this inherent inconsistency, it is the regime's new ideological policy to make it harmless at the service of its ideology: a tame, docile and homely pop culture. Therefore, on one front, any cultural transformation of the regime is done by the third generation through a persistent defiance. On the other, the regime's cultural deformation is a plot for depoliticizing the very generation.

Basmenji gets through this diversity in the words of some political activists of the era. His first representative is Dariush Sajadi. Despite the fundamental turns and twists in his political inclinations over the decades, first, a fiery advocate of the reformists, then a zealous promoter of the hardliners, Sajadi's estimation of Khatami's overnight popularity and the whole Reform Movement has kept a certain validity. Basmenji demonstrates Sajadi's opinion about the Reform Movement in Iran from the essay Sajadi wrote for *Middle East Insight* magazine in January 2000, in which Sajadi read the whole event as an Iranian demand, which alternated between security

and freedom from over the past 200 years in Iran's history. In his point of view, "due to the absence of the genuine missions of governments and non-existence of political parties, the people's choices have been unconsciously eliminative. Ninety-eight percent voted for the Islamic Republic with the slightest knowledge about such a combination. They solely voted on their repulsion with the Shah's regime, it wasn't a yes to the Islamic Republic but a great no to the monarchy" (quoted in Basmenji 230-231).

For Sajadi and his co-believers the same mechanism was at work for 23 May 1997- the date of Khatami's victory in the election. Urban and rural masses turned out in millions to cast protest votes against policies that had dominated Iran for two decades. Thus, the votes cast for President Khatami carried a blunt message: a bold and big no to the Islamic Republic. In this point of view, the popularity and victory of Khatami was not an approval and submission to his electoral promises at all.

Basmenji's other representative is Mohsen Sazgara. First, one of the founders of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, then a reformist, and finally the Islamic Republic's ardent opposition who firmly believes that the regime did not have the ability to reform itself, Sazgara's interpretation of the Reform Movement at that time was that

> like any political system facing an inefficiency crisis, the Islamic Republic decided to reform itself. Because with the development of such a crisis, a gap opens up between the state and the people, and only reforms can bridge that gap. In 1997, we came to the conclusion that the system would increase its efficiency if it moved towards democracy, a civil society, political development, promotion of civil liberties and returning to the international community… People conveyed a clear message to the state through elections; they said you [the state] can remain in power providing that you reform yourself. They voted for Khatami within the framework of the existing

system, which means they agreed with his slogans of political and cultural reform (quoted in Basmenji 229).

There are other observers who view the whole Reform Movement as a function of globalization, an impact of the modern media-video, satellite television and the Internet, on a young population grown up under and alienated by a constant bombardment of ideological values. The Iranian political analyst and journalist Nima Rashedan, as a supporter of Khatami, says: "twenty million young boys and girls voted for reforms because of the impact of globalization and the Western culture. Just like in other countries, they demanded absolute freedom" (quoted in Basmenji 231). In Basemnji's opinion, "the problem with the latter view is that it was also the impression of the hardliners. *Kayhan*, *Yalesarat* and many other hardliners' media had almost the same title after Khatami's victory: 20 million punks voted for Khatami" (Basmenji 231).

During the first round of his presidency, hardliners attacked student dormitories, closed daily reformist newspapers and did not let the reformist Majles pass its bills. Many other obstacles by the hardliners made Khatami declare that he was dealing with a new crisis every nine days. His New Year address to the nation in 2000 contained a famous line from the Iranian poet Hafez: "this chapter is about to close, but the story still continues" [*Beh pāyan āmad in daftar, hekāyat ham-chenān bāqist*]. Time showed that the chapter had not been closed yet. Khatami was re-elected for the second time as Iran's president with even more votes than the first round.

More based on her motherly affection rather than her social position as a lawyer, activist, and the winner of the Nobel peace prize, Shirin Ebadi divides the situation of the youngsters in the Islamic republic as before/after Khatami. Comparing the situations of young people before the reform, she reminds her readers of the uniform code dress women had to wear, long robes,

maghnaeh, for which the choice of colors were between black, dark brown or dark blue. She recounts:

> slowly we learned to cope with the obstacle course that was public space. Dating couples socializing ahead of marriage, would borrow a young niece or nephew on their evenings out to appear as a family and pass through checkpoints unmolested. We monitored everything from our personalities to our wardrobes, careful not to express opinions in public. But the harassment was arbitrary and senseless and thus impossible to anticipate. The Reform Era did much to relax our daily lives. The morality police were by no means retired but they went from omnipresent invaders to a periodic nuisance. President Khatami deserves only a measure of credit for this shift. It was because of my daughters' uncowed generation fighting back and through the sheer force of their numbers and boldness, made it unfeasible for the state to impose as before. Now planning a birthday party no longer requires a strategic battle of timing and defensive maneuvers. I no longer had to worry if the girls left the house in sandals without socks or wearing veils in bright colors. If they are with a male companion, I no longer began to panic if they were ten minutes late, fearing a catastrophic encounter at a checkpoint (Ebadi and Moaveni180).

Ebadi is right. After Khatami, in the game of wearing sandals, the moral police and socks were both odd man out. A concise definition of the third generation's tactical achievements in Khatami's era would be that they came out of their seclusion, conducted a carnivalesque election campaign, conquered the streets, but never retreated. The hide and seek game of the moral police and the youngsters did not have a hiding side anymore. Continuing the game with no playmate made the previous seeker to seem not just redundant but ridiculous. In De Certeau's words, tactics remained opportunistic, but the marked places had lost their solidity (55).

Second to Khatami's campaigns, one of these subversive/ carnivalesque celebrations happened on 28 November 1998, the day the Iranian national soccer team defeated Australia to qualify for the World Cup for the first time in twenty years. Considering it as one of the most unprecedented forms of resistance, Basmenji recounts that within minutes, jubilant fans occupied the streets, cheering, singing, dancing and defying the existing restrictions. They blocked traffic, danced on the top of the cars, in the streets, and sidewalks, while waving Iran's flag. Many women did not observe the mandatory hijab and many more were dancing in the streets. "Police and security forces were totally taken aback" (Basmenji 233).

Since then, transforming any occasional happening deserved of a celebration into a carnival has become a routine, and inevitably accepted by the regime. But none of these tactical maneuvers is comparable with *Chārshanbeh suri*. In a ritual as ancient as Nowruz, every year, Iranians celebrate the last Tuesday night before Nowruz as *Chārshanbeh suri*- in the third week of March. In the original version of the celebration, in their own neighborhoods, Iranians jump over bonfires, exploding firecrackers and in a Halloween-like ceremony, going door to door in disguise, to collect anything the owner of the house is willing to share. However, the Islamic Republic had its own definition of the ritual. Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari, one of the Islamic Republic's fathers/founders and Khomeini's closest aides, deemed *Chārshanbeh suri* to be a favorite amongst simpletons. The leadership, Seyyed Ali Khamenei, evaluated the ritual as a damaging corruption and asked for its elimination. Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi [nicknamed by the third generation as Ayatollah Forbidden] assessed it a superstitious ritual that wastes time and money and therefore was to be forbidden. Ahmad Khatami, the designated Imam for Tehran's Friday prayers, announced that *Chārshanbeh suri* damages Iranians' dignity and added that the enemy attempts to fade religion by emphasizing the national symbols and rituals. These assertions were proven to be futile specifically during the Reform Era (quoted in Basmenji 20). In the establishing days of the Islamic Republic having such festivity seemed irrelevant specifically

during the war in the 1980s but celebrating *Chārshanbeh suri* in the Construction Era did not seem so farfetched. The ceremony had become a battlefield: the people versus the suppression of the Basij.

In the end of the 1990s, during Khatami's presidency, *Chārshanbeh suri* was once again a battlefield although conquered by a new owner/winner. The youngsters of the third generation in the big cities of the country, heralded *Chārshanbeh suri* by the explosion of their home -made firecrackers, something between a grenade and a handmade bomb. Neighborhoods made their own bonfires over which boys and girls would jump hand in hand. From evening until dawn, they roamed the streets and would stop at intersections to dance to the music amplified from their cars. Therefore, since Khatami's presidency and based on completely different grounds the whole event became disquieting for the regime and also for the first generation. The homemade firecrackers/grenades left behind serious injuries, amputations, and deaths. The parental cautionary considerations remained as unheard as the regime's admonitions.

Gradually, transforming any event to a carnivalesque demonstration became an unwritten rule, whether it was holding sympathetic vigils for 9/11 or attending Ashura. Ashura, the date of Imam Hossein's martyrdom, is commemorated by the believers through many carnivalesque demonstrations. Traditionally, groups of men dressed in black march down the streets beating on their chests and self-flagellating with metal chains, sometimes slitting their scalps with machetes whilst repetitively chanting the name of Hossein. In Khatami's era, clean -shaven young boys in their tight black jeans and trendy black shirts along with a'la mode young girls started their own march. The scenery unsettled the police force. They could not be arrested since they were not doing anything sinful. They were ostensibly mourning for the Imam. Proving that the hidden intent for conducting such a ceremony is deriding the real mourners and/or degrading the sanctity of the Imam was almost impossible, while accepting or assimilating the others in such a sacred

ceremony was unbearable. The regime was in a deadlock as Imam Hossein's new mourners passionately continued their own ceremonies. With the rise of popularity of these ceremonies amongst the youth, the ceremony dubbed in the vernacular as Hossein Party.

In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), De Certeau explains that any spatial practice has two opposed forms simultaneously; one belongs to the oppressed, the other to the oppressor. Strategies belong to the oppressor. They create marked places and maintain them under the control of the powerful state. Tactics belong to the oppressed. Tactics are created and used in places which are not under their control. This very fact makes the tactics temporal. In other words, tactics are always watchful for using opportunities possible and available on the spot (20).

De Certeau explains that since the ruler has the place at its disposal, the ruled deprived of the place has nothing but the time to poach around it. Thus, the ruled become opportunists. They poach around the forbidden place whenever it has been left unguarded. With no intention of a dramatic change, the poacher left its traits on the propertied place. Any resistance depends upon catching that elusive moment when it is possible to accomplish individual preferences in the strategically marked places. In those moments, individuals challenge the rigid, organized place and transform it into a place for defiance. This is why De Certeau calls the poacher an "ordinary, invisible hero". In fact, the book has been dedicated to this "ordinary, invisible hero of the society" (X).

Ashura had never been left unguarded. Based on its holiness, it had never been merely a strategically marked place on which an individual could make its own preferred alterations. Therefore, the one who was able to transform Ashura, the one ideological cornerstone of the Islamic Republic, to a Hossein Party and downgraded its sacredness to the banality of the regime's strategically marked places such as coffee shops, was a hero, but not an invisible one. In practice, through this opportunistic demonstration, Ashura became a poaching ground for both the

regime and the youth in which the hero was the one who seized the opportunity/space and put its traits on it.

Like De Certeau, Bakhtin also accredits the crucial role time plays in the playground of the poachers of stability and power. For Bakhtin, the carnivalesque is the time in and through which a previously formless and dispersed mass sees itself as a noble assembly. The carnivalesque mass is well aware of its unity in time, of its relative historic immortality. When at display, this frivolous noble assembly stands against the seriousness of any bounding socioeconomic and political organization. In his own words: "as a spokesman of power, seriousness terrorized, demanded, and forbade. It therefore inspired the people with distrust. Seriousness has an official tone and is treated like all that is official. It oppressed, frightened, bound, lied, and wore a mask of hypocrisy" (Bakhtin 94).

Considering the opportunistic and repetitive carnivalesque festivities in the Islamic Republic, one thing seems obvious. For the youth itself, specifically the third generation who had their upbringings in the Islamic Republic, downgrading Islamic instructions and rituals to all aspects of everyday life had made them mundane; they were not sacred anymore, so, they were poachable. Or better still, too much restriction had made them completely ineffective. Well aware of the fact, the regime made categorical modifications in its ideological restrictions. If it seemed that this generation, as the brand- new product of the Islamic Republic, was not afraid of punishments anymore, it was not because the regime was not brutal as it was. The reason was that through its ideological alterations, it had become a farce in which the performers were mortified of their own show while trying to seem horrifying for their audience. Thus, the ground of the marked place in which the regime and the third generation cohabited were misshaped into a circle in which time was blissful and vicious alternatively for both oppositional habitants. They were playing in a closed circle while both fronts were watchful of the other's maneuvers. The youngsters were

playing the system's games, while making their own alterations to make it fit as their own. It seems that through this mutual game they were accomplishing their own fragmentary victories. In effect, the Islamic Republic was forced to many -not official but practical- retreats.

Young and Defiant in Tehran (2008) is the Swedish/Iranian anthropologist Shahram Khosravi's field research on youth culture in Iran from 1999 to 2006. Using De Certeau's demarcation of the strategies and tactics as the theoretical backbone, Khosravi is able to show that what had been left in the battleground is not just momentary traits of an invisible hero in a marked place. What has remained is in fact a fundamental transformation that has outmaneuvered all alterations in Iranian youth culture during the Islamic Republic's reign, for which both the regime and its products, the third generation, are equally responsible. First, through spreading their cultural defiance, the youngsters reshaped a longstanding in Iran's typology of class –based boundaries. Second, the unpopularity of the regime's propaganda, endowed its allegedly ever present- on the scene- enemy, the West, in ever-increasing popularity. The result was an irreparable crack in the regime's ideological foundation.

Reasoning that by politicizing all aspects of everyday life, the Iranian social order oppresses poor and rich youth more or less alike, Khosravi observes that there is a shared demand for social freedom that transcends class boundaries. The consequence has been a homogenization of the needs and claims of young people throughout Tehran and other big cities. To further illuminate this homogenization, he explains how and on what conditions the class boundaries have been formed and reformed. He explains that Tehran's geographical location, being on a north-south axis, has also made a socioeconomic hierarchy in which the upper- class dwells in the north and the lower class inhabits in the south. Khosravi clarifies that the terminology and policy used by Khomeini while conducting the revolution was based on this very factual class boundary. Khomeini's labels "mansion dwellers" [*kākh-neshinān*] for north Tehranis and "slum-dwellers"

[*kukh-neshinān*] for the population in the south of Tehran were not just metaphorical. They were a tangible reality. Khosravi reminds us that before the revolution, cultural vibrations flow from north to south rather than vice versa, but following the revolution, this interactive flow is not based on class differences. After the revolution, there is still a spatial social hierarchy between the south and the north Tehran. But the social inequality reproduced itself by way of a dichotomy between modern, global north, and the traditional, local, south. In other words, in the youth culture after the revolution, there is an asymmetric relationship between modern youth and traditional ones, not based on the financial advantages, but based on access and utilization of global culture (58-60).

To prove this point, it seems that there was no better place than his chosen neighborhood, Shahrak-e Gharb, and no better time period than the end of the Construction Era and during Khatami's presidency. His chosen neighborhood at that specific time can fairly be considered as the spatial embodiment of Islamic Republic's cultural transformations.

Before the revolution, the upper class of Tehran's residency was in Shemiran, a suburb in the slopes of Alborz Mountain. In the Qajar era (1789-1925) the neighborhood was merely a countryside used as a summer resort for the kings and their entourages. In the Shah's era (1941-1979), Shemiran transformed to a diversified district in which the upper class of Tehran in their modern villas and westernized lifestyles were cohabitant with Shemiran's native, mostly traditional, and rural residents. Since the beginning of 1970s, Shahrak-e Gharb started to be constructed as a secluded, unmixed, and above all a self- sufficient neighborhood for Tehran's *nouveaux riche*. It had its own bilingual school and a shopping center in which renowned international fashion brands were supposed to be launched. The project was left almost unfinished because of the revolution.

After the revolution, since it was demonized as the residency of the Idol and the idolatries, Shemiran changed categorically. Most Shemiran dwellers were forced to leave it. Some were officially disposed of their possessions by the revolutionary court, so they had to leave their homes. Some others, who were not confiscated, were not able to afford the same lifestyle, so they had to leave theirs as well. Therefore, while Shemiran was cleansing of the idolatry, its residues mainly moved to Shahrak-e Gharb as their last resort.

Yet again, Shahrak-e Gharb turned out to be a secluded neighborhood. If Shemiran was diagnosed as "the den of idolatries" by Khomeini during the revolution, perhaps Shahrak-e Gharb would have been labeled as the den of the idolatry residues, if he were still alive during the Construction Era. The bitter irony is that, ignoring its degrading implication, the label would be a fair and square one. Shahrak-e Gharb residents were mostly educated people who still could afford to start a new life after the revolution based on their educational experiences. Naturally, they brought about their habitual lifestyles to the new neighborhood, a lifestyle which was too westernized for an Islamic government even by the Construction Era's resilient measurements. Therefore, once again a neighborhood started to have the last say on how to be in, and made the time's cultural mantras by spreading its ideal cultural trends, first in Tehran, then to other big cities in Iran.

Khosravi notes that the youngsters' tactics inspired and ignited in this place, being so successful that many believed that there is a Shahraki type of young man and woman and that they were the forerunners of the popular culture of their own era, thus, starting to be known as Shahraki kids. Khosravi explains:

> a Shahraki kid is a slender clean-shaven young man, with a longer hairstyle than preferred by the regime, in skinny jeans and a trendy shirt, more often than not with a western logo. A Shahraki girl wears a short coat instead of the mandatory long

> manteau, pulls her scarf back from her forehead to show as much hair as possible, more often than not having a –dyed- blonde hair, impeccable makeup and painted nails. For being a Shahraki kid, you just needed to know how to be in (69).

Not getting a haircut and wearing tight jeans and short sleeve T-shirts for boys, did not need any specific financial support, and the girls did not need money to expose their hair as much as possible. In this typology body substituted for money. "For Shahraki kids' others, the girls were deemed impure and the boys were feminine, not real men. For Shahraki kids, the others' non-modern body is seen as 'rugged', masculine, and uncouth" (76). The other is uncivilized.

Far from a new or displaced social hierarchy the equivalence of modernity and civilization became a cultural shield against the political hegemony. Fighting against the very confounded modernity as the Shah's imposed cultural mantra and his most derided ideal civilization as the threshold he forced the people to pass through, were the first generation's means to overthrow the Shah and accomplish their revolution. The very concepts of modernity and civilization became the ends for the third generation to fight with the anti-modern, anti-westernized dictatorship. Civilization became synonymous with globalization. As Khosravi argues, it became a common sense and put its mark modern/civilized as the only yardstick for evaluating the quality of all things. Khosravi observes that "anything western has the highest quality, whether it would be a lifestyle or a commodity. Based on this belief, an unprecedented adjective: *khāreji* [lit: made out of Iran, meant specifically: Western Europe and North America] was introduced into the third generation's argot and soon became a well-used adjective for other generations. "Everything in Iran is carried out badly compared to the *khārej*, where everything is correctly managed" (104).

Moreover, Khosravi confirms that people frequently assert that there is the rule of law in *khārej*, but in Iran matters follow not regulation but relation. The belief is so deep rooted in society that numerous jokes about the authorities' ignorance and incompetence in derogatory

tones are produced daily and circulated in public places such as taxis, the Internet, and schools. For Khosravi, one example that explicitly demonstrates how people believe that politicians are not just ignorant but are totally out of their element reads: "Haj Agha goes to Paris as a Foreign minister. During his visit to the Louvre, the foreign minister of France offered a present to him: the shoes of Louis the sixteenth. Haj Agha says: they are a bit small for me. Please give me Louis the Eighteenth" (151). Another one that shows how the state's propaganda against the west is transformed into anti-propaganda goes like this: "Two Iranians died. At the threshold of the other world, they have asked whether they want to go to the American or Iranian hell. One picks the Iranian hell and the other one who believes that the American hell would be much more fun, goes for the American one. After a while they meet and ask each other about their places. The one in American hell says: It is a real hell. We are burning constantly and meticulously. The one in the Iranian hell says: practically we are living in paradise. Because one day, everything is ready for the fire but the agent is not there. Another day, the agent is present, but we are running out of the wood or the matches or something else… so they can never prepare the fire" (151).

The cultural outcome is that foreign taste [*khāreji pasand*] is in opposition to what is known as the haji taste [*hāji pasand*], which means fanatically traditional, or bazar taste [*bāzāri pasand*] which means kitschy cheap quality things made in Iran. Khosravi believes this to be deeply rooted in Iranian belief as the conjunction between Islam and Bazar and has now revealed itself to be a decisive cultural value at this specific historical moment. The relationship between the bazaar and the present regime in Iran has reinforced anti-bazari attitudes among young people. Bazari is considered a job without prestige among the educated middle class. Bazari depicts a mean, traditional, but affluent man who earns his money through dishonest dealings (107). Specifically, a Bazari is usually called haji- the term assumed a multiple derogatory tone after the revolution since it is a common label among basijis and interrogators of political prisons to refer to each other.

For expressing this otherness, the third generation constructed its own vernacular. A Bazari, non-modern, and non-Shahraki, is called Javad [Javad is a traditional Iranian name for men as well as the name of the 9th Shiite Imam]. Khosravi stresses that in youth culture Javadness has little to do with mere wealth. Most of the time it refers to newly rich people. Dara, one of Khosravi's informants, says: "They have money and consume expensive goods. Yet, it's obvious that they are Javad. They have a bazari style and bazari culture. You know, for instance, the color combination, the designs, they just don't fit. They just are a disaster!" (117). In Khosravi's opinion, based on informants, the power over cultural meanings gives authority to distinguish between who is modern and who is javad- uncivilized. To be Javad actually is not a matter of possession of objects but a matter of having knowledge about them. Thus, even [and for the most part] wealthy people are classified as Javad. They have all the means of a modern lifestyle but they still lack the authority over the meanings of these means. In contrast, the modernized, in their latest trendy coffee shops, exhibit mastery over cultural meanings and preferred subjects that made their intellectual worlds. At the end of his six years survey, Khosravi concluded that "you have to be 'in', to not be a Javad. In the 1990s, in the coffee shops is the time for The Doors and Nirvana, no one listens to you if you talk about Bergman and Tarkovsky. They were on top until last year. Now, you have to know about Jarmusch and Wim Wenders" (119).

Standing against the regime's pedantic sobriety is not limited to one's fashionable and intellectual preferences. As Bakhtin has demonstrated, as an interior form of truth, "laughter liberates not only from external censorship but first of all from the greater interior censor; it liberates from the fear… of sacred, of prohibitions, of the past, of power" (94). Accordingly, following up the youth's vernacular, Khosravi outlines the ways in which abuses, curses, profanities, and improprieties have been used as language for defiance. In his own words, "such forms, liberated from norms, hierarchies, and prohibitions of established idiom, become themselves as a peculiar argot and create a special collectivity, a group of people initiated in

familiar intercourse, who are frank and free in expressing themselves verbally" (Khosravi 187). The satiric vernaculars demonstrate the demarcation that youngsters have made between themselves and the officials, or between being global, rational, and modern as opposed to others' Javadness [lagging]. Examples of such vernaculars are:

> *Motodayyus*: literally means a hypocrite pious, mostly refers to a Haji or a Bazari. The first part of the word- Moto- comes from *motedayyen*, meaning pious, religious person. The second part, *dayyus*, literally means pimp in Persian.
> *Pashm- o- shisheh* [*pashm*= wool & *shisheh* = glass]: is used for Iran's television, referring to the ever presence of bearded men on the screen.
> *Māikel Jam-kon* [lit. the one who arrests those who seems to imitate Michael Jackson] using the rhyme of *Jamkon* and Jackson referring to Michael Jackson; a name for moral police and Basij patrolling the streets and arresting young, westernized people. (Khosravi 155)

One interesting and illuminating point is that even the non-political vernacular is a Persianization of an originally western subject/name, mixed-matched coinage that shows how deeply western pop culture has been interiorized:

> Miss Marple: nosey woman.
> *Tip-e titānik* [Titanic Type]: snobbish.
> Yul [after the American actor Yul Brynner]: thick, slow people.
> *End-e sheh* [lit: it is its end]: it is the best.
> *Pink bāz*: someone crazy about Pink Floyd.
> *Ārnold-e feshordeh* [concentrated Arnold, referring to Arnold Schwarzenegger]: a short, chubby but masculine man (Khosravi 155).

Through the passage of time, as the regime changes its cultural policies, some of this vernacular has endured, some had lost its function and are not used anymore. The IRIB is not called "wool and glass" anymore since its anchors and personalities are clean-shaven. Snobs are not referred to as types of *Titanic* since the movie is now considered as a classic and is not the latest blockbuster anymore. Miss Marple TV series were broadcasted by the IRIB in the 1980s; therefore, it is not the latest on the TV screen. Since the late 1990s, due to the expansion of the satellite channels and dubbing and broadcasting foreign TV series, the nosey person is addressed as *Poirot*.

As the headquarters of cultural formations and deformations of the era, Khosravi chose Golestan shopping mall in Shahrak-e Gharb. The shopping mall started to be built in 1996, the last year of Hashemi's presidency. When it was completed in 1997, the first year of Khatami's presidency, the previous marketplace, which was supposed to be the center for fashion in Tehran, was already history and was referred to as the "old market". Now, spreading the latest fashion for the new bourgeoisie had been assigned to the newly-made Golestan shopping mall. Golestan proved triumphant in accomplishing its mission. Like any other shopping mall around the world, it was a place for the youth to spend their spare time, mingling with the opposite sex and window-shop. Controlling the ample number of boys and girls that spent hours lingering and pacing down the mall's hallways turned out to be a hard task for the police. Golestan became a Mecca for the youngsters. Therefore, the government increased their scrutiny by enforcing guards to watch the mall and the Basij to control the roads and intersections around the area. One of the responsibilities of the shopping mall's newly assigned guards was to prevent the entrance of young men/bachelors on the weekends.

However, the outcast bachelors did not go far away. Adjacent to the shopping mall was a public park, known to the "kids" as *Pārk-e Qurbāgheh*, a literal translation of Frog Park. While popularity and controlling over Golestan had a correlated proportionality, the park became the

youngsters' desirable hangout and safe haven. The "kids" practically transformed the park to their own cultural council in which the trendiest ways "of how to be in" were scrutinized. When tired of riding around on their skateboards, the youths exchanged their latest knowledge on the prohibited art of graffiti, western movies, and Rock n' Roll. Attributing one of the influential cultural centers during Khatami's era to this park would not be baseless, because some members of this outcast cultural council were acknowledged both nationally and internationally in their fields. The underground rock bands Hypernova and Yellow Dogs later went on to find musical success in New York City. Two brothers, the Iranian graffiti/stencil artists Icy & Sot, started their career at and around Frog Park and are continuing to color New York and other metropolitan cities' walls with their art. Through the efforts of Alireza Ansari, a veteran skateboarder and the founder of the first skate shop in Iran, skateboarding, a previously taboo and shunned American sport, not only became more accessible for the youth but became a normalized activity. It was such an effort that encouraged former presidential candidate and mayor of Tehran, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, to invest in a multi-million dollar sports complex dedicated to skateboarding.

Although ephemeral and mundane according to De Certeau, these tactical murmurs penetrated through the concrete and monotonous governmental strategic walls and left behind consequential cracks, which in turn, brought about one remarkable form of cultural defiance during Khatami's presidency: the multiplied voice, albeit in a geographical hierarchy of over ground/legal and underground/illegal music. While through ascendency of the satellites, L.A. continued to pour its products into Iran's pop market, the legal scene of music enjoyed an unprecedented leniency from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. Songs overruled anthems and singers outplaced eulogists.

The mystic heavenly love of the previous decade started to mingle with its earthly mate in a new pop package of the era which had almost no counterpart in Iran's pop music, both before and

after the Islamic Republic. The genre's superstar Alireza Assar was the very embodiment of President Khatami's electoral slogans: meritocracy, tolerance, resilience, and lawfulness, all parceled in an Islamic/pop framework. Bearded, solemn, and ever in black, Assar's was the artistic/intellectual appearance of a moderate Muslim who happened to be a singer. In her minute research on Assar's personal character and career, Siamdoust explains:

> On his first album, [*Kuch-e āsheqāneh*] *Amorous Migration,* Assar is captured with an intense, soulful gaze; the liner notes highlight his lineage as a seyed- a descendent of the Prophet Mohammad- and a quote by the artist asks God to help him not to leave the honest path. In other interviews he has said in truth my calling as an artist is to deal with people honestly, and in order to achieve this goal we have to get closer to them, and 'I am a seyed and without intending to show off, I believe that this success has been given to me for a higher reason, not just for singing'. In his interviews, Assar also casually mentions that he does not socialize much, since he works throughout the night, and that he avoids parties where men and women mingle or alcohol is served (128).

Assar was not the only pop star in the Islamic Republic with these characteristics. They are fairly applicable to many other legal musicians in the Islamic Republic, although rarely as all-inclusive as Assar. What made him unique was that deliberately or inadvertently, his repertoire was an acknowledgment of heavenly and earthly love, with no discrimination. Thus, he became a role model for all other legal pop singers in the Islamic Republic. His successors shrewdly- albeit crudely- imitated what Assar did. Instead of Assar's mystic songs, they started to insert an occasional song into their albums. The song functioned as a guarantee to obtain permission from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

These religious oriented songs are more often than not a *Nowheh*- a eulogy for the third Shia' Imam's martyrdom- or a laudation of longing for Imam Zaman's return- the twelfth Imam in the lineage of the Prophet Mohammad whom Shia Muslims believe in his resurgence in the future. It seems that the fans must have ignored the obligatory occasional tracks and enjoyed the other songs of the albums, since the singers popularity and fame is acknowledged only by their hits, be it an up tempo dance number or a sad and sorrowful one. But Assar was/is as famous and popular in praising the "Heaven's Celestials" ["*Qodsiyān-e āsemān*"] (1999) as for his earthly love songs. In contrast with his predecessors such as Mokhtabad, his selection and elimination of mysticism was relatively contemporary, even up to date. "Heaven's Celestials" is Assar's smart selection of Fazlollah Naeimi (Horufi) Astarabadi's poem. He just picked eight out of twenty-four verses of the original poem. Examples of the eliminated verses are:

> Selfhood is my housewife, I'm her husband, her master
> If the housewife is wrong, I would slap her in the face
> When the wretcheds love me for my makeup
> Why should I dress my hair like a prostitute? (Naeimi. Transliteration p. 246)

Another example of an excluded verse would be:

> Hey Gardener! Why did you close your doors on me?
> Open the garden's door for me to nick some apple and peaches (Naeimi. Transliteration p. 246)

It seems that intertwining "prostitution with a hairstyle and makeup" mentioned in the original lyrics was an implication of the 1980s rhetoric and not the word of the time. Assar purified the poem of its macho and misogynistic verses and transformed it to a praise of self-sufficiency, self-

confidence, pride and bravery, the characteristics best-suited to the Reformist mantra of the time. The repetitive verse of Assar's selection of the original version is:

> Hey Caravan, Hey Caravan, I'm not a nightcrawler thief
> I'm a universal gladiator
> Use my blade only in a face-to-face combat (Discography, Assar "Heaven's Celestials". Transliteration p. 246)

In case that the elimination of the gardener's permission for entering his garden would not be enough to show how far the singer is autonomous and self-governed, in the midst of the song, his fellow-colleague, the singer Mohammad Esfahani- a popular legal singer but much more conservative than Assar- interrupts Assar's rhythmic and semi-militant tempo through a traditional Iranian melody and downgrades any supremacy and leadership:

> If the Khan would not join my tribe wholeheartedly
> I, the king of kings, will invade his camp, conquer his land
> Come on guru! Courteously kneel down in front of me
> I'm the king of the country, why should I ever kneel down for you? (Discography, Assar "Heaven's Celestials". Transliteration p. 246)

Producing, promoting, and finding an all-inclusive persona such as Assar was almost impossible. Therefore, the IRIB had to find more innovative ways of releasing agenda-laced pop songs. It started to place such tracks as the theme and the opening/closing titles of popular TV series in which there would be no need to show either the singer or the instruments. Moreover, the song's earthly love was soon to be nullified/ justified by the matrimony of the lovers in the season finale. The innovation soon became not just a norm but also a cliché' in Iran's pop music.

Introducing one hundred hits of four decades of the Islamic Republic, Musicema explains that in Muharram 2004, the IRIB released the series *Gharibāneh* [Aloof]. The song used in the

closing credits of the series endured harsh criticism. The first negative reaction came from the hardliners, who admonished that no one could use a song when the subject is Muharram [the month of the third Shi'a Imam's martyrdom]. The other harsh criticism came from the community of musicians themselves. Their objection and criticism were drawn to the age of the singer, Ehsan Khaje Amiri, who at the time was only 19 years old. Gradually this point of view changed, and the song became one of the enduring pop songs of the decade ("Introducing" 2).

In the sacred month Muharram, in the IRIB, Khaje Amiri sang: "All my best wishes, are yours; All your memories, be mine; All those romantic days, are yours; These restless nights be mine"; and all religious admonitions and musical cautions proved to be futile. In Ramadan 2005, now twenty years old, Khaje Amiri sang for another TV series: *For the Last Time* [*Barāy-e ākharin bār*] and two months later, he released his first album, *For the First Time* [*Barāy-e avalin bār*], an eclectic body of work containing a wide variety of emotions ranging from up-tempo dance tracks to songs about heartbreaks. The album also contained a eulogy for Imam Hossein. The result of such an innovative combination was that Ehsan Khaje Amiri transformed to the Islamic Republic's pop star and the album's now deceased lyricist Afshin Yadollahi became known for his gloomy love songs and enjoyed a dignified reputation.

If Assar was the embodiment of a moderate Muslim, Ehsan Khaje Amiri was its teenager version, an ideal youngster in the Islamic Republic during the Reform Movement. Lacking Assar's charisma, having a goatee, a decent short haircut, always in a suit, standing motionless on the stage even in the midst of his most up-tempo songs, practically, he represented the sheer image of the boy next door. Best matched with their own era, while maintaining their fame and popularity afterwards, Assar and Khaje Amiri, could be taken as the Reform Era's preferred pop icons.

But the Reform Era's effect on the stream of the Islamic pop was not limited to this ideal picture. It was in introducing a phenomenon best known as Shadmehrism. The coinage is after the name of Shadmehr Aghili, a young violinist, singer, and composer. Beginning his career in the IRIB, in no way as docile as Khaje Amiri, Shadmehr's feminine beauty stood in stark contrast with Assar's masculinity. After two decades, in defining Shadmehr's oddity, the official website Musicema explains that in 1998, most singers were imitating their L.A. counterparts, so the music produced inside Iran did not gain many fans. But a certain phenomenon changed this all. It was a 26 years old musician and his debut album *The Passenger* [*Mosāfer*]. The title track of the album, "The Passenger", was set for release through the Islamic Republic's satellite TV channel Jam-e Jam, which was launched exclusively to target Iranians abroad. Jam-e Jam had a more moderate/liberal approach in its programming compared to the IRIB. But the whole project turned out to be controversial. The website Musicema explains that even the innovative album cover turned out to be polemical. It was the first album cover that did not have a conservative image of its singer wearing a suit and staring into an unknown horizon. Shadmehr's unfocused profile as the background of his focused violin on the cover broke a taboo. Although the website did not explain further, the responsibility of breaking a taboo could fairly be assigned to both personas. Shadmehr and his violin were both outcasts by the Islamic Republic's yardsticks. The official website concludes that "the foremost reason for the album's immense popularity and endurance through all these years is that it highly resonated with the youth as if the words were directly taken out of the kids' mouths, specifically the kids of the 1980's, a confused generation that oscillated between staying or leaving the country" ("Introducing" 5).

The website's definition, if not dishonest, is dubious. According to the album's lyricist, Niloufar Laripur, at least in one of the album's tracks, "Practicing Silence" ["*Masghq-e sokut*"], the words had not been taken out of the youths' mouths but had been put into their mouths. She explains:

when you hear it you would not realize that it is a pre-ordered song. To tell the truth, they did not force any specific outline to us. However, their message was to evade the feeling of desperation in the youngsters. The funny thing is that the only song that needed revision was this one. I had written: *don't talk about the night and loneliness, the sun is at the door*. They told me that the sun is already in, so I changed the verse to: *don't talk about the night and loneliness, the sun is already shining*" (Laripur).

Shadmehr was one amongst this oscillated generation who left Iran. Coincidently and in a bitter irony, his last album in Iran was a soundtrack of the movie *Wings to Fly* [*Par-e parvāz*], (2000). In this semi-biographical movie, Shadmehr was practically playing his own dilemma as a musician in Iran. Trapped in a triangualr love story, the two women in his life were advocates and promoters of his music, one in Iran, while the other promised stardom in L.A. In the movie, in a frustrating sway between selecting his lovers, between staying or leaving, between creating music free of surveillance or fighting an uneven battle with censorship, in short between Iran and L.A., he chose the domestic love and stayed. But his cinematic destiny ended up in smoke by the musical narrative of this decision. Twisting between the two diverse lovers and loves, one unfamiliar and foreign, thus risky, but powerful; the other, familiar, homely and safe, but hand-tight and short leveraged, Shadmehr sang two songs both directed to the homely one, or more precisely, the motherland/mother-figure.

While having fun with the other woman, the representative of the outside world, Shadmehr sings the song "Question Mark" ["*Alāmat-e soāl*"] (2000). Through the lyrics, he explains that his life is in fact an entrapment between selecting an open window, which leads him to fly or forever remaining in a cage. In this entrapment, he is a voice, but with no sympathetic ear. Candidly confessing to the homely lover that he has an affair, he reminds her that she is nothing for him but a blurred memory declining him into his end. In his own eyes, his life has been passed through a eulogy of the darkest side of the night, a night that has reigned over his life and has overshadowed

all his beliefs. He told the homely lover that in such bitter dormancy, the only thing he wants is to forget her voice and asks her to let him go. He insists that he does not have much time to waste. He must leave:

In my eyes, the deep regret for singing
In my body, the passionate desire of reaching
In the coldness of this cage
I'm yearning for fly
I'm from the tribe of homelessness
From the never-come- true dreams
Our story has reached to its end
With a question mark (Discography, Aghili "Question Mark". Transliteration p. 246)

Hopeless, alone and entangled in the midst of numerous wishes/ideals that will never come true in the cage, in his homeland, he candidly and honestly confesses to the homely lover that their story would not have a happy ending. In this bleak life, familiarity and feeling safe and secure would be nothing but a mirage. His conclusion is that they have no tangible ties anymore. He must leave. For him, staying in this cage and the end of time/life seems to be one and the same.

Based on the scenario, however, staying in the cage is not the end of time for him. In the Reform Era, Shadmehr, both in his cinematic version and in person, would have an opportunity to be heard. Thus, the movie ends with Shadmehr's public performance. In his tattared sweatshirt, shabby jeans and slipshod shoes, lost and defeated, he plays his violin and sings. In the midst of his song, the homely lover in her bride-like attire descends the concert hall's stairs towards the scene while carrying a bouquet in her hands. Cinematically, the scene is a reminder of the IRIB's decipherable tricks in the season finale of its TV series where the frivolous lovers are undoubtedly always united in the holy bounds of marriage. But semantically, the very scene,

through the contradiction of what you see versus what you hear, could fairly be considered the most to the point depiction of the youngsters' and musicians' frustrations under the daily restrictions in the Islamic Republic, musically or otherwise. Gloomy and worn-out, the finally-legal- musician/Shadmehr sings the song "Wings to Fly" ["*Par-e parvāz*"] to the motherland lover:

> Your name remains sacred for me
> Till my last breath
> Have a faith on me,
> since only your faith
> Is capable to break the lock of the cage
> I have not but a generous sky
> I have not but a doomed bypath
> Hey You! The star of the eastern nights
> Don't take away my wings to fly (Discography, Aghili "Wings to Fly". Transliteration p. 247)

The question, both in reality and in the cinematic version, is: despite all the dramatic changes in the cultural scene, why is there still "no wings to fly"? Or in other words, why do tangible changes in the cultural scene in the Reform Era that seem so promising in theory are painted in such a gloomy picture? What would be more desirable for a pop musician than having the permission of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance to publish music and perform in concerts? In short: why is he not happy and satisfied? What is in the Islamic Republic's musical policies that makes the musicologist Laudan Nooshin name it a limbo (Nooshin "Underground" 472) and the acclaimed musician Mohsen Namjoo to call it a big official lie (Namjoo "Revolution" 192).

Understanding a musician's frustration in his concert, defining the limbo, or calculating how big the official lie was, could not be done based on the Islamic Republic musical policies per se, but on its politics as a whole. In practice, the Reform Movement's promises were meritocracy, the rule of law, tolerance, and resilience, but only for those who were tolerable and meritorious in the Islamic Republic's political framework. Scrutinizing and comparing the lyrics and musicians who got the ministry's permission resiliently, and those who were rejected based on the rule of law, would shed light on this peculiarity, depict the limbo and betray the official lie. Introducing Shadmehr Aghili's "The Villager" ["*Dehāti*"] (2001) as the greatest hit of the decade, the website Musicema wrote:

> The song made Shadmehr the face of music for the youth. Along with this song, Shadmehr and his fellow singers succeeded to separate themselves from the Los Angeles based singers. The song with its innovative lyrics and smooth melody was heard in the farfetched parts of Iran and became one of the mega hits after the revolution… the same album rendered its singer to seek refuge first in Canada and finally in L.A… ("Introducing" 5).

While Shadmehr's album, or better still its controversial track "Villager," rendered its singer to exile, the album *For the First Time* with its single: "Your Dream" ["*Khial-e to*"] (2005) along with its eulogy for the third Shia Imam "Estrangement" ["*Hess-e gharibi*"] (2005) made Ehsan Khaje Amiri a pop superstar in Iran. Censoring "Villager" still seems one of the novelties in the Islamic Republic's musical/moral policies. Based on the Islamic Republic's musical restrictions, compared to "Your Dream", Shadmehr's "Villager" was harmless, even neutered. It was a villager's lamentation for a non-urban and non-modern lifestyle, which he candidly announces that he has missed. Not that the lyrics lack any tint or hint to any kind of immorality- in the Islamic republic's moral formulas- the song's rhythm does not lead to any "harmonic bodily movement"; a coinage made after the revolution for dancing. Under the same rules and laws,

Khajeh Amiri released his single “Your Dream” seamlessly. “Your Dream” could be considered as a carbon copy of the much-outlawed Los Angeles produced songs, an appreciation of an earthy beloved in the most stereotypical words in which the rhythm of the music has but one responsibility: to harmonize its audiences’ bodily movements.

Seemingly, there was no specific rule through which a musician would be able to predict his music’s fate during its creation. Practically, there was. According to the government related websites such as Fars News, Musicema, or Bultan News, to name just a few, the Islamic Republic’s priority was secluding L.A. singers and all their implications: stardom and celebrity culture. Therefore, the Islamic Republic was as determined in accomplishing its mission in theory, as it was hesitant on how to do it in practice. On the one hand, it had to produce and introduce its own culture of celebrity to erase any memory of the Shah’s era and its “idolatry residues”; on the other, it inherently had a profound ideological animosity towards any type of stardom. This is why in the early time of the Islamic Republic’s musical trials and errors, Assar turned out as a success and the whole assemblage of Shadmehr Aghili appeared to be an error. If Assar was able to attract his audience’s attention to spirituality, Shadmehr was entertaining its audience with what pop music does best internationally: having fun in a concert venue. If Assar seemed attractive as a dignified and weighty artist, or better still, if he was a suitable subject to be adored and appreciated by the whole family, Shadmehr, once again, had the unwelcome and arguably the most powerful tool of attraction in the industry: being the one the girls fell in love with, and the one the boys wanted to be. Musicema’s reasoning on “The Villager’s” success, in retrospect, confirms the idea above. Numerating the reasons why the song turned out to be a hit, the website explains that the cover album that had a close shot of Shahmehr’s profile, had been reshot/redesigned thirteen times because of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance rejections. Perhaps a fair conclusion would be that in 2001, Shadmehr’s feminine beauty was too much, too soon.

Yet again, the determined Islamic Republic in eliminating L.A.'s influence realized that it had no way other than to produce its own substitute stars. Thus, in 2000, the Islamic Republic's pop scene started to enjoy the presence of its new phenomenon, the Arian Band, consisting of eight men and three women. In addition to the uniqueness of having women as choir and instrumentalists, in defining the reasons for the group's novelty, Musicema explains: "the most important thing about the group was their style. They were handsome, chic and up to date. Ali Pahlevan, Payam Salehi and Mohammad Reza Golzar had a different style from those days' singers" ("Introducing" 5).

The writer is not exaggerating. Mohammad Reza Golzar, then the band's guitarist, in the years to come became a megastar in Iran's cinema, not because of his ability as an actor, but because of his prototypical beauty. Gradually, what was considered to be an unknown reason for such a contradictory restriction and resilience in this decade became the Islamic Republic's well-known musical policy afterwards. The Islamic Republic had realized that if Shadmehr, an IRIB musician, could be adored in L.A., why not produce more Shadmehrs*?* This time not as dissident musicians, but as ambassadors to conquer the enemy's music scene.

All in all, at that time, Shadmehr was the Islamic Republic's export by default and he was not the only one. One remarkable event at this specific decade was giving permission to the Shah era's diva and megastar Googoosh to leave Iran. As a female singer and also being condemned as the one archetype of the idolatry, the most popular singer was silenced for almost twenty years. Watching Googoosh singing for the first time after the revolution in Toronto's Air Canada Centre (29 July 2000), a BBC Persian correspondent reported: "The show was in fact a national Iranian celebration in a Canadian city. After twenty years in exile, Iranians with a renewed sense of confidence are promoting different versions and aspects of their culture to the world. In practice,

the event was an exhibition of Iran's multidimensional and colorful pop culture" ("Googoosh's First").

Whatever was happening in the minds of the decision-makers of the era, permitting Googoosh and forcing Shadmehr to seek refuge in L.A. as their messengers and propaganda, was not one of them. At least at that time and during the Reform Movement this was not the Islamic Republic's policy. In the eyes of the hardliners and their daily tribune, *Kayhan* newspaper, giving permission to Googoosh to leave Iran, like any other reformists' leniencies, was interpreted based on a conspiracy theory. Hossein Shariatmadari, first a prosecutor in the notorious political prison Evin, now Kayhan Newspaper editor in chief, saw this as a ploy by Ataollah Mohajerani, the progressive minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance during Khatami's presidency, for personal publicity to increase his popularity and to gain votes in the next presidential elections. Shariatmadari also claimed that this act was assisted by Googoosh's husband at the time, the renowned film director Masoud Kimiaei. The ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance's official excuse was that Iran's famous director Masoud Kimiaei was in location scouting for his new film outside of Iran, so he simply requested permission to have his wife with him. Whatever the real reasons were, letting Googoosh free after twenty years was the Islamic Republic's distinguishable and profound retreatment of its grand narratives, or in the Islamic Republic vocabulary, the revolution's values. Googoosh's performance after twenty years had inadvertent but indisputable effects both on the regime and the people's approach towards the defiant power of pop culture.

As the BBC reporter had observed, the performance was a national milestone where the restoration of confidence was the common attitude between the Iranians physically in attendance and the ones watching the footage back home. If the one and only Googoosh, the archetype of the Shah era's pop culture, was able to regain her voice, the limitations on anything else would seem trivial. Moreover, the show's significance was not limited to the enthusiastic emotional level of

fandom. As the BBC reporter explains, although before the revolution Googoosh was a megastar, the intellectuals of the era were not in her favor. The Shah's era intellectualism saw nothing but a systematic stupefaction in the era's pop culture. But in the past twenty years in which Googoosh was silenced, the attitude dramatically changed. After the revolution, the intellectuals had a contrasting approach towards her and pop culture. Because of living in Iran after the revolution, Googoosh was not merely a megastar. She had been transformed to the embodiment of the inevitably silenced culture. According to the reporter, "the most important cultural and intellectual experts researched and wrote extensive essays on the significance of Googoosh[1]. Her work was now adored and thoroughly appreciated. She had always been admired in countries like Afghanistan and Tajikistan, but this was the first time in Iran that Googoosh was cherished by a wider spectrum of people." ("Googoosh's First").

Shadmehr and Googoosh had a similar path to creative freedom. They both reignited their careers in Canada and were warmly welcomed by the Iranians both in Canada and eventually in Los Angeles. However, the comparison of the music that they had produced in exile illuminates the different impact on the Iranian audience and the regime's musical policy for the years to come.

Googoosh's first post-revolution album, *Zoroaster* (2000), was written in Iran and produced in Canada. The album consists of five songs: "Captivated Soil" ["*Khāk-e asir*"], "Secluded" ["*Gusheh neshin*"], "Melancholia" ["*Deltangi*"], "Scent of the Voyage" ["*Buy-e safar*"] and the title track "Zoroaster" ["*Zartosht*"]. The album narrates the personal story of Googoosh while carrying strong metaphorical parallels with post -revolutionary Iran. The story begins in a "Captivated Soil", in which nothing had remained for its inhabitant but a picture of an imaginary

1 As instances of these scholarly reviews on Googoosh see Breyley, and Fatemi. Hemmasi, *Tehrangeles* and "Iran's Daughter". Milani *Eminent Persians.*

you. The lyrics left recognizing this "you" completely to the listener. But it elaborates that in every moment of this captivation, the singer's "shattered heart pours incessantly like raindrops on the bars of her cage". Surrendered and abandoned in the "Captivated Soil" there is nowhere for her to go other than an imposed "Seclusion", both socially and individually. In this lyrical seclusion, there is an everlasting winter and the constant breaking of bad news. The city's gates had been broken down by the strangers who had conquered the city. They are hunters who came to suffocate their prey. There is no love, no secrecy, and no privacy. In the midst of the hunters' ambush, love has no choice other to take refuge in a homely seclusion. This aloofness rendered her to a melancholic wishful thinking about her unfair share of life, about her dreams that would never come true. In "Melancholy" she explains that her only relation with the outer world is through a window. Sitting in front of the window and staring at the mountains she ponders how is it possible to exclude her? Her song, the sound of hundreds of birds, is being imprisoned in her throat. But if she sings again, ignoring their schools, the boys and girls will sing her songs and make love once again.

If in "Melancholy" she is daydreaming, in "The Scent of a Voyage" she is in a total impasse. Not sure of any exit strategy, she is fed up with nostalgia, with the status quo, and with the agony of exile. The album's finale, "Zoroaster" concludes the album's autobiographical tales in an essayistic construction. In three seemingly separate but coherent parts, she introduces her main idea, elaborates it with illuminative examples and finally gives the listener her conclusion. Her introduction is a concise narration of what she thinks about her twenty years of silence. She confesses that she cannot make heads or tails of their judgment. They realized that her singing is a crime so she did not sing. Unaccustomed, oblivious, or alienated to their judgment, she is well aware of the Zoroastrian rules. She knows that hers is an ancient country, in which singing was never considered a crime. In fact, Zoroaster cultivated the land with songs. Through her final

words, she reasons that remaining in the homeland and bearing witness to all its miseries grants her the people's permission to sing their agonies and therefore concludes:

> You my lady
> Who had sacrificed your land, your son
> Give me your permission
> And I will lend my voice to history
> To sing your suffocated cry (Discography, Googoosh "Zoroaster". Transliteration p. 247)

Zoroaster was not Googoosh's only chronological narrative of the revolution and its aftermath. In a single named "Qiu, Qiu, Bang, Bang" (2004) the veteran lyricist Zoya Zakarian, famous for her lyrics for Googoosh's love-songs prior to the revolution, once again resorts to Googoosh's nostalgic fabric. The lyrics tell the life story of the first generation, the ones responsible for the revolution. It is as minute and accurate as it is heart -wrenching. It divides the life of this generation into three different parts. Each part interrelates with the childish imitation of the sound of a pistol, in Persian: *qiu, qiu, bang, bang*. Zakarian delicately plays with this notion to show that although childhood has passed, the childish mimicry of killing playmates has become the generation's grown-up attitude. Referring to the enthusiastic revolutionary aspirations, believing and acting as the radical, utopian, and romantic dreamers, it is her interpretation that this specific generation had never had a closure with its childhood. The bitter truth for her is that their grandchildren in exile are still playing the same game of qiu, qiu, bang, bang, albeit on their computers.

Googoosh was more than welcome for the Iranians in exile but neither this single, nor the album *Zoroaster* in its entirety, was a great success whether in Iran or abroad. As BBC's reporter observed, it seemed that after twenty years, no one outside or inside of Iran wanted to listen to a free Googoosh reporting on the generation's mistakes and the miseries of life under the Islamic

Republic. The Iranian produced album was impotent in aspiring any sympathy. It felt as if Masoud Kimiaei, the lyricist, was asked for a personal memoir of a person that had been ruined by the Islamic Republic's agonies- truly applicable to Googoosh- and was delivering a memoir through worn-out metaphors such as "cage", "the invasion into the homeland", "old and dusted photographs". The metaphors that were familiar enough to hint to the revolution and its aftermath, and vague enough to evade the consequences of such a depiction in the Islamic Republic. The descriptions stood in contrast with the image of a free Googoosh: a person responsible for restoring the sense of pride and confidence in the cultural battleground with the Islamic Republic. Googoosh was still adorable, but too nostalgic and too much of an embodiment of the good old days to sing of the concurrent misery. The likely reason Googoosh refrained from singing the inefective and untimely material from the album *Zoroaster* in her sold-out concerts in the years to come.

Contrary to Googoosh, Shadmehr's single that was produced in and released from Canada, immediately made him a hit. He too was more than welcome to L.A., the capital of Iranian music in exile. In the song's video clip, his audience was confronted with a whole new Shadmehr. The devastated, depressed and worn-out violinist in the movie *Wings to Fly* was now the Islamic Republic's outlaw through and through; a mischievous boy who was marking the city's wall with graffiti, while playfully singing his love song "What the Hell" ["*Khiāli nist*"] (2002) with sparkling eyes.

While Googoosh and Shadmehr were gaining momentum in L.A., the words of another Iranian artist in exile went strangely unnoticed. It seemed that it didn't occur to anyone why L.A.- based Iranian singer Siavash Ghomeishi, who had the freedom to perform with no restrictions, would sing the lyrics "I want to cry this very song on stage". The song was named "Mask" ["*Neqāb*"] (2002):

Hey actor! Don't cry!

We are all the same

Everyday as we awake

We put a mask on our faces

One becomes a teacher, the other a wanderer

One becomes a composer, the other a song salesman

Life's old mask is on our faces till the night

The cries behind the mask, as usual, are silent

Whoever you are, once and for all, grow out of your mask

Don't make a pre-written speech, grow out of your cocoon's dormancy

Draw a picture of a window on the prison bar

Even for once, breathe for your own

Wish it would be possible that in life, we were ourselves, just ourselves

Even in one glance, even in one inhale

Till when would our mask speak our words?

Till when will repeating silence be my dialogue on the scene?

I want to cry this very song on the stage

To tear up my mask and cry out loud as myself, in my place (Discography, Ghomeishi "Mask". Transliteration p. 247)

Belonging to the third generation, the song's lyricist Yaghma Golrouei was and still is living in Iran. The two final verses, oddly out of place when uttered on the stage, were in fact the breaking news of the birth and existence of a musical revolution in Iran. For the first time since the advent of the Islamic Republic, the third generation was obsessively producing unauthorized music. For the first time in the Islamic Republic, the enemy did not come from L.A. The folk devil was an insider and had nothing to do with idolatry at all. This native folk devil was known mostly as alternative music or underground music. Although in theory and in rare researches on the topic

the labels have been used specifically for defining the underground rock, in practice the label categorized different and at times diverse types of music. For example, underground music was also used for a type of pop music that in that specific period was not able to gain permission for release. Some of the musicians, who would become legally permitted pop stars in the next decade but were unable to gain the permission at this decade, were releasing their singles and even albums through the Internet or making bootleg CDs and releasing them unofficially in the market. Maybe the most illuminative label for this music would be the undue pop of the Islamic Republic of Iran. One of these known pop hits of the black market was "Black is the Color of Love" ["*Meshki rang-e eshq-e*"] by Reza Sadeghi (2003). The track gained popularity not only based on its upbeat rhythm but mostly for the simplicity of its lyrics. Soon after its release on the black market, the introductory verse [*Meshki rang-e eshq-e, rang-e cheshā-ye mehrabunet*] *"* black is the color of love, the same color as your kind eyes" (Discography, Sadeghi "Black"), became well-seated in the youngsters' vernacular, mostly used as a pick-up line directed at anyone dressed all in black.

Another example of the era would be Mohsen Chavoshi, a well-known pop singer who was releasing records without the official permission of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. His pirated music was so renowned for the officials that veteran filmmaker Dariush Mehrjui tirelessly fought the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance to receive permission to use Chavoshi's voice for the lead role in his acclaimed movie *Santuri* [lit. the one who plays dulcimer] (2007). Notwithstanding its illegality, not only did this music did not have any critical point of view on the status quo, but it also had no relevance whatsoever with its own time and place. In the sense that with no awareness of the artist and the time of production, the music could fairly be considered to have been a product of L.A. or even dating back to the Shah's era. Perhaps a more precise definition of this music would be that its ideal and ultimate goal was to become mainstream, but it has not yet been recognized as such.

Like the music community in any other country in the world, the underground/ alternative/independent musicians and their fans set themselves apart from this mainstream. In fact, the underground musicians had a profound grudge over the artistic qualities of their over-ground counterparts. In her field research in Iran's underground music scene, *Reverberations of Dissent, Identity and Expression in Iran's Illegal Music Scene* (2012), Bronwen Robertson quotes an underground singer and songwriter by the name, Houshang:

> If we didn't have Arian Band, it would have seemed that we had a dictatorial government, right? It does not matter how many times you say that they [the government] are so restrictive, they don't give anyone permission to play music etc.', Arian is their rebuttal. This very one band gives them the right to say, 'We've got pop stars so we're not a dictatorship'… A government that's so opposed to music! They even paid for Alireza Assar to go to Abbey Road and record with the London Symphony Orchestra… I don't even know how much money that cost, but I know that if they gave each unofficial rock group one million IRR, [apprixmately 300 pounds] they could record one of their works to a very high standard (36).

The uneven situation of the musicians in the Islamic Republic is not merely limited to what the aforementioned musician - precisely - describes as the main hindrance and problem of independent music and musicians. The problem or contradiction or music's dilemma also shows itself in the very names of the artists. Houshang, the singer and songwriter, is and remains just as Houshang in Robertson's book. Not only there is no mention of a last name for protecting his identity, but also no one can safely assume the authenticity of the first name either. While there is no over-ground popstar in the Islamic Republic who is not addressed by his authentic, full name, such as Alireza Assar, Mohsen Chavoshi, Shadmehr Aghili, and many others, the underground musicians had to seek shelter in the comfort of made-up stage names to protect anonymity and safety.

The musicologist Laudan Nooshin sees the underground music of this era as a rebellion against the musical restrictions consequent to the Islamic revolution. She explains that during the first decades of the Islamic reign, the much-forbidden pop music played this rebellious role. But in 1998, after the governmental resilience on pop music, rock became the new pop. A series of young people forming their own bands in the undergrounds of Iran started to be responsible for this type of defiance. The music is called alternative music, underground rock, but mostly the underground music, since the music was literally produced, practiced, and performed in the basements, in the farfetched warehouses, sheds and barns[1] (Nooshin "Language" 71-82). In Nooshin's observation these underground rockers were "urban, young, educated, relatively affluent, as well as modernist, internationalist, and secular in outlook, lifestyle, and aspiration. In many ways, these young people – with their mobile phones, their jeans, connected to the Internet, and so on – share as much with their cosmopolitan peers outside Iran as they do with their compatriots from the less affluent and more traditional, religious areas of south Tehran and the provinces" (Nooshin "Language" 74).

In her field research on the same topic, Robertson affirms Nooshin's observation. Robertson believes:

> constituting a small minority of Tehran's vast population, Iran's unofficial rock musicians are, by and large, young men aged 17-30. They come from middle to upper-class families, live in the affluent northern suburbs of Tehran, are competent users of technology and are highly educated. Their socio-economic status is important because it is expensive to be an unofficial rock musician.
> There is no money to be made in a craft that is not officially recognized by an internal music industry and instruments and equipment are costly. Unofficial rock music is an

1 This fact has been pictured by Bahaman Ghobadi in his semi-fictional/semi-documentary movie: *No One Knows About Persian Cats,* released in 2009.

elitist genre in Iran and in poorer communities Hip Hop is far more prevalent (xi).

Robertson's definition is not fully accurate on its class-based division. It is true that underground rock needs a certain affluency, but hip-hop was not produced because of the lack of it. Soroush Laskari, best known as Hichkas [Nobody] was born in an almost affluent neighborhood in Tehran. He named himself "Iran's hip-hop godfather". The self-made lable/title is being well- accepted with almost no controversy from the beginning of his career until now. Zedbazi are considered to be one of the populars of Iranian hip-hop. The members of the group came from wealthy families from the upper-class neighborhoods of Tehran. The criteria of their lyrics predominantly revolved around their personal experience of a lavish and westernized lifestyle. What is accurate in Robertson's definition is the fact that under the Islamic Republic's musical policies which would not permit them to release their albums or have a public concert, these musicians had no financial assurance or high expectation of their careers. The fact that persistent in pursuing their music made them twice enthusiastic, even idealistic. As in their other defiant demonstrations, musically they were elitist, not based on their affluence, but as Khosravi has shown, because of the knowledge of how to utilize their means, of how to be in musically.

Nooshin speculates an additional reason to explain the elitist nature of underground rock. For her, Iranian rock musicians are highly articulate, most are university students or graduates, but rarely music graduates, and are eager to define rock as an alternative space of youth experience. "This is their music; for the first time in Iran, there is a music which belongs specifically to young people and to no one else, and over which they feel a sense of ownership" (Nooshin "Underground" 470). For Nooshin, what is particularly interesting about the discourses of rock musicians is the extent to which they project a universalizing and global consciousness that stands in stark contrast to the isolationist brand of nationalism promoted by the government since 1979. Nooshin concludes that "statements such as 'We have to become universal' or 'They think

globally and see no geographical boundaries for their work' are regularly encountered both in discussion with musicians and in published interviews… for many, this music represents youth, freedom of expression, and is regarded as anti-authoritarian and anti-establishment" (490).

One other fact that makes this music elitist is its audience. As Nooshin argues, the audience for rock is relatively small, but is evidently committed and enthusiastic. At first this committed audience was not growing further than the close circle of the band members' friends. Attending an underground rock concert was a privilege only endowed to those who were aware of such novelty. This awareness was circulated through word of mouth, only among the insiders. The situation changed dramatically in 2002, when the website Tehran Avenue invited musicians to participate in the Underground Music Festival. The website was established in 2001 as a platform for youngsters to exchange views on the cultural and artistic events of the time. Describing the festival's aspirations, Hesam Garshasbi, one of the festival's conductors, recounts:

> Introducing new talents and non-official musical currents, the centralization of scattered efforts to encourage synergy between various bands… preventing young talents from being ignored and their introduction to proper channels, were our goals. We also wanted to open the discussion of the place of rock music, as a popular form, in Iran. News of the competition circulated through informal networks and twenty one bands eventually participated, each submitting one song. These were made available for one month in the autumn of 2002, and listeners could access the tracks and vote on-line. In the one month that UMF was online, we had 200,000 successful downloads from various cities and countries around the globe, cities that possibly house no Iranians. Sixty percent of downloads were from outside the country (quoted in Nooshin "Underground" 480).

In concordance with Garshasbi, for Nooshin the remarkable impact of UMF on Iran's underground music was in the fact that it highlighted the level of grass-roots activity and gave it a

coherent identity. It showed that this music was and could be a movement, a fact that in her observation, the musicians were unaware of before the competition.

For the first time, the musicians were heard by a relatively larger audience than the close circle of their own friends and received unbiased feedback through the voting system. As TA's editor, Sohrab Mahdavi, observes: "UMF had repercussions that went beyond our expectations and the full consequences are yet to unfurl… we simply intended to present works of young Iranian music aficionados. We foresaw some of the consequences: bands coming out of their isolation, listeners realizing that there were other types of music being produced…" (quoted in Nooshin "Underground" 480).

Concordantly, Payman Mazaheri of the now disbanded Fara expresses that "until the festival, we thought that there were perhaps two or three other bands like us in Tehran. Other bands felt the same way… equally intrigued were the online listeners, fifty thousand of whom voted on the songs. There were five hundred thousand successful downloads of songs altogether, which is remarkable anyway, but especially for that era, when the Internet was super slow; it was the time of dial-up" (quoted in Siamdoust 178).

The winners of the competition were supposed to perform a public concert, but the concert was canceled by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. Time and again, it has been mentioned that the reason for the first UMF's concert cancelation was the ministry's complaint about the word underground on the concert's posters and promotional material. Even Mahdavi blamed himself for the fact. Siamdoust quotes Mahdavi: "the term 'underground' was something the crew came up with for the first contest because it was playful and we liked it, and as far as I remember it was not being used yet and is a Tehran Avenue coinage" (179).

Time and again, the musicians claimed that they are only aiming to play music without a political context. According to Nooshin in their own words, they have serious concerns, but these

concerns are musical and financial, and not by any means definitely political. Their main concern was finding a secure place to produce and practice. Their secondary concern was reaching an audience and finally to gain authorization within rock music in Iran. But neither for Nooshin as a musicologist, nor for any Iranian familiar with the music, they could not be considered merely harmless musicians. The Underground Music Competition's first winner was a song called ["*Pasheh*"] "Mosquito" (2002) by the band Fara. The supposedly harmless, music-orientated and apolitical lyrics goes as:

> Hey! Hey! Mosquito! I'm talking to you
> What do you want from me?
> Till when do you plan to suck my blood?
> It's enough mosquito!
> Leave me alone
> Why don't you let me sleep?
> Don't you have a place of your own to sleep?
> Why do you incessantly come to my bed?
> I wish either I didn't have any blood
> Or, you wouldn't drink my blood
> I wish that instead of this incessant buzzing
> You would also sing a song with me
> (Discography, Mazaheri "Mosquito". Transliteration. p. 249)

In the article "The Art of Selling Out", published in the now-banned Iranian website called *Zirzamin* (Underground), the lyricist and lead singer of the band Hypernova, King Raam (Ramin Seyed Emami) also claims:

> the traditional definition of 'underground music' dictates that a band must be difficult to access and found through unorganized networks that are less reliant upon

> commercial success. However, Tehran's unofficial musicians and bands are 'underground' only because the current Iranian government does not sanction their music. They are underground because they have no public profile. I think that every underground musician is subconsciously defying the authorities. Rock music's contested status in the Islamic Republic of Iran has forced its politicization because music, even if it is lyrically apolitical, becomes politicized as it embodies the political tensions of its immediate sociopolitical surroundings. Performers at a private concert or party in Iran do not look upon the event as a means of rallying support to overthrow the regime; they perform to escape from the rigidity of their outside world and to explore alternate ways of existing in a society of suppression ("King Raam" 2007) [The article originally is in English].

Although King Raam emphasizes the apolitical nature of the underground musician, the lyrics to his own song "Consequences" lightly contradict his views:

> There's a man with a gun who lives inside my house
>
> How long has he been here, why won't he get out?
>
> Always telling me what I'm supposed to do
>
> I ask what will you do if I refuse?
>
> There will be consequences
>
> There will be consequences
>
> Seems like we're moving way too fast
>
> Never have the time to take the time to look back
>
> Big brother do you mind? I'm trying to sleep
>
> I'm getting tired I want to leave!

There will be consequences

There will be consequences [lyrics are originally in English]

If it would be too much of a political reading to assume the bothersome sound of a "Mosquito" as the omnipotent presence of the regime in everyday lives of the band members, or for that matter, every other youngsters living under the rules of the Islamic Republic, Hypernova's "Consequences" (2004) hardly leaves any room to doubt the lyricist's political point. Whether it be metamorphosed into the most of the inferior nuisance such as a mosquito's buzzing or be personified as an ever-present gunman, the message seems to be one and the same: the regime invades the most secluded of your privacies, even into your bed. A mosquito is not so horrifying and could be addressed directly, but Hypernova's gunman is morbid, so it can never be confronted in person. Fara talks logic to his mosquito. Hypernova suffices to introduce the enemy to its audience. For Fara, with such an inferior enemy, there is a hope for coexistence. Therefore, the mosquito is invited to sing the same song as Fara. In contrast, with the ominous repetition of "there will be consequences", Hypernova is left with the only two choices in common with its whole generation: live with the consequences or leave the home.

Decidedly or coincidentally, the music competition's impact was not limited to its ability to be a platform to illuminate the spontaneous growth of a new type of music and musician. In practice, it lifted the veil of a cultural transformation that had not been acknowledged yet. It showed that what had been tactically started since the advent of the Islamic Republic and was well present in the beginning of Khatami's presidency as a form of defiance through pop culture, was now history. Licking an ice cream in public, mingling with the opposite sex, wearing tight jeans and having long hair, wearing sandals with colorful toenails and the ability of having access to music was not considered as defiance but a rite of passage. The tactical defiance of the poachers tangibly did not sound a mere murmur. Now, the new defiance meant playing your own tunes and singing self-approved lyrics. In essence, it had diminished the regime's puritanical control over

the music and musicians and shook the Ministry's authority to its core. First and foremost, it put a spotlight on the fact that independent of the IRIB or any state propagandist apparatus music exists in Iran. Second, it proved that because of its quantity, this voice is not ignorable. Third, the voice was too diversified. Therefore, the underground musicians with all their shortcomings, deprived of having the governmental support, being absolutely on their own or at the mercy of their family's financial aids, dispersed and mostly unknown, could be a de facto threat to the state's cultural mantras.

What Mahdavi playfully did for these musicians dramatically altered both the Islamic Republic's musical policies and the concept of superstar, or better still, the stardom in Iran's music scene for the years to come. But for now, and at that specific historical moment, one thing had come to the surface for all to witness. The very fact that in defining this generation, the diversity of musicologists, sociologists and even the most morbid political rivals and enemies such as Reza Pahlavi and Seyyed Ali Khamenei, ended up at a common point. The generation shows that it could be at the same time the most alert generation in Iran's history, the most zealous, patriotic and political generation in Iran's history, broken-down in morals under the constant surveillance and presence of the morality police, urbanized, affluent, educated, fashionable youngsters singing their profound and eloquent lyrics in the undergrounds of Tehran. It also proved the words of Professor Sadegh Zibakalam claiming them as the most apathetic and laid-back generation in Iran's history. Relating the third generation or the products of the Islamic Republic, with no memory of the past for a nostalgic idealization and no promise of a bright future at present was neither nostalgic, nor utopian[1].

1 For more information about Zibakalam's opinion on youth see Zibakalam "I'm afraid of this".

In the last year of Khatami's presidency, in its underground produced song "No One", the band Hypernova proudly announced that they are "four slacker kids in the undergrounds of Tehran, with nowhere to go and nothing to do, but no one can ever tell them how they should live their lives" [lyrics are originally in English] (2004). Hypernova named its underground EP *Who Says You Can't Rock in Iran.* In May 2004, roughly the same time as the EP's production and on the National Youth's Day, Khatami was harshly attacked and criticized during a speech delivered to the university students. Omid Memarian, the reporter of the reformist daily *Shargh* at the time and now a human rights activist and contributor to the *Huffington Post*, reports: "He frequently moved. Several times he wiped the sweat from his face. A few times he had a clogged throat, and a few times his eyes sparkled. Khatami responded: 'I know what you are telling me now, you could not say anywhere else, because you would pay dearly... and have already paid dearly'..." (quoted in Basemenji 39).

Between the two, the president was right. In the era of Khatami's successor, Hypernova's question practically transformed to: who says you can rock in Iran?

This chapter reviewed the cultural transformations occurred during 1997-2005, better-known as the Reform Era. President Khatami's agendas: democracy, meritocracy, and having dialogue instead of using violence, were well-heard and demanded by the baby boomers of the 1980s, best-known as the third generation. Along with the president's electoral campaigns, they started to utilize any opportunity for their carnivalesque demonstrations in public places and used internet to release their music. The multifariousness and prevalence of this underground music made the regime to shrink its restrictions on the state produced pop songs and rendered permissions to the love songs in which the mystical/celestial and earthly love had the same propotion. In the next

chapter, we will see how the new petty freedoms of the Reform Era backlashed and the regime strived to revitalize the 1980s revolutionary/ regressive agendas.

Chapter Five

In Praise of Silence

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's Presidency 2005-2013

In 2005, introducing his programs as a presidential candidate on the state television, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said: "Is our country's problem our youngsters' hair? The kids would cut their hair in whatever form they like, it's neither mine, nor your business. You and I must deal with the country's fundamental issues. The government must manage the economy, make the country's atmosphere calm, *provide social security* [my emphasis], and support people. People have different tastes, different traditions, different nationalities, so they prefer diverse types. The government is at the service of all of them. Why do you insult the people? Is it really the case that our grand problem is the hairstyle of our youngsters and the government wouldn't let them cut it in the way they want? Is it how you dignified the government? Do people deserve such a thing? This is an insult to our people. Is it true that our country's problem is that one girl wants to wear some kind of dress and the government won't allow her to do so?" (Ahmadinejad "Before").

The election turned out to be controversial and went to the second round. Hojatoleslam Mehdi Karroubi, Khomeini's close aide and one of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's rivals in the first round, said: "Before I had a nap in the afternoon, Mr. Hashemi and I were at the top, when I woke up, I was eliminated". In the second run, Iran's intelligentsia and the reformists tried their best to

mobilize people in favor of Iran's previous President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. They failed. When the election's result was announced, the previous President Hashemi said: "I would resort to my god". Ahmadinejad won that election and he kept one of his electoral promises. His government provided The Project of Improving Social Security[*Tarh-e behbud-e amniyat-e ejtemā'i*]; the Cultural Revolution Council approved it, and police forces ran it from the spring 2007 to calm the society. Police arrested young boys and girls who didn't observe the Islamic dress code. In May 2007, in a press conference, Tehran's chief commander in police force General Ahmadi Moghadam said: "the project of confronting bad hijabs will start from May. The examples of a disproportionate veiling would be: short trousers- trousers that don't cover the ankles- wearing short head scarves that don't cover the hair completely, the ones that we call head bands, wearing short and tight mantua and short and see-through dresses" ("Project").

Nothing was new or surprising in the chief of the police's statement. The Moral Police had been at work since the advent of the Islamic Republic and their activities enhanced specifically during summer. Although their presence in the streets became less organized and more dispersed in each decade, as far as in the Reform Era it was almost an exception than to be a rule. They were always there, ready to advise youngsters orally or arrested them physically. What made this project so shocking and different from the one that was started and applied in the 1980s was exactly the very similarity between the two projects, as if the passage of time had not happened and history had been forced to repeat itself once again. Retrieving and ascending the revolution's values was Ahmadinejad's priority and promise in his electoral campaigns. As such, he was enthusiastically parroting Mohammad Ali Rajaei, Iran's prime minister and president who had been assassinated in 1981. Rajaei was mostly famous for his simple and moderate lifestyle as a zealous revolutionary.

For those who were the targets of it, the whole project turned out to be completely out of place, but still agonizing. The time was not the1980s, Seyyed Ali Khamenei was not Khomeini, and Rajaei was not repeatable through Ahmadinejad. With no war, and the massive elimination of all diverse political rivals in the 1980s, as a defective successor, Seyyed Ali Khamenei in the beginning of the millennium had to be innovative to make and fake the same capital needed for sovereignty and produces a host of enemies for his own. Therefore, the tangible enemy, such as the Shah or Saddam, the idolatry residues, royalists, communists, etc., was substituted by a concept of the cultural invasion. The country was and is still addressed and portrayed under the siege of all kinds and types of enemies, the society must be diagnosed under the threat of ever renewed kinds of crises, the police force needed to be alarmed round-the-clock and be prepared more than ever for ever-repeating emergencies.

Thus, Khomeini's ideological preaching and political commands on the country's affairs transformed to the numerous lectures of his successor in which he announces and introduces a new enemy and a new strategy to combat all kinds of real or imaginary invasions. The previous pervasive ideological propaganda at the time of his predecessor was succeeded by a host of conspiratorial theories. The ever-present folk devils started to be introduced sequentially and thus the whole society was put under an everlasting moral panic. Animosity towards any westernized aspect of culture that for Khomeini and his followers was reckoned as idolatry residues was transformed to and renamed as saboteurs of society's tranquility. Therefore, what was considered to be a religious negligence and misdemeanor, assumed a political implication and was/is interpreted as a threat to national security, which disturbs and disquiets the public's mind. Accordingly, Khamenei's speeches, which more often than not were delivered to the

government's officials, had been collected by Iranian Parliament as a substitute for Khomeini's official treatise[1]. It consists of four hundred titles including:

Speech for Musicians, on the Occasion of the Islamic Revolution and Youth. 13 February 1998:

Ingraining a distinct demarcation between halal and forbidden music is not an easy task. Be aware that the music that leads humans to lethargy, triteness and frustration is haram. Music that makes humans forget God and be driven to sin, lust and passion is haram. *The lyrics are crucial* [my emphasis]. One cannot depend only on the censor, for one cannot be sure they do their job correctly (Khamenei *Leader's Opinions* 120).

In a meeting with the Grand Council of Cultural Revolution. 26 October 2002:

I personally read books and indicate my points on them. One of them is talking about a village in Iran in which there is a brothel but no mosque. Have you ever heard of such a village in Iran? I've asked Mr. Aref [the head of the Telegraph and Telephone Ministry in President Khatami's cabinet] did you make a firewall for the Internet? He said that he had ordered it. When I use the word 'unleashed' for the Internet, I mean exactly this very situation. It's like you bring a wild dog and when we ask where the leash is, you answer me back that we have ordered the leash from a blacksmith. One first makes a leash, puts it on the dog, then carries the dog here [to Iran] and locks her up. Beware, our war is not a military one anymore, it's a war through the Internet, satellites, and all kinds of propaganda, specifically with their infiltrators into our own media (Khamenei *Leader's Opinions* 123).

---

1 For a comparison, see the consice definition of Khomeini's Treatise discussed in chapter two of this disertation, p. 50-51.

Meeting with Naja [Islamic Republic Police Force] Head Directors. 14 September 2000:

Society has to be in complete harmony with people's beliefs. Moral insecurity means living in a society in which witnessing sins stressed out and hurts people's religious conscience. People want to be sure that when their youngsters get out of home there would be no sinful scene in the society to impact them. Thus, in the streets you have to fight with all that is morally forbidden. Never let someone in the parks or in any other public places promote debauchery. There is a pre-planned plot for ruining our virtuous society. It normalizes the sins and makes them seem routine and trivial. Breaking taboo is contingent, so don't let that breaking norms become a rule (Khamenei *Leader's Opinions* 21).

Meeting with the Organization of Commanding Good and Prohibiting Vice. 11 August 2002:

Hijab is not just for women. O' Muslim brothers, O' young brothers, you too must have keep your Islamic hijab. Your job: commanding good and prohibiting vice, is a war against the dominance of bandits. Our Everyday lives are being dominated by bunch of bandits. Watch for this domination! Where can you find it? You would say in sheer socks. No, sir! Don't bother yourself with sheer socks, let them wear it; it does not matter. But if you see a picture of Michael Jackson on someone's socks, you have to arrest and prosecute him/her (Khamenei *Leader's Opinions* 139).

With a remarkable –and also regrettable in respect of the passage of time- similarity to the advent of the Mods and Rockers in the mid- century in England, the leadership in the beginning of the millennium found an entirely new task for the president's Social Security Project: the users of the Internet along with the promoters of Michael Jackson whose sins are contingent and would hurt the society's religious conscience. For illuminating the procedure, Stanley Cohen asks three definitional questions: "why does a particular rule, the infraction of which constitutes deviance,

exist at all? What are the processes and procedures involved in identifying someone as a deviant and applying the rule to him? What are the effects and consequences of this application, both for society and the individual?" (Cohen 6).

Cohen reasons that in every society the power makers are in an everlasting pseudo-combat with the ones who in one way or the other are not in a complete harmony with the society's norm. Thus, these oppositional readers of social norms or deviants would be introduced as folk devils who bring about moral panic that shakes society's tranquility and sense of security. Cohen points out that this does not mean that real moral panics do not exist and all of them are merely imaginary, based on delusions, hysteria, or fantasies of people who are being ruled by a sovereign. Moral panics can happen, but what is introduced to society is a deformed and exaggerated narrative of what has really happened. In other words, the very illuminative characteristic of a moral panic introduced by the state is its exaggerated form. According to Cohen, this exaggeration happens in two ways. First, the case is blown out of proportion as for example, the gap between what eyewitnesses say in comparison to journalistic reports of the same event. Second, it is exaggerated compared with other problems that are more serious and more in need of public attention and discussion (25-35).

Cohen explains that every society creates its own periods of moral panic and its own folk devils. It goes as a person or a group, a trend or a specific situation is introduced as a distinct threat to social values and the facilitators are condemned as the instigators of immediate danger in need of being vanquished. The process takes place step by step. First it will be introduced to the society by the media then professionals and all kinds of social experts start to render the exit strategy in the same media. The strategy introduced by the experts is also procedural and goes step by step. Cohen believes that it must work this way otherwise it would not amount to an outbreak. In this procedure, first comes concern about a real or imaginary threat. Second comes

hostility towards those deemed responsible. Then comes the media's inflated and dramatic narrative of supposed dangers that threaten the innocent and decant and their social/moral values. The media's narrative also confirms that anxiety and hostility must be taken seriously, and the devils must be diagnosed, cured or punished. Then comes the much-expected consensus. At this stage, the threat has been believed, so something should be done about it, although as Cohen stresses, consensus is not necessarily total (37).

Furthermore, all this does not require innovation or novelty. The object of moral panic is as predictable as the ways in which it is represented. It could simultaneously be old and new. If it is new, it has always been there, but until now it was unrecognizable because it is too mundane, too ordinary and routine. If it is old, it has been camouflaged but now that it rises to the surface, now is the time to react. In either case, it must be transparent enough for everyone to realize and acknowledge it, albeit, not too transparent, otherwise the experts would have nothing to prescribe, so it would not be able to spread any panic (66-67). A new rock song is Cohen's example for this symbiosis of transparency and opacity. The lyrics of a rock song could always be decoded afresh for any current social calamity: drug issues, school shootings, hooliganism, etc. (53). What Cohen tries to prove is that if all the definitions are acceptable, then deviance could not be something that exists on its own; it is the creation of the powerful (11-12).

One significant characteristic of moral panic is that its object is usually too simple, too ordinary, too trivial, such as a group or personal taste in clothing. But it would be defined as a crucial matter worthy of being diagnosed pathologically. As soon as it is diagnosed, the deviant or a group of deviants is segregated as offenders/outsiders of conventional, normative society. The response must be appropriate, which means they must be cured or punished. But this does not mean that the process is a linear one. For Cohen, transforming people to folk devils occurs in a

vicious cycle. Since in their own turn, the outsiders perceive themselves as such, leading to the creation of more moral panics and folk devils.

A crucial point for Cohen is the equation of a moral panic with disaster (35). In both cases an entire society or part of it is confronted with a danger rendered through images of injuries, destruction, and damaged moral values. The difference is that a disaster happens abruptly but moral panic evolves sequentially. This is why it is narrated as: "this sort of thing… but it's not only this" (52). These cautionary reactions to the aftershocks transfer an immediate transparent danger to the opaque domain of unpredictable threats. This makes the imaginary threats too pandemic to be escapable. The greater the capacity to cause a wide range of anxieties, the more successful it is. This is why an immediate danger must simultaneously point to a near future: "it's a growing problem… it would be a total disaster if nothing prevents it, it can be more pervasive and impressive" (81). In fact, in accordance with Cohen's definition, this is how the media plays its role through three interrelated stages. First comes Exaggeration and Distortion, second comes Prediction, and third is the Symbolization. Using his case study of the Mods and Rockers phenomenon, Cohen shows how these stages work. Cohen pictures what happened on Easter Sunday in Clacton, a small holiday resort on the eastern coast of England:

> it was cold and wet, and the shopkeepers and stall owners were irritated by the lack of business and the young people had their own boredom and irritation fanned by rumors of café owners and barmen refusing to serve some of them. A few groups started scuffling on the pavements and throwing stones at each other. The Mod and Rockers factions- a division initially based on clothing and lifestyles, later rigidified, but at that time not fully established- started separating out. Those on bikes and scooters roared up and down, windows were broken, some beach huts were wrecked and a boy fired a starting pistol in the air (23-24).

At the Distortion phase, the headlines were melodramatic, exaggerated and sensational. *The Daily Telegraph's* title was: "Day of Terror by Scooter Groups", *The Daily Express,* expressed that "Wild Ones Invade Seaside- 97 Arrested", and the overseas coverage was extensive. Belgian papers captioned their photos "West Side Story on English Coast" (25). Phrases were used such as: "riot, orgy of destruction, battle, attack, siege, beat up town, etc." (26). Then come the agents of the Prediction, whom Cohen identifies as councilors, social experts, police spokesman, and random local figures of public opinion. The task of those involved exposes the real danger and states what should be done about it now, and how it should be prevented for the sake of the future. At this stage, exaggeration has left its mark, the punitive deviation has been revealed and stereotyping completed. The deviants- in Cohen's case the Mods and Rockers- have been transfigured to folk devils (52).

Now, the procedural symbolization has already accomplished its implicit final goal. First, a word or more precisely a label – in this case Mod/Rocker- has become the symbolic embodiment of a deviant, then, hair style, clothing, objects and accessories used by those deserved to be diagnosed under this label/word have become the symbols of the label/word. Finally, the objects themselves have become the symbols of a certain status. The result of this procedural symbolization is that a term- Mod/Rocker- deprived of its previous neutral meaning and ordinary context, which is supposed to refer to a consumer's personal preference, transforms into a symbol of wrong/deviant/ condemnable consumption. In Cohen's own words, at this stage this deviant consumption

> enters the mythology to provide a composite stigma attributable to persons performing certain acts, wearing certain clothes or belonging to a certain social status, that of the adolescent. Such composites are of an all-purpose sort, with a hard core of stable attributes (irresponsibility, immaturity, arrogance, their innumerable boring emotional complexes, bovine stupidity, rarely intelligent, underdeveloped, lack of respect for authority) surrounded

by fringe attributes varied more or less logically according to the deviance in question (53).

So, the statements start to convey that the problem is not just a mere harmless consumption. Out there in the society there are folk devils:

> louts, thugs, savages, ruffians, maniacs, hooligans, hoodlums, brats, human wolves, lemmings, rowdies, apes, misfits and morons, neurotic, sick or unstable, show-off or exhibitionist, violent, cowardly, aimless or rudderless, half-baked, immature, precocious, dirty, unwashed, slickly dressed, foolish or slow-witted, cynical, inarticulate. The attributes of boredom and affluence were also mentioned in the media in 1964. Therefore, these long-haired, mentally unstable, petty little hoodlums which their lifestyles inevitably result in more profound social calamities like contraceptive in slot machines, pregnant schoolgirls, the abundance of drugs, to name just a few (53-55).

Cohen concludes that the deviant is assigned to a role or social type, shared perspective develops through which he and his behavior are visualized and explained, motives are imputed, causal patterns are searched for and the behavior is grouped with other behavior thought to be of the same order. This imagery is an integral part of the identification process: the labels are not invented after the deviation. Labellers and the mass media have a ready-made stock of images to draw upon. Once the initial identification has taken place, the labels are further elaborated: the drug addict may be fitted into the mythology of the dope fiend and seen to be dirty, degenerate, lazy and untrustworthy. The primary label evokes secondary images, some of which are purely descriptive, some of which contain explicit moral judgments and some of which contain prescriptions about how to handle the behavior. This is the characteristic of the Control Culture. The laws, procedures, programs, and organizations which in the name of a collectivity help, rehabilitate, punish or otherwise manipulate deviants contain not just official institutions and personnel but also typical modes and models of understanding and explaining the deviance. A conceptual machinery accounts for the deviant condition and as such, performs a basic function in

justifying a particular view of the world. The deviant's conduct threatens the societal reality as such, putting into question its taken-for-granted cognitive and normative operation procedures. The devil has to be given a particular shape to know what virtues are being asserted (75-76).

Something like Cohen's description of the transformation of the Mods and Rockers to folk devils in England, in the mid 20th century, happened in Iran in the millenium. In conducting the Social Security project, the regime shrewdly realized that introducing a delicate youngster as a folk devil needed a delicate approach. So, through a procedure in a complete accordance with Cohen's, first, the media started to introduce the moral panic in its most exaggerated form, i.e., the youngsters under the siege of the cultural invasion, then it indicated its main point: it's not just this, we have to do something about it, otherwise it would be a social calamity. Then the government through the media marshaled a whole bunch of experts to diagnose the pathological deviance. Many never heard before persons claimed to be social experts mushroomed in the media and became household names. Experts such as Hassan Abbasi, Ali Akbar Rafeiipoor and Islmael Shafiei Sarvestani to name just a few, started to launch their own websites, magazines, and hold regular seminars in Iran universities. Their delicacy was in their ability to deliver their subject matter and case studies in a meticulously calculated order in which a triviality was doomed to transform to a social/political danger threatening the country's security. In other words, a cultural crime would be transformed to a political crime.

One remarkable and all-inclusive example of this procedural transformation and deformation was Shafiei Sarvestani's lectures on music, which were delivered through five sessions in his own launched Mo'ud Organization. The task of the organization was /is promoting the culture of Mahdaviat - literally believing in Mahdi the twelfth Shia Imam and preparing for his resurrection. As if following Cohen's theory step by step, in the speeches that rendered under the main title of "Satanism and Rock and Roll" [*Sheytān parasti va rāk and rol*] (2010), first came Exaggeration

and Distortion, then the Prediction and finally the Symbolization, through which Shafiei Sarvestani was able to transform playing rock to the one disaster in the Islamic Republic.

In Shafiei Sarvestani's narrative, in the seminar of "Satanism and Rock and Roll", Anton Szandor Lavey, the founder of the Devil Church who is worshiped all over the Western world through his holy book the Satanic Bible, is the founder of rock music. Rock music was the milestone of Lavey's satanic rituals. According to Shafiei Sarvestani, Lavey played a crucial role in gruesome organizations such as CIA and Mossad, so they named the date of his death- 29 October 1997- as Halloween. The Western world believes in Halloween as the resurrection of Satan, so they celebrate the night through Satanist rituals. In addition, Lavey was also Roman Polanski's personal advisor. His role in Roman Polanski's cinema was essential especially in Polanski's famous film *Rosemary's Baby*. But rock music was the result of his diabolical collaboration with Michael Aquino. Their main goal was provoking youngsters to say no to religion by using sexual pleasure at its maximum level, murder and rape and committing all kind of sins to become closer to Satan.

Shafiei Sarvestani goes further and claims that one of the two major places in the world acknowledging black magic is England, and right now there are 8500 warlocks who work legally and officially over there. All their ceremonies are performed at the cemeteries. They kill cats and dogs in these rituals, and they take the corpses out of their graves and prick them with swords. The other place in which you can find them, and, by the way, is also their favorite one, is Hollywood. Their main target is following children at schools and also in the society, so they could rape and kill them, especially in Russia in which numerous children have been killed and eaten. They gather together in the dark rooms with violet curtains, while listening to rock or heavy metal, using drugs, drinking blood and tattooing the Star of David on their bodies. Then he goes for symbolization. He illuminates that their symbols show clearly their deep roots and

relations with *Israeli* and *Masonic* cults. Society must be very careful about these symbols. The necklaces, bracelets, rings, watches, or other accessories that young people wear are not merely innocent decorations. According to him, all of them are talismans made and used by "Zionist Jews".

Furthermore, Satan is sending his special messages through all the notes of Cabala music. Satan believes that he could utilize his magical power over youngsters' minds through this music. All of these satanic products have their own special and crucial functions. The best example is the US dollar. The pentagram depicted on the US dollar is a talisman working on people's minds throughout the world and enchants them to the Zionist intentions of America. This pentagram or Star of David belongs to Satan himself and is used in all Cabala rituals.

According to Shafiei Sarvestani, by scrutinizing the satanic symbols, you would realize the inter-connection between the entire Western and satanic philosophies, beliefs, and cults. His example is the symbol of feminism, which seems so simple at first glance, so no one would take it seriously. But it is an upside-down crucifix. "It is the very symbol of deriding the Christianity by Satan. And if you are alert enough, you could see that all rock bands use it as their symbols in their albums and video clips" ("Satanism"). Then he goes further to combine one of the most consequential political concepts in the Islamic Republic with the youth culture. He explains that "Zionism means denying god and its ideal is to build the ultimate temple for Satan in the Holy Land: Jerusalem. Anarchism is the Zionists' philosophy. Destroying the current law is their ideal. They have to act as a rebel" ("Satanism").

To introduce the prediction stage, he further illuminates the relation between the emblems, music, and the political Satanism. The eye on the US dollar is the eye of Lucifer: the omniscient eye, which is constantly watching the whole world. It is the eye of Satan, the symbol of power. The other element is Satan's hand. The two middle fingers must be hidden. "There is no Heavy

Metal performance without this gesture. All celebrities such as George W. Bush and his wife, Paul McCartney, Bill Clinton, Prince William, and so many generals of the United States army use this symbol" ("Satanism"). He further elaborates that fictional celebrities such as Spiderman have also used this sign and in Iran the very character has been depicted in all parks where Muslim children play. He concludes that everything is so calculated since all satanic symbols are sold in Iran's shopping malls as accessories. And he firmly cautions the social experts to be watchful of Iran's youngsters. They have to know what is going on around them. They have to know where are the roots of this diabolical music, accessories and all other satanic symbols. This is the experts' duty. Shafiei Sarvestani also taught the social experts that rabbis are the instructors of Satan's rituals. They permeate their diabolical intentions via rock music and movies. For him, one of the best examples in which they show all their secret rituals is *Indiana Jones*.

Although his cinematic examples are generalized, his proofs for the embodiment of Satanism in music are delivered in detail and point by point. For him music is the best and the first mean that Satanists use for propagating their rules and ideals such as protecting and promoting homosexuality, cruelty, prostitution, rape, assaulting tradition, slaughtering children, despising anything holy and sacred, and on top of it all is all kinds of licentious acts. So, they [the Satanists] invented heavy metal and rock music. They can instill all their ideas through music into a youngster's mind. Shafiei Sarvestani's logic is that the word music comes from Muses. He defines Muses as the famous ghosts from ancient Grece, which were believed to be the inspiration of artistic creations; but today, it is not just Greeks who believe that ghosts inspire artists. It is the internationally acknowledged musicians who promote such ghosts. For proving his theory, he quotes some acknowledged musicians. He claims that Joni Mitchel in an interview with the *Times* blatantly confessed that in the name of art, a male ghost enters her soul in an unusual and extraordinary way and gives her the most powerful inspirations. According to Shafiei Sarvestani, John Mclaughlin had also had the same experience. "He had said that one night, when he was

playing, suddenly a ghost entered into his soul; although it was he who was playing on the stage, but in fact it was another person. Angus Young of AC/DC also declares that on the stage, I am not myself, I'm completely another person. It's like driving a car but I'm not the driver, I'm always the one who sits beside him. On the stage, I am completely possessed" ("Satanism").

At this level, the exaggeration and distortion are completed. Now, it is the time for introducing the devils, which Shafiei Sarvestani accomplishes by dividing the Iranian counterparts of these possessed musicians, or better still, the promoters of Satanism in Iran into four groups. First are the westernized, educated people inside Iran who introduce fashion to Iran. Second are the royal family's advocates. There are hirelings of the last regime who are conducting this systematic corruption in Iran. Third are spies working for the West and Israel secret services, especially Mossad, whose job is hunting young people through introducing the ever-new rituals of Satanism. Fourth, are all musicians who have any relationship with the United States, England, Canada, and Australia.

Shafiei Sarvestani cautions his audience that their current mission in Iran is varied but interrelated. By promoting Metallica and Iranian underground musicians, they normalize the nightlife of the rockers. They destroy all moral values and distribute an anti-religion culture. By promoting prostitution, nihilism, and drugs among youngsters, they desensitize youngsters to corruption, guilt, and crime. By instructing nihilism as a trendy lifestyle and intriguing young people to live a life without any sense of responsibility, they disseminate morbid mental illnesses.

As Cohen has shown, at this stage the symbolization has been completed. Deprived of its previously neutral meaning, now a word/activity- playing certain kind of music- is the embodiment of a deviance. A fashion/style is the symbol of music, i.e., symbol of a deviant status: Satanist, royalist. Pandemic as it is, hairstyle, clothing, and accessories, are simultaneously immediate dangers which threaten society's tranquility and security in future, and cause a wide

range of anxieties: “it’s a growing problem… it would be a total disaster if nothing prevents it, it can be more pervasive and impressive” (Cohen 26). Thus, a seminar on rock music by Sarvestani concludes:

> Our task must be revising all the current artistic and literary products and controlling their unofficial distribution in the country. The first priority is finding all the people, sects, cultural products, in short anything under the protection of Zionism and the Children of Israel, and a firm resistance towards all the foreign propaganda and the whims of national intellectuals. They are the most corrupted. They promote the pervert sects of the Children of Israel. They disseminate all their rotten ideas as the artistic products which mislead, confuse and corrupt the youngsters. We must learn to be safeguarded, resistant and shielded against all the foreign pressure and national caprice. All those who are promoting liberal interpretations of Islam are the descendants of Freemasonry. They have nothing to do but to impel Muslims to act against their religious beliefs. All these troubles are because our officials and decision makers don’t do their job seriously. They have just one task: to revise, censor and destroy all the cultural and artistic products of the Children of Israel” (“Satanism”).

In conducting the Social Security Project harmonized with the leadership who had equaled the sinners with bandits, in 2007, the media initiated the first group of society’s folk devils. Police started its strikes on the neighborhoods that it considered inhabited the hoodlums. For almost a year, the IRIB released a horror show twice per night. In this show, police assailed the homes of the hoodlums, beating them to death, taking them out in chains for the whole neighborhood to see them while alternatively hanging toy guns, plastic machetes and daggers, and more often than not, a pitcher- which is used in Iranian washrooms for cleaning oneself after defecation – on their necks. So, a morbid hooligan after enduring the utmost insult through carrying plastic guns was also degraded as defecation in need to be washed out, eliminated. In some cases, handcuffed and

in chains, the police mounted them at the back of a van rounding them around the streets, forcing them to eat leaves while producing animal sounds. The message was clear. The police were merciless in eliminating folk devils. While police boastfully showed its power over the bandits, hoodlums and hooligans, in short, the society's folk devils, what the audience was witnessing was police's flawless and sheer brutality and wondering that if these veteran hooligans, mobsters and roughnecks could be crushed so miserably, what would happen to a delicate youngster, if considered to be a folk devil?

Simultaneously, the IRIB produced *Shock* (2005), a documentary in which the underground music is proved to be Satanism in disguise. Released concurrently with the daily shows of the police ransacks on mobsters, in which the impact of the immediate danger threatening society through playing underground music, was well guaranteed. Playing underground introduced as a problem that "was not just it, it could be more disastrous in the future" (Cohen 26). The lack of any chance of being cured made the experts scrutinize the dosage of the due punishments meticulously. The underground musicians and their fans were not merely the victims of the enemy's cultural invasion, disarrayed by lust, duped by the Internet and satellites propagandas, wrecked addicts or Satan worshipers. They were also deliberately or inadvertently the victims of Zionism and its accomplice, the Great Satan, the United States of America.

Notwithstanding the fact that for any Iranian who lived in and accustomed to the Islamic Republic's vocabulary, no further information was needed to show the seriousness of the government's approach in that matter, for transforming the young musicians and their fans into folk devils and bringing about a moral panic in the society. In accordance with Cohen's definition, the program plays its role through three interrelated stages. First came Exaggeration and Distortion, second came Prediction, and third was the Symbolization. Other than a reporter who interviews the youngsters, the team of program's social experts consisted of three

psychologists, the director of the Institution of Social Studies of Islamic Republic Police Force, the director of Social Affairs of the Islamic Republic Police Force in Tehran, a musician, a poet, and a clergyman.

As its title, the pseudo-documentary has a vampire flying over a bloody background, which alternatively followed by the concerts of Marilyn Manson and Michael Jackson [at the time when he used to wear black Victorian jacket with golden embroideries], shows many youngsters who wear cross and skeletons necklaces, and its camera pans over the abundance of the latest fashion brands of the time in Iran's boutiques such as Diesel T-shirts and Vans sneakers. Each episode has one aspect of the youngsters' lifestyles and personal or group preferences as its own main theme. Through the procedural system of exaggeration, prediction, and symbolization, the experts prove that their chosen themes are in fact interrelated forms of a pandemic deviance.

First comes fashion. Twenty-two boys are asked to explain the meaning of the emblems on their shirts and accessories. The emblems are varied as well as the reasoning, but they have one thing in common. Nothing is innocent as it shows. A boy would wear a skeleton necklace "for no specific reason, just for fun." Another one would wear a Kurt Cobain T-shirt, "since Kurt Cobain's haircut is so nice and fashionable, his eyes are so beautiful, but his overall sadness would mesmerize anyone". If wearing/doing something "just for fun" or for "mesmerizing the audience" could be pardoned as ignorable naivete, the statement: "my appearance, my clothes, what I do or don't do is my business. People are so basic and I'm not every people", is a deliberate claim to an autocracy that has gone awry, thus, in need to be scrutinized. Therefore, the experts start to analyze both the roots of the problem at hand and its solutions.

For the director of the Social Affairs of the Islamic Republic's Police Force, the reason for such an odd situation in society is one thousand and five hundred satellite channels, the Internet and numerous websites, all the physical and cultural connections between Iran and the outer

world. Accordingly, for one of the psychologists, the lack of a local role model is the reason for the youngsters' asocial appearance. Another psychologist adds ignorance to the lack of local role models along with the abundance of foreign cultural goods. His diagnosis comes with an anecdote of a young boy who had worn a T-shirt with the rock emblem on it, without knowing its meaning, just to assimilate into the group of his fashionable friends. The doctor concludes that T-shirts or training shoes have special meanings and functions and it is their [the authorieties'] job to be alert. Another psychologist adds to this comment that this fashion is destructive, a fashion with no identity. A youngster does not know about the real goal and intention behind fashion styles. This real goal and intention would be confirmed in a categorically changed tone of the youngsters' self-definitions.

After the diagnoses their comments would vary from "there is no god" or "I eat insects" and eventually to "I will kill myself", and "whoever commits suicide is the noblest of heavy metal fans". The relation made in the self-definitions between fashion, music, and Satanism helps the police director of social affairs to make his conclusion. He announces that the sects of Satanism are frequent in Iran, specifically in Tehran, and each have their own specific rituals. Their first condition for recruits is drinking a potion, which brainwashes the newcomer. Two more interviewees would confirm the head director's claim by confessing that they drink alcohol and use all kinds of drugs to be ready for praying to Satan in their hangouts.

The disputed subject in the second part of the documentary is sex. First a clergyman introduces sexual desire as the cornerstone of Satanism. A boy confirms the clergyman's claim by confessing that by playing music, sexual relations and using heroin, he discharges his energy. Accordingly, a psychologist prescribes that part of music's function is creating horrifying agitations. Music increases endorphin, which brings about an excessive ecstasy, which is addictive. Once you experience it, you would not feel right without it. The fake enthusiasm of

music is dangerous, destructive, dysfunctioning and damaging the brain. With no further ado to add any relevance between the music's ecstasy and Satanism, another psychologist concludes that those who are attracted to these sects are deprived of a sound mental situation and sanity. Then someone in the role of a music expert declares that in his meeting with them [the musicians], he realized a profound lack of scientific knowledge of music among them. According to the music expert, they could not answer the simplest questions about the music. Concordantly, the second episode comes to its end by a youngster relating his own experience: "they told me you must not believe in god. All of them were Satanists and I had to worship Satan too. We listen to rock and metal to reach a higher mood. We are all drug addicts. We couldn't and shouldn't be in a normal mood" (*Shock* pt. 2).

The third part places drug, sex, and Satanism in the underground rock concerts and their after parties. The novelty of this part is that it backbones the experts' diagnoses by developing a boy and a girl's life story as the representative of this lifestyle. The girl defines her love affair with one of them, a handsome and fashionable young man. He had invited her to one of those parties, in which, first they offered her cigarettes, then alcohol, then pills, then they had sex with her. The girl concludes that she had lost everything that she had, her parents, her righteousness, her virtue, but above all she had lost herself. She is not the same innocent girl anymore. The boy, in a pair of blue jeans and sneakers is sitting on a wrecked sofa, in an outdoor place full of garbage, in the middle of nowhere. He says that he has always been in all kinds of these parties. He had started with pills and ended up with heroin injections. The interval between these two life stories is the pictures of the police's attack on one of the underground concerts. The party had been held in one of Tehran suburbs. The invitation was online, so the police found the place. Four hundred boys and girls were arrested (*Shock* pt. 3).

The fourth episode starts with the scenes of Marilyn Manson, Michael Jackson and one of Pink Floyd's *The Wall* concerts, while the arrested youngsters would define their own experiences of the rock concerts and the after parties. A boy in a Mohawk hairstyle confesses: we have a leader in our group. He told us if you want to kill yourself, first indulge yourself in all the enjoinments, then you will commit suicide with content, you would never feel regret. Another boy explains that a newcomer has to cut his wrist with a knife to prove his sincerity. The others numerate the musts for the membership as: doing drugs, incest and adultery, wearing Satanic necklaces as the symbols of their music style, wearing black outfit, having long hair and playing the electric guitar. One young boy in a skeleton mask, sitting in front of his interrogator, confesses: which part of my story would you like to hear? Shall I talk about blood drinking, of all kinds of drugs, all kinds of corruption? The inquisitor asks: what do you have in life? Predictably, the boy's answer would be: despair and melancholy. The inquisitor asks: why are you hiding your hands? I'm not talking about your physical hands; I'm talking about your soul's hands. Are they bloody as well? The boy sighs under his skeleton mask and answers: they are drenched in blood. The interrogation cuts to the program's psychologist who concludes that rock and hard metal is the mother of all these debaucheries. A child under the influence of the amalgamation of drugs and the excessive endorphin that this morbid music has produced in his blood would kneel in front of the monstrous rock stars and worship them. Accordingly, the head director of the police force announces that the first thing that these perverted bands use for attracting their audience is a complete negation of all social, moral, and legal restrictions. They seasoned their diabolical music with drugs, and we don't have to deal with them in a respectful manner. We must command that they cannot have such appearances (*Shock* pt.4).

The last parts continue in the same line. The representative girl relates how his underground musician/Satanist boyfriend seduced her to run from her home. Nowadays, she is homeless. The representative boy begs the reporter for money for purchasing his drug. In the end, he is still

sitting on his sofa playing an imaginary guitar. The music expert's final reasoning is that all these underground musicians are drug dealers. The psychologist concludes that "treating this malady could not be limited to the parents. This is your job. You who are watching this program are responsible. This is the country's responsibility to endow its youngsters with an authentic identity". Staring at the camera, the inquisitor of the boy wearing the skeleton mask advises: "Go back to life, go back to the tradition, go back to the prayers, go back to god" (*Shock* pt.6).

From the inquisitor's recommendations, the underground musicians Mohsen Namjoo, Shahin Najafi, and the rock band Hypernova, picked up the "going back to life" recommendation and left Iran. Among them, the case of Mohsen Namjoo was exceptional. If Hypernova and Shahin Najafi left Iran on their own choice, Namjoo was forced to get refuge in exile. While he was in Europe a private video was spread in the social media in which Mohsen Namjoo was singing some verses of Qur'an on a rock theme. He was being tried in absentia and condemned to flogging and imprisonment. Namjoo released an open letter through social media in which he asked his mother for a pardon in case he had inadvertently insulted her religious beliefs. He also explains to the officials that the performance was supposed to be an absolute private matter with no intention of any insult whatsoever. The letter turned out completely ineffective on the officials. So, Mohsen Namjoo never got back to Iran again.

Legal pop singers did not go back to god, the prayers or the tradition either. They continue to live their lives as legal superstars, while many previous illegal pop singers gained the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance's recognition and became over ground new stars. Reza Sadeghi's "Black is the Color of Love", which was released through the Internet in the Reform Era and failed to gain the ministry's permission, was released as a legal album. Dubbing the outsiders also continued by introducing a certified copy of Shadmehr Aghili. The similarity between Hamid Asgari's voice and Shadmehr's was such that in introducing the hits of the decade, Musicema

wrote: “In the summer of 2007, Hamid Asgari’s “Destiny” [“*Sarnevesht*”] was circulating in the market as Shadmehr’s new song” ("Introducing” 1). But the phenomenal innovation in pop music of the time was Benyamin Bahadori, who followed his career as a pop singer by releasing the album *Kind Moon* [*Māh-e meharabun*] (2005), in which he eulogized Abolfazl’s [Imam Hossein’s brother] martyrdom on the track “A Champion” [“*Ye pahlevun*”] accompanied by instrumentaion in the style of techno.

The first round of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s presidency ended in 2009. His rivals in this round were Mehdi Karroubi, Mohsen Rezaei, one of the directors and founders of IRGC, and Mir Hossein Mousavi, Iran’s prime minister in the war and during the presidency of Seyyed Ali Khamenei. Whether the origin of the carnivalesque defiance in Iran was integral to Khatami’s campaigns for presidency, or a football match, or happenings of Charshanbe Suri, the spirit of carnival has never taken over the whole country as it did in this presidential election in the spring of 2009. This unique fusion of political and carnivalesque defiance was depicted by an eyewitness by the name of Afsaneh Moqadam, a pseudonym adopted to protect the identity of the author of *Death to the Dictator: A Young Man Casts a Vote in Iran’s 2009 Election and Pays a Devastating Price* (2010). Narrating her hero’s story during the crucial days of the most controversial presidential election in Iran, she provides a meticulous picture of how the Twitter Revolution- as the western media labeled it- or The Green Movement- as Iranians call it- took place through young adults’ carnivals and the heavy price that they paid for it. In the bright side of the book, which depicts the electoral campaign days, we read: “It’s election traffic. Take a car. Cover the bodywork and side windows with posters, tie green ribbons to the side mirrors and aerial, fill up with friends and family. Go and join the party” (Moqadam 20).

She describes one of the scenes that happened in Tehran during the presidential campaigns. The scene was uploaded on YouTube and at the time became a hit. Moqadam pictures

the boys and girls are crouching by the side of the road. They leap into the air and then crouch again. Leap and crouch. It's a version of a childhood game where one person says the name of an object or an animal, then shouts fly and jumps into the air. In this scene a young beautiful boy shouts:

Sparrow,

Fly! The others shriek.

Crow!

Fly!

Mahmood!

Fly! (Moqadam 20).

Moghadam's other chosen example is one unprecedented slogan in a political campaign that targeted the 'Javadness' of a politician. It reads: "one week! Two weeks! Unwashed Mahmoud fairly reeks!" (Moqadam 20).

One other form of propaganda was conducted during the presidential debates which were released on big screens in the streets, main intersections and public places. The advocates of candidates gathered in two different parts of the street and chanted their slogans towards each other. In the presidential debate between Ahmadinejad and Mousavi, Ahmadinejad was self-composed, detached and smiling. Mousavi seemed too anxious, many times called his opponent a liar, but above all, to prove his points he frequently used the catchword "thing". The winner seemed to be Ahmadinejad. When the debate was over, Mousavi supporters were chanting in the streets and text-messaging: [*piruzi-e chiz bar bi hameh chiz*] "the victory of a thing over nothing".

On 9 June 2009, three days before the election, BBC Persian reported that the advocates of Mousavi organized human chains in Tehran and many other cities in Iran. In Tehran this human chain was taking place on twentyfive kilometers in Tehran's longest street. The beginning of the chain was at the Rah Ahan square in the southern part of Tehran and it ended in Tajrish square in

northern Tehran. Both lower and upper class were combined in it. The people who shaped this chain showed their advocacy by wearing green symbols, the color of Mousavi's campaign. The project was a yes to the invitation of Mousavi's electoral campaigns. One of the organizers told the BBC that "we predicted that for such a chain there must have been eighteen thousand of people, but people were many times more than the predicted number. Many of Mr. Mousavi's supporters came by their cars, so Vali Asr Street and other streets in its connection were practically blocked" ("Twenty").

On Friday, 12 June 2009, Ahmadinejad was announced the winner of the election with sixty three percent of the votes. Did not believe the claimed persetage of Ahmadinejad's votes by the regime, on Saturday the thirteenth, Mousavi's supporters surmounted Tehran and many other big cities chanted: "Hey liar! Where are your sixty-three present?" They addressed Mousavi to take back their votes. On Sunday, the fourteenth of June, in his victory speech Ahmadinejad compared the competition to a football match after which the loser would always complain, but in this match, forty million people themselves were the players and the referee. "*So, it does not matter if a bunch of dust and dirt, here and there, do something*" [my emphasis]. Iran is united and the nation's "pure river" would leave no room for them. On Monday, July 15, Mousavi and Karroubi asked their supporters to have a silent march in Tehran. They promised they would attend the rally themselves. Calling the rally "the dust and dirt revolution", *The Guardian* reported "How Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's jibe backfired":

> When it was uttered it was meant as a biting put down to the thousands who dared to question his re-election as president of Iran. In the same speech, he had also labeled his opponents the officially recognized thieves, homosexuals and scumbags, but none was considered as contemptuous as 'a bunch of dust and dirt'. The phrase entered folklore and provided a focus for the rage of the protesters. So far it has inspired pithy slogans, blog headlines, posters and a litany of insults throwing the president's words

back in his face. Dirt and dust is you, it is you who are the enemy of Iran, one chant goes. Another frequently-heard slogan was: we are not dirt and dust, we are Iran's nation. The phrase *khas- o- khāshāk* –Dirt and Dust- has become a badge of pride. The reformist newspaper, Etemad-e Melli, carried a huge picture on yesterday's front page showing marchers carrying a banner bearing the slogan, Epic of Dirt and Dust. The offending words were written in green, the color adopted by Mousavi's campaign" ("Dust Revolution").

The attendees of the Epic of Dirt and Dust have been approximated between hundreds of thousands to three million. The chant "Dirt and dust is you, it is you who are the enemy of Iran", mentioned by *The Guardian*, was in fact part of a poem written at the very night that Ahmadinejad named his opponents a bunch of dirt and dust. Although the poet is unknown, Hamed Nikpay, who composed and sang it in the name of "The Owner of this Land" ["*Mālek-e in khāk*"], gained an overnight fame and popularity. The song's video clip consisted of the pictures of the Epic of Dirt and Dust's rally and was uploaded on YouTube on nineteenth of June. It says:

That dirt and dust is you
Even more inferior to dust, is you
I'm the passion, I'm the light, I'm the agonized lover
The bully is you, the blind is you
The lightless halo is you,
The gallant and daring is me
The owner of this land is me (Discography, Nikpay "The Owner of this Land". Transliteration p. 249)

In August 2009, in an interview with the Voice of America, in answering the questions about the process of producing the song and its popularity, Nikpay explains that "witnessing what was happening in Iran when far away from it makes everything bitter and harsher. Watching the

scenes and reading the poem, the melody took shape in my mind in minutes. I sang it immediately. For me, technique, beautification, harmony or any other musical standard had the least significance at those moments. In fact, the song's real composer was a pure emotion. A word that comes from the heart, will well be seated at the hearts" (Nikpay "Interview").

On June 20th, Neda Agha Soltan was shot to death in the streets of Tehran. A mobile footage of the moments of her perishing became the symbol of the Green Movement and *captured the world's eyes* [my emphasis]. The video was remarkably powerful. Not just as a witness to the heart wrenching moment of her death, but as an evidence of what was happening to the protestors in all other streets at that time. Roozbeh Bemani, a young and at that date not so well- known Iranian poet and lyricist wrote the song "Blood Game" ["*Khun-bāzi*"]. Referring to Mousavi and Karoubi's invitation to the silent march that afterwards was nicknamed as the epic of dust and dirt, Bemani describes a desperate generation whose last resort is silence. It has many untold stories, which will ever remain untold in the abundance of censored words. Addressing the suppressors, he outlines a sharp demarcation of us and them between the compatriots. There can be a relationship based on nationhood, but there could never be any engagement based on brotherhood. Addressing his comrades, he recalls that they have endured the miseries of all kinds of wars, and asks them desperately for whom vengeance they have to pay such a heavy price? For Neda, he pictures people's unity in continuous demonstrations as the waves in the sea and let her know that her eyes, with their blood eyeliners, have captured the world's eyes (Discography, Dariush "Blood Game").

Roozbeh Bemani was and still is living in Iran. He chose Dariush to sing the song, which means the song had been written in Iran, then exported to L.A., then once again imported to Iran. In 2012, Colonel Sadegh Rezadoost, the director of the Police Surveillance on Public Places announced to ISNA- Iranian Students News Agency- that the moral security force had arrested a

team of illegal musicians for their underground activities, writing songs for L.A. singers and cooperating with the blasphemous satellite channels. They were delivered to the judicial authorities along with their criminal instruments ("Destroying").

At the same time, *Javanan* [Youths], the Iranian magazine published in L.A. also quotes *The Guardian* that five lyricists and composers had been arrested because of their collaboration with the exiled Iranian singers. Yaghma Golrouei, the famous poet and lyricist, also published an open letter, mentionning Roozbeh Bemani and Alireza Afkari the lyricist, and composer of the song "Blood Game" among the arrested artists and asked for help. *Javanan* found the letter an immediate threat for Golrouei and admired his bravery. The magazine wrote that although Roozbeh Bemani, a very young poet, only 34, had written some well-heard lyrics for singers such as Alireza Assar and Ehsan Khaje Amiri, his fame both in L.A. and in Iran are from his cooperation with singers such as Googoosh and Dariush. *Javanan* quoted for its readers in L.A. that the judicial authorities in Iran had arrested five lyricists and composers because of their collaboration with the singers out of Iran and for their videos released in the satellite channels outside Iran. The magazine reasoned that the main reason for this detention was that some exiled artists made a fuss over this collaboration between Bemani and Googoosh and Dariush, and through this they have provoked authorities inside Iran to react.

The magazine concluded its article:

> We ask these nice friends to stop such wrong doings which would put a group of young artists in danger. We also hope that Iran's judicial authorities stop their restrictions and detentions, which would only ruin the bridge between artists inside and outside of Iran. The artists' intention, both inside and outside Iran is merely a cultural exchange through artworks. Their main addressee is the young generation ("Detention").

Notwithstanding its futile resort to the authorities to be easy on the insiders, the magazine's other comments were accurate. The young lyricists were writing of their own generation for their own generation. And Yaghma Golrouei was brave. As one of the products of the Islamic Republic, or the third generation, for describing the generation's hopes and despairs during the Green Movement, Golrouei chose a title song of one of the TV programs *Stories of Little Ali* [*Qesehā-ye ali kuchulu*] (Etedali et.al), broadcast by IRIB in 1980s, when he and his generation were passing their childhood during the war. The original lyrics describe how little Ali and his mother live and endure without the father who was at the battleground at that time. The series/lyrics' blatant message was normalizing the war, or better still, to show how to live a life without a father, because of war. The lyrics narrate that little Ali is not a fictional character. He is just like us. He is neither hero, nor too chicken. He is neither too talkative, nor too shy. His mother is generous and kind. His father is a fighter. They live in an ordinary home, which has a very small but flowery garden (Discography, "Stories of Little Ali"). Each one of these concise lyrical descriptions is related by singing La La La La… in a childish melodious tone of the TV show called *Little Ali,* 1985.

At the beginning of the millennium, neither Ali nor Yaghma were little boys anymore. Thus, Yaghma as a representative of Ali's generation gives minute and up-to date reportage of Ali's life as a grown up. Yaghma starts his depiction by stressing the fact that little Ali is not little anymore. He won't be happy with the best grade-mark. He has his high school diploma, has finished his military service, and is searching for a job, day after day, month after month. His father is in prison. His mother is doing people's laundry, does threading, but to no avail. She is in debt that she cannot pay since she is absolutely broke in the middle of the month. She has surrendered herself to all, good or bad. Heartbroken and desperate, her only wish is for Ali to be a child once again. But little Ali is not little anymore, and his world has expanded far vaster than his childhood's ally. Empty-handed and heavy-hearted, he is searching after a solution, reading

books ceaselessly, wandering on the Internet, and breaking filters to enter into the websites censored by the regime all the time. He reads and knows that here is a prison. He wishes for a miracle to make him the little Ali once again. He is a suspended university student since the secret police have recognized him as a threat to the national security and the disturber of the society's tranquility. He finds a stop sign in front of him, everywhere he goes. But he won't give up his dreams. He goes to the streets to join the protesters. Together they would sing the song that they used to sing during Mousavi's presidential campaigns: winter passed and spring is blossoming [*Sar umad zemestun, shekofteh bahārun*]. Ali sings the song while his shirt is drenched in blood. Ali's end is in an unknown collective grave. While telling the story, little Ali's original refrain La, La, La, has been changed to the sighs of grown Ali's sighs of pain: woe, woe, woe (Discography, Golrouei "Little Ali").

There is another song of that period which also has Ali as its title, written and sung by another musician of the third generation. Arya Aramnejad wrote the song "Ali Rise Up" ["*Ali barkhiz*"] for the two days of unrest in Tehran and other big cities in Ashura 2009. Police brutally suppressed the demonstrators by beating them up to death, shooting them and in some cases passing over them by police vans. Arya Aramnejad compared this Ashura with the original one, in which once again Hossein [both the third Shi'a's Imam and Mousavi's name] would be martyred by Yazid and complained about the contemporary Ali to Imam Ali. Arya narrates that once again, in Ashura's high noon, the Yazid of time has resurrected from his ancient grave to murder the lovers of Hossein. His question is: what have these people done other than a cry for freedom? And he asks God to be a witness of the degradation of humanity. Then he addresses the Imam personally and straightforwardly:

Ali! Rise up and dismantle these scoundrels' edifice
Those who garmented Evil with the Good's attire
They polluted Mohammad's religion as far

As if his majesty Hojat is at their disposal

In the hands of Evil's corps

Moharam is drenched in blood

The Outsiders are disguised in religiosity

On bayonet of their spears, is attached a Qur'an

It's antichrist's resurrection

In the middle of this nightmarish night

O' God! Shine your light on Iran (Discography, Aramnejad "Ali Rise-up". Transliteration p. 249)

In 2011, Kaleme, the website attributed to Mousavi reported: "Arya Aramnejad's most famous song is "Ali Rise up" which he released after the events of Ashura 2009 and he was arrested because of it by Babol's [a city in northern Iran] intelligence office, condemned for acting against the national security. He passed forty-four days in solitary confinement. In defending himself, he explained to the court that among physical and mental tortures he had endured by the interrogators were threats of execution, passing his solitary confinement in a three meter cell, being cursed and naked, hearing false news about his wife that she is being raped and tortured in the next room, and forcing him to walk barefoot over the blood of a prisoner afflicted by HIV in the adjacent cell" ("Heavy").

It was not just Arya's cry to the first Imam that had such morbid consequences. The result of Shahin Najafi's cry to the tenth Shia Imam, "Naghi" (2012) was a death sentence. In May 2012, the head title of the regime's websites was the same, albeit with some nuances in calling Shahin Najafi a profane, rascal, villain, Baha'i, Wahhabi, to name just a few. The media announced that a singer, who above all the mentioned titles is also a Satanist, had insulted the holy Imam and there is a fatwa for his death. The initial and original document was in fact not an official fatwa. It was

a religious question on a grand ayatollah's web page. It has the file number 912/ 4 on its right, in the name of merciful god on its left, and the official website of his majesty Grand Ayatollah Safi Golpaygani in the middle as its head titles. Under this title there is a questionnaire that must be filled by any respondent who uses the ayatollah's website. The needed information is the first and last name, age, email and postal address of the survey taker, which none has been filled by this specific respondent other than the age, which is 25.

Above all, the question is not even about or directed to Shahin Najafi. The question is: "In the name of God. Unfortunately it's a while that some hirelings, mostly the exiled anti-revolutionaries, through the Internet and on their websites and blogs are easily and freely insulting and degrading our innocent Imam Hadi [Naghi], by making jokes, picturing caricatures, cursing and telling lies… what is their verdict?" The answer is: "If they were insulting and daring the holy majesty, they are apostates. But Allah knows better" ("Verdict").

"Naghi" was not the only song in which Shahin Najafi was complaining and reporting the Islamic Republic's tyranny to Shia Imams. He had resorted to the prophet's holy family before. In practice, Shahin Najafi's dialogue with the Imams is a trilogy mirroring the concurrent miseries in the Islamic Republic. The first song of this trilogy was "Mahdi" (2010), in which a religious man resorts to the twelfth Shia Imam who had promised to save his followers when the utmost of calamities conquered the society. "Mahdi" starts as an imaginary monologue but through a repetitive confrontation between a frist person narrator and Mahdi in each verse, gradually turns to a dialogue between the omniscient first person of a narrative and the mute, ignorant, and fallible Mahdi. By "Mahdi", Najafi pictures the deformation and somehow the destruction of sacred concepts for those whom Khomeini most adored during the revolution as bare feet or slum dwellers, the very social strata on behalf of those the regime had been able to stick to the

revolution's initial/ideological values for almost two decades after the revolution. Therefore, the supposedly one and only Mahdi is alternatively sacred, trivial, and tyranical.

The narrative starts by praising Mahdi. The speaker is a traditional believer under the dire influence of his neighborhood's mullah. He had done what other alike believers would do, passing thousands of miles for a pilgrimage on foot. He expresses to Mahdi that he had run from Chamkhaleh- northern Iran- to Qom- the central province of the country.

The reason for the pilgrimage to Qom is not because the city is placed the shrine of the eighth Imam's sister, but because of visiting the mosque Jamkaran and its famous well. Rasekhoon, the news agency related to the IRGC, has it that thousands of years ago, on a Tuesday night, a trustworthy believer, Hassan Mosle Jamkarani, was invited to the place and commanded by Imam Mahdi to build the mosque at the very point that their meeting took place ("Honor").

Rejecting the claim as a baseless anecdote, the Iranian sociologist Majid Mohammadi sees the flourished fame of the mosque and its well during Ahmadinejad's presidency as Ahmadinejad's shrewd strategic maneuver. According to Mohammadi, as an ardent believer in Mahdaviat [believing in Mahdi's immediate revelation] Ahmadinejad assigned a great amount of the government's budget to expand the cult's theory, the mosque's physical and spiritual significance, and the well's mythology. Mohammadi argues that the propaganda found hearing ears. The ancient Shia ritual of writing pleas to Imams revitalized through Jamkaran and somehow monopolized its well. The abundance of the plaintiffs and pleas forced the mosque's conductors to divide the space around the well into men/women designated areas. In Mohammadi's estimation, the result of the remarkable popularity of the mosque, the well, and Mahdi, for Ahmadinejad and his comrades, was their indisputable dominance in the competitive market of the religion. "They gained wealth, by which they added to their power, through which

they added their wealth and by which they further extend their ideological influence both nationally and internationally" (Mohammadi "Jamkaran").

In accocordance with the leadership, who consider Mahdaviat as his ideological adversary, the media started to inform people against the well. Wikishia- a sort of Shia Wikipedia- announces that "the Jamkaran well, neither has a specific story, nor any holiness" ("Well"). ISNA, the Iranian Students News Agency, interviewed an expert in Mahdavism [*Mahdaviyyat*] and quoted him that "no one should believe that his holy majesty- referring to Imam Mahdi- would read and answer these letters. His majesty already knows what is going on in the hearts of believers, and there is no difference whatsoever between the Jamkaran and other running waters" ("No Difference"). And finally, the leadership announced claims such as meeting with the holy majesty, or seeing signs of his revelation are at best, figments of imagination, and at worst, they are deliberate lies.

Furthermore, claiming and/ or achieving such an ideological dominance in "the competitive market of religion", as Mohammadi names it put the leadership and his previously favorite president into a dire and ongoing confrontation. Calling the cult a perversion from Islam and Revolution and recognizing Ahmadinejad and his companions the perverts, was Khamenei's defensive strategy. In Mohammadi's evaluation, the leadership's endeavors at that point were too little, too late. The holiness of the mosque and its well was as established as Ahmadinejad and his companions as an opposition (Mohammadi "Jamkaran").

Maybe all these could explain why among numerous descendants of the Prophet in Iran, Mahdi is the chosen correspondent for Najafi's persona. Far beyond any other holy figure, Mahdi was accessible, handy and trendy at that time. So, Mahdi's correspondent explains that he has run this far to see him, but to no avail. He reasons that perhaps it was not his day, as the neighborhood's mullah believes. The mullah has confirmed that for sure Mahdi has answered him

back, but he has not heared it. Believeing in the mullah's righteousness, his conclusion is that he had not heard Mahdi, because he is full of sins and evil. He confesses to Mahdi that he is terribly discontent and shameful of himself and is more than ready to deliver his sincere apology for his deficiencies by washing Mahdi's feet with his tears if he knows where Mahdi is. He swears that Mahdi's revelation has always been the love of his life, a life that has passed in this great expectation. After all kinds of apologies, he continues to make his own revelations to Mahdi:

But I want to say something to you Sir
The truth is
It has been six months that I haven't got my paycheck
You sir!
Who is managing the whole world's affairs
Would it be possible for you that sometimes
Have a merciful eye on us? (Discography, Najafi "Mahdi". Transliteration p. 250)

After this laudation, he starts a confabulation with the Imam in which his tone starts to change gradually but drastically. From then on, maybe because his miseries are too tangible and trivial to be expressed courteously, or merely because of the fact that no one would be able to keep up his courteous appearance in a chit chat, Mahdi is not addressed as a holy majesty anymore. He is revered, but as far as any other official in the Islamic Republic who had gained power based on his visible religiosity in the regime. No more celestial, at best he is revered as one among many of the prophet's descendants who are called Seyyed and have been bestowed an unlimited power by the government. So, the previously humble believer addresses the holy Imam as: Hey! Seyyed! And starts to define all the miseries and entaglements he and his family must endure. And once again asks the Imam not to let him down. He further illuminates his situation for the Imam:

It is worth nothing that I'm a martyr's father
I haven't gained anything from the Martyr's Foundation

Would the blame be on those who say

Its founders themselves are the first-rate embezzlers

I couldn't make heads or tails of politics

How should I?

My crippled mind and the divine government's reasoning?

What a nonsense!

All the time

Someone ascends

Another one descends

And in the end

We will be the same miserable

As always (Discography, Najafi "Mahdi". Transliteration p. 250)

At this point, Najafi summons up the three different eras in the Islamic Republic, into three verses. Khomeini's era is defined:

Sometimes

For somebody

We are the wretched of the earth

Sometimes

We have to fight and get martyred

For hocus-pocus:

Karbala, Karbala we are coming

Its only result:

Living as a fool

For eight years of construction (Discography, Najafi "Mahdi". Transliteration p. 250)

The novelty of the Construction Era is in the replacement of those who were previously advantageous through their noble blood by the descendants of the governmental *nouveau riche* who are now having fun in Dubai, London and Hawaii. And finally, Khatami or the Reform Era is referred to:

> For another eight years
> He cheered: Dialogue!
> And we laughed
> Its result:
> The Tir the 18th
> And the scholar martyrs (Discography, Najafi "Mahdi". Transliteration p. 251)

The date *Tir* the 18th refers to the 9th July 1999, the night that Basij attacked Tehran University's dormitory. They beat the students to death, arrested and imprisoned them for three days. The students' uproar after this event has been defined as one of the most widespread street protestations after the revolution until that time (Sadr). The movement was brutally suppressed when Khamenei started to cry and complained to the militia that he has an inferior life and an invalid body. So, he is not worth fighting for. He asks the Basij that even if "they" cursed him, or tore his pictures apart, or insulted him, the Basij must let them do as they wish ("Our Seyyed"). For any Iranian, no matter a friend or a foe, who was listening to his live speech, it had but one meaning: a carte blanche to Basij and the police force to do whatever they wished. The ephemeral Student Movement came to its end by the brutal suppression. "Mahdi" came to its end when his former believer admonished the Imam:

> You are in your well
> What the hell where we are
> We're sad and full of rage Mahdi
> Your eyes are shut

You don’t exist

You’ve fooled us, Mahdi (Discography, Najafi “Mahdi”. Transliteration p. 251)

In Najafi’s trilogy, “Mahdi" is a candid criticism of the regime’s political abuse of religious beliefs. “Mahdi " could be reflected on as a narrative of how substantiating the terrestrial/political figures through celestial/holy myths for almost three decades has not elevated the powerful to saintliness, but it has subjected the religion to metamorphosis and has downgraded the holiness.

The second song in the trilogy, “Naghi" (2012), is a harsh criticism of the regime’s cultural policies. “Naghi " could be recognized as the third generation’s minute reportage of a cultural downfall ignited from the early days of the establishment of the Islamic Republic but became a pandemic during Ahmadinejad’s presidency. Based on Najafi’s report, it is a culture in which the prohibited and the propaganda are equally vulgar. As far as he cannot merely enumerate these debasements to the Imam, he had to swear the Imam to each vulgarity as irrefutable evidence of his righteousness. The ridiculousness of the facts has made them seem fictional rather than factual.

Therefore, “Naghi, I swear you to the cardboard Imam", refers to one of the innovative ways that Ahmadinejad’s government celebrated the anniversary of Khomeini’s return to Iran in 1979. In 2011, the Islamic Republic’s air force remade the scene with a nuance all over the country. A cardboard Khomeini was passed through a troop of saluting officers on a red carpet and was placed at the plane’s staircase. The famous picture, in which Imam is descending the plane with the assistance of assistance of the Air France’s pilot, was remade as a cardboard installation at the airports. In addition, a cardboard Khomeini was built and was placed on those places considered to have a revolutionary significance such as Refah School, the first resistance of Khomeini in 1979. Officials and ordinary people started to take selfies with the cardboard Khomeini. The pictures spread in the media, triggering a profound anger among Khomeini’s advocates. It also inspired the unfollowers on their numerous jokes. Anything that has been made of cardboard,

depending on its size, found a potential to be considered as the embodiment of Khomeini in the different cycles of his life. So, a cardboard standing part of a picture in the small size would be titled as the Imam's childhood, the medium size would be the Imam in his teens, and finally a container of shoe boxes was revered as Imam's family album. Khomeini's life-time companions such as Hashemi Rafsanjani found these types of laudations insulting and harshly criticized Ahmadinejad and other decision makers in his Cabinet, but to no avail. Mimicking Khomeini's entrance to and his presence in Iran through cardboard installations continued until the last year of Ahmadinejad's presidency.

The verse: " Naghi, I swear you to that infant who says *Yā Ali* in his mother's vagina" refers to an innovative way of praising the religious figures by clergymen, which was ignited during Ahmadinejad's presidency, but became a fad with the passage of time. In their lectures in the mosques, the clergymen started to fabricate stories about the holy figures, and as if in a competition, each tries his best to deliver newer and more fabulous information about one or another miracle. The lectures' videos are frequently uploaded on YouTube and other webpages. These fake anecdotes seemed so ridiculous for some audience that their comments varied from the laughing emojis, to compare the speaker's imagination with Hollywood's sci-fi, the champion in bending with the wind's competition, or damning the narrator as a fraud.

In the one that Najafi has selected, the narrator is Hojatoleslam Seyyed Mohammad Saeedi, Khamenei's representative and the Imam of the Friday prayers in Qom. He says that "he had heard from a martyr's mother that Khamenei's sister, who is still alive and is living in Qom, has told her that when Khamenei's mother was delivering him, we who were waiting outside the room heard that the midwife is shouting: 'may Ali be your protector'. When they had to rush to the room, the midwife was holding the baby and told them that while coming out of his mother's vagina, this holy Sir shouted 'Ya Ali'. Such a miraculous creature is your leader that you have to

support him till you are alive" ("Khamenei Says"). Although the video's comments cover a vast variety of all kinds of curses in Farsi, they have one thing in common, "you have faked an Imam for us before, don't even try to make a new god" ("Khamenei Says").

In Najafi's lyrical report, informing "Naghi" continues by numerating those cultural events that were considered significant enough to be dealt with in the long-run debates in the media. His list consists the blossoming popularity of plastic surgery in Iran, ranging from repairing virginity, to nose jobs and the silicon breasts; the pandemic Viagra; the importation of rosary and Sajadhe- the mat used by the Muslims to stand on while doing their daily prayers- from China; the pros and cons of the Iranian cinema's superstar in exile, Golshifeh Farahani's decision to pose topless for photos and a video for the French magazine Madame *Le Figaro* as part of a project by director Jean Baptiste Mondino.

The apex of these vulgarities would be Farnood's "wee-wee". In a popular children's talk show, *Aunt Narges*, the performer advises the children to be self-sufficient as far as their age would let them, and then asks the children what they have done for that matter. A little boy said: I wash my wee-wee on my own. The performer surprisingly answered him back: what? You turn on the washing machine by yourself? No! No! No! You shouldn't. It is too dangerous! The boy remained silent, confused, and startled until the end of the show ("Be Careful"). The video burst into the media. Thousands of jokes were about the relation between one's wee-wee and a washing machine. The performer, Azadeh Aleayoob, was appreciated by the state media for her smart and immediate reaction. In one of her many interviews on the subject, she said: "in a live program, the performer must be able to manage the crisis. I made the audience confused. Many thought by themselves, maybe they've heard the sentence wrongly. There is always a possibility that the child says a dangerous sentence without knowing its gravity. We have to be able to manage the calamity" ("Aunt Narges").

Through his verse “Naghi I swear you to Farnood’s wee-wee”, Najafi clarifies his point to the Imam that there remains no hope for salvation other than his revelation. He reminds the Imam that nowadays, the “colorful revolution” [referring to the Green Movement] is merely accomplished through endless political debates in the talk shows in exile, and no one can even remember the name of the Green Movement’s leader anymore.

The song finale in Najafi’s trilogy is “Shaban” [“*Sh‘abān*”] (2013). First exiled, now a fugitive with a death sentence hanging over his head, he desperately put himself into Shaban’s hands. Confessing that he is absolutely exhausted from the endless and uneven war, he asks Shaban, an ordinary man, “to keep him in line, never let him talk too much” (Discography, Najafi “Shaban”). He made a promise to Shaban that from now on, he too, would say what the hell with Iran, and would sing the same lascivious, but harmless songs that would bestow on him the same fame and fortune as others. Thus, he would be able to have fun with “this horny flock”. In a bohemian gesture, he will muffle his voice underneath a pile of metaphors, symbols, and signs. “Through estimating the size of Tehran's famous concert hall’s tower and his own hips, he decides that although too painful, it is worth giving it a try” (Discography, Najafi “Shaban”). As soon as he is done with his own calculation, he realizes that any brutal pain would fade away in comparison with what Shaban endures. So, he makes a new promise to Shaban. He would never, ever again sing about Naghi and Mahdi; a down- and-out Shaban, who is coping all his life with all kinds of miseries is much more dignified and much more heroic than any Imam.

Najafi’s logic for such a revelation, first and foremost, is that unlike Mahdi, Shaban has never vanished, so there is no need for waiting for his reappearance. Therefore, from then on, as the only holy figure, he would resort only to Shaban. Secondly, since Shaban had not ever considered nuclear energy as a decisive civic right, he considers it needless of going to go to Geneva and wheeling and dealing over it. Thirdly, Shaban is neither one of those good-for-nothing blue eye

artists that make it possible for cinematic officials to “make money out of shit” through their names. Nor he is a happy-go-lucky musician verified by the Culture and Islamic Guidance ministry. With no money, no familial inheritance, and no relation with the noble officials, Shaban “exists only to be agonized, to be smashed under the economic determinism” (Discography, Najafi “Shaban”). In fact, such a deprivation has made Shaban the best persona for sloganized poetry. So, the newly tamed and flower-child Najafi would respond responsibly. He asures Shaban that he will support him, albeit in front of his computer’s monitor and through delivering appropriate status on Labor Day. He also makes promise to Shaban that other than himself, his intellectual friends, from all over the world, would like and make comments on his appropriately defiant and supportive status.

In the end, his last words to Shaban are:

> Shaban, what are they talking about?
> Once again, the sky is heavy hearted
> Once again, the dark clouds have blinded the moonlight (Discography, Najafi “Shaban”. Transliteration p. 252)

The two final verses are not even in Persian. He sings them in Gilaki, the language from north of Iran which he cherishes as a token from his late mother’s lullabies.

In introducing Shahin Najafi as the folk devil, the state media’s reaction was instantaneous. Many websites related to the IRGC, such as Rasekhoon, Bultan News, Fars, and Fararoo, along with the hardliners started to release and promote the verdict massively. Not that Shahin Najafi was the devil in person nationally but also they have transformed him to the Most Wanted internationally. The governmental news had it that through an “absolutely spontaneous reaction”, “absolutely ordinary people” had set a price on Shahin’s life. Among the state media reports, Fars News Agency, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’ tribune, was more elaborate than the

others. Trying to be the most impressive, Fars News ornamented its reportage by deforming one of Shahin Najafi's cover albums *We Are Not Men*. The original picture is a close-up of Najafi, in his early twenties, staring strenuously into the camera. In Fars News renovation, Najafi is supposedly transformed into a monster, his face is green, his eyes are yellow, and his background is on fire, but he does not burn, perhaps to prove that he is Satan himself. The very graphic design was also used for *Shoot the Apostate*, a computer game in which the player has the opportunity to kill the media-made Satan/Shahin Najafi at different levels and stages.

As a safety net, in case the picture would not be enough to shine light on Najafi's so-called devilish deed, Fars News also represented its reportage through one of the worn-out tricks of the tabloids, the tautology of one title in different fonts and sizes. On the right corner, on the left corner, and in the middle of the page the reader would be informed through a bold format: Fars Reports. Yet again, under the head title "People Assigning Price for Executing the Asperser Singer", Fars Reports is repeated. What Fars reports is that following the grand ayatollahs decrees on the apostate singer, the people's spontaneous reaction was dedicating prices for his execution.

According to the Fars reporter, in May 2012, the Germane- based Baha'i Shahin Najafi insulted the tenth Shia Imam, Imam Ali- al- Naghi in a song and released it in the market. This devilish deed made the devoted lovers of the family of virtuosity angry and heavy-hearted. Therefore, an absolutely spontaneous wave of protestations went hand in hand with the apostasy verdict of the grand ayatollahs. It goes so far that many grand ayatollahs such as Safi Golpaygani, Naser Makarem Shirazi, Moslem Malakooti, Mohammad Ali Alavi Garakani, Hossein Noori Hamedani and Jafar Sobhani, found the song absolutely blasphemous and the initial sign of apostasy. The reporter once again recognizes the people's remarkable spontaneous reaction to this satanic singer, but this time for an entirely different reason. According to the reporter the remarkable thing is the role that the youngsters, specifically the third generation, play in this

spontaneous will to eliminate this exceptional Satan. At this point, the reportage personifies third generation to document this general spontaneity.

According to Fars News, Seyyed Mehdi Mousavi, one of the youngsters of the 1980s, in his weblog *The Muslim Engineer,* had written: "Since as the one Jihadi obligation, every Iranian has dedicated a price for Shahin Najafi's murderer, I will give one month of my salary in addition to a flag that I've got it as a souvenir from the Imam Ali's doom, to whomever kills Shahin Najafi" ("Prize"). As another member of the third generation Ali Abedi also wrote on Mehdi Mousavi's Google Plus page: "I make a promise to dedicate one month of my salary, plus the only carpet that I have under my foot, to the murderer of this dirty apostate. I wished I could cleanse the earth of this dirt" ("Prize"). The third generation's other offer came from Mojtaba Shahmoradi: "my share is five thousand U.S. dollars dedicated to shut up the mouth of this vicious creature" ("Prize").

Fake or real personas, the representatives of the third generation's reaction to the crime of one of its age-mates, would not be completed without one of Shahin Najafi's workmates. So, Fars reports that one of the young singers, Hamed Zamani, had written on his Facebook page:

> I, Hamed Zamani, as a humble member of Iran's music along with a group of my friends, will dedicate ten million tomans, the only price that I can modestly afford to the person or any group that would be able to accomplish this revolutionary execution. Although this deserved to be dead, does not worth even trial, but for preventing the prevalence of insulting the prophet's family any further, I invite all believers to help us to annihilate this calamity ("Prize").

Fars News also reports that Roydad news agency has assigned 200 thousand dollars for killing Shahin Najafi. In part of its manifesto the agency says:

> Shahin Najafi organized the most atrocious insults to the holy family and

> specifically to Imam Naghi, made Rooydad to dedicate a remarkable reward for executing this apostate. Based on this decision, each one of the believers who achieved the target and execute him, with the reference to revitalizing Imam Khomeini's habitude in punishing all the ones who dare to curse and insult the holy domain of Islam's Sharia, will gain this money from Rooydad wherever in the world that it happens through due courses of payment. In addition, other Shi'as from other countries have announced that they are prepared to dedicate a price for accomplishing the execution of this malevolent singer, which its report will be given to the readers ("Prize").

The reportage finishes as "and this spontaneous reaction continues…" ("Prize").

Alongside or even above the report's inhumane brutality is its stark ecstasy in verbalizing it. Ostensibly disguised in "Naghi", the principal reason for such self- applauding bravado over barbarity was the fact that in practice Shahin Najafi accompanied by his "Naghi" turned out to be a dream come true for the regime. The amorphous and inchoate folk devil in mass was now personified. There is no need for any academic seminar to prove the direct relation between "Satanism and Rock & Roll" or producing a new season of *Shock* documentary. The regime succeeded to use the whole spectacle as its closing manifesto to prove the parallelism between the unbridled music and deviance; furthermore, it was triumphant in refuting one of its greatest defaults: the third generation as its own product turned out to be its ideological archenemy. This is why the report put a young before the name of each one of the death-donors and the grand ayatollah's website found itself needless to any further information of the one whose question have the artist's life at stake. His only identification is his age, which is twentyfive. This seems enough for solving both his and the regime's religious dilemma.

What is factual is that Fars News agency is literally negating Shahin's existence twice: he is not one among many in the third generation, the product of the Islamic Republic; therefore, he is

an exception to the rule. According to the agency, the real third generation, notwithstanding its diverse social strata, is harmoniously ready and more than happy to murder the one and only outlaw, apostate, atheist; in short, the only devil among them. Slaughtering the embodiment of Satan would purify moral panic and bring back tranquility and security to the society.

Through analyzing the procedural production of moral panics, Cohen proves that if all the definitions are acceptable, then deviance could not be something that exists on its own; it is the creation of the powerful. “The authorities create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders” (5). What Cohen shows is not a mere illumination of how a society and a specific culture would produce or deal with a deviance. Rather, it is the fact that although a panic is inherently temporary, the ever-occurring moral panic is not an oxymoron. “Moral panics will be generated and others, as yet nameless, folk devils will be created. This is not because such developments have an inexorable inner logic, but because our society as presently structured will continue to generate problems for some of its members, and then condemn whatever solution these groups find” (233).

The regime, unable to find a solution, effaced the whole problem. Having Shahin Najafi as the one and only folk devil among the third generation not only was its best excuse and purified all its defaults for transforming its own made generation to its own nemesis, but based on Shahin Najafi’s very existence, the regime finally was able to cement a sharp demarcation between music’s legality and illegality. Any voice could be hearable, any appearance bearable, provided that it is absolutely irrelevant to the folk devil Shahin Najafi, which means, it must have nothing to do with the political Islam, or better still, with the part of Islam’s mythology based on which the Islamic Republic gains its power over its citizenry as its cultural/ political mantras. The result was that pop music was totally erased from the regime’s ever- be-renewed list of forbidden and

the inside Iran's pop singers entitled with an unprecedented autonomy which makes any musical moral panic an oxymoron at this time.

The result of all this for Shahin Najafi is that his problem has no solution. As a condemned apostate in our society as presently structured, a death sentence sways over his life.

This chapter saw through cultural intricacies during Mahmoud Ahamdinejad's presidcy 2005-2013. His cultural policy was an emulation of the 1980s revolutionary agendas. The upheaval against his cultural and social restrictions along with his controversial victory in the second round of his presidency resulted to an upheaval known as the Green Movement. The defiant underground artists were forced to take refuge in exile. Their exiled produced music was added to the bulk of the smuggled pop songs from Los Angeles to Iran. For anhilating the influence of this exiled underground music, the regime assigned a death sentence for Shahin Najafi while lifted almost any restriction on the state-produced pop songs. In the next chapter, we see how once again a whole new social and cultural policies will be followed by the moderate president of the decade.

Chapter Six

Breaking Taboos

Hassan Rouhani's Presidency 2013 Until 2020

In August 2013, the promises of moderation, resource and hope made Hassan Rouhani Iran's 7th president. There was no significant difference between the previous presidential elections and the one that had to assign Ahmadinejad's successor. Since the beginning of the millennium to reject the leadership's allegedly chosen candidate, people would vote for his combatant. Confronting his rival Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Tehran's former chief of police, Rouhani reproached him: "I'm not a general. I'm a lawyer". The blatant innuendo was well heard by the people. Celebrating their candidate's victory over the leadership's favorite, people chanted in the streets: "Mousavi, we retrieved your vote". Ending the house arrest of the Green Movement's leaders Mir Hossein Mousavi, Zahra Rahnavard, his wife, and Hojatoleslam Mehdi Karroubi, was one of Rouhani's electoral promises along with a pacifistic approach in Iran's foreign policy. The first was never achieved; however, the latter seemed to have been accomplished through long running negotiations with P5+1 over Iran's controversial nuclear power and resulted in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Welcoming the foreign secretary Mohammad Javad Zarif to Iran after his attainment, people chanted: "don't size him up by his delicacy, [Zarif in Persian means delicate] he is resonant over five countries" ["*negāsh nakon zarif-e panj keshvar-o harif-e*"], and sang and danced in the streets ("People's"). The future seemed prosperous; the society seemed hopeful.

A year later, in December 2014, the legal singer Mohsen Yeganeh held a concert at the Nokia Theatre in Los Angeles. The news surrounding the concert became the headline of the regime's news agency websites, announcing: "Nokia Theatre at the helm of Mohsen Yeganeh". It was not an exaggeration. The videos available on YouTube and other sources showed that in the packed concert hall the audience wholeheartedly sang and danced to Mohsen Yeganeh's music. But the self-glorification went as far that the state-run website Mardom-Salari claimed that not only all the seats were taken but the management of the venue was forced to place the audience in the never-before-used parts of the music hall. According to the website, in the history of the Nokia Theater an event of this scale had only occurred once before and for the acclaimed hip hop artist Eminem. To back its main title the website added: "Everyone in Los Angeles attended the concert, while at the same night and at the same street another concert was held by one of Los Angeles singers, D.E." ("Everyone"). In the commonly known ritual of decoding the regime's agenda, the readers were easily able to realize what D.E stood for. It meant everyone chose Mohsen Yeganeh over Dariush Eghbali, who is called by his fans merely as Dariush.

The user comments on the reportage were mostly weary but deriding bewilderments on whether Dariush's fans suddenly had a changed mind and picked the other concert at the same time and on the same street, or did none of his fans have any plans of attending Dariush's concert in the first place? In a defensive tone, other comments were merely reminding the reverence and popularity of the veteran exiled singers among Iranians. One reads: "By D.E you don't mean Dariush Eghbali? Do you? If so, I have to let you know that all the Iranian singers put together would not be able to reach the size of Dariush's one finger, whether they sing in Iran or in Los Angeles". Another said: "Eminem? For your information, Googoosh sold out this concert hall, not just once, but seven times. Eminem? Are you kidding me?" And the last one concluded: "the attendees of Googoosh, Dariush, and Ebi concerts are usually up to eighteen thousands of people

in exile. Now imagine if they were able to have a concert in Iran! There would be hundreds of thousands attendees for each one of them[1]" ("Everyone").

To demonstrate the insiders' victory over the outsiders, needless of any acronyms, any comparison or resourcing to tell tales about the event, would it be factual or fictional, the IRIB's official website, Jam-e Jam was the most candid and more to the point: Under the title: "The Arm Wrestling of Home Grown Pop with Los Angeles' Stars", it recounted that "During the revolution's victory and the imposed war, some preferred to put their talent at the service of the foreigners and seek their dreams beyond the borders, meanwhile, children born and raised in the revolution's arms prove that they would leave no room for 'their' activities even at the heart of Los Angeles" ("Arm Wrestling"). As an ironclad evidence of the unprecedented popularity of the insiders and the last straw for degrading and humiliating the outsiders, the news agency also quoted Pirouz Arjomand, the director of the Department of Music at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance: " the music produced in exile must be named: chewing gum music. Since this music's expiry date is less than a day" ("Arm Wrestling").

The Los Angeles reaction was scant but harsh. Their problem was not the physical invasion of the imported singers into their own previously unrivaled pop scene. It was much more conceptual. Their problem was with exported words into their territory. In [*Tarānehām-o pas bedeh*] "Give Me Back My Songs" (Discography, Asemani 2011), the versed lyricist Iraj Janati Ataei berated his compeer singers that "over all these years they must have been parroting his songs under the flashy spotlights of an aborted fame, with the least realization of the true meaning of his words" (Discography, Asemani "Give Me Back My Songs"). Although the colleagues hinted by Janati Ataei could fairly involve the likes of Googoosh and Ebi who had collaborated with Roozbeh

1 Predictably, the comments dated back to 2014 are not available on the website anymore.

Bemani, the lyricist's harsh criticism targeted Dariush rather than the other two. According to the song's composer Mehrdad Asemani, who wholeheartedly gave Janati Ataei every right to be furious and heart broken, the album in which Dariush had sang Roozbeh Bemani's lyrics [*Donyā-ye in ruzā-ye man*] *My World in These Days* (2010) was the Islamic Republic's artifice for depoliticizing Dariush, which would have no result other than neutralizing the defiance power of the exile music. Reasoning that since for an artist living inside Iran and working simultaneously with the state apparatus and Dariush is impossible, then the whole album must have been the Islamic Republic's most successful scheme for suffocating, disaffecting and castrating the resistance power of the legendary/rebel Dariush, and Los Angeles music on the whole. He certifies his point by analyzing the ["*Shekanjeh-gar*"] "Torturer" (2010), a track from the album *My World in These Days*, in which Roozbeh Bemani wrote and Dariush sang:

I'm prostrating to you
There is no door open to K'aba
As much as I circumambulated you
I don't need the Haj anymore
…
For you to believe me
I'll be in an everlasting contrition
Your voice tunes my heart romantically
By your side, all my wandering is a homecoming
I suffer and it's not a sin
When the torturer is you
Torturing is not a sin (Discography, Dariush "Torturer". Transliteration p. 251)

Unable to find any earthly romantic eroticism, for Asemani the lyrics are but a manifesto against the convention of human rights, and its true call is to Ayatollah Khamenei himself. He

also found out that in the song "Blood Game", Dariush, albeit inadvertently, has been used as the regime's mouthpiece to invite people to silence. Referring to the verse "our last trench is silence/ our right is not achievable", he reasons that Roozbeh Bemani through Dariush's voice is in fact instilling to the minds of the people that the only thing they can do is to be silent, since their right is not achievable. Finally, he concludes:

> The artists' real places are changing gradually. A never-heard-before singer comes from Iran and five thousand people would attend his concert. An old-time superstar has no more audience than two thousand. The reason is the very obvious fact that when everyone sings the same words there is no difference anymore. I'm not denying that there are numerous talented musicians in Iran, but they will never receive permission for their music from the Ministry because they don't belong to the regime's mafia. Now, think about the one who writes the lyrics that nowadays our legendary singer is singing. The result is that there would be no difference between the one who was a legend in Iran and the Islamic Republic's mafia. Nowadays, the same word is being uttered by everyone (Asemani "*Uncut*").

Depoliticizing pop songs, neutralizing the defiance power of pop culture, nullifying exiled singers and depoliticizing people through the victorious arm wrestling between the insiders and outsiders, was not merely concerned by the regime's opposition outside Iran. The regime's policy, or better still, its unprecedented leniency on pop stars, seemed dubious and suspicious for the insiders as well.

For many researchers on popular culture and everyday resistance in Iran, there is a day, a place or an event that represents a landmark in breaking a taboo. But none would be comparable to what happened on 14 November 2014. Reuters reports from Tehran: "A 30 years old pop singer was defeated in his three years battle with cancer in the Bahman [in Persian it means avalanche] Hospital in Tehran. And then, an avalanche fell over the whole country. His funeral became a

historical event. Tehran had not seen such a crowd in its streets in the last 5 years" ("Pashaei"). The BBC Persian reports that Morteza Pashaei used to perform sold out concerts in the middle of his chemotherapy. Whether this gesture had been interpreted as the utmost humbleness and self-effacement, or it was because of his delicate figure, or maybe it was because of his unique voice with its feminine grain, or perhaps because of all of this, his much expected and much too early death bombarded and shut down the whole capital for days. People were lighting candles, crying, and singing his songs for three days in the streets of all big cities in Iran. The whole scenery was normal for his fans. But many were astonished, specifically those who thought that they had the rhythm of people's pulse in their own hands ("Pashaei"). The Iranian sociologist Amin Bozorgian had been asked for the reason of such unprecedented popularity, and why the government tried so hard to pretend that he was a devout Muslim and in complete harmony with the Islamic Republic policies:

> First, whenever a whole country starts to sing a song, it is not merely a eulogy, it is a message sent to the government. The government in its turn has no exit strategy other than confiscating the subject of popularity for its own. The other reason is in Pashaei's songs. They are desperately sad. This sadness is not limited to Iranian music in general or Pashaei's music at all. You can find it in literature, cinema and all other works of art in the past three decades in Iran. In 2013 Gallup had announced Iran as the second saddest country in the world. Sadness is the mega-narrative in Iran. Pashaei as a delicate, fragile but humble figure along with his melancholic songs mirrors what is happening to these people. They can discharge all their despair through him. Singing with Pashaei they sing their dreams that never come true. They come to the streets to boast their existence and persistence to the government ("Pashaei").

Tebian, the website related to IRGC, used BBC Persian's reportage to make a predictable and almost worn-out conclusion for its audience: "once again the enemy misrepresented the true and sincere emotions of Iranians on behalf of its ominous intentions" ("Pashaei"). Tebian's anonymous critic further stresses that Pashaei as a pro-government young singer had conquered the hearts of the public. This is why the Islamic Republic's supposed archenemy the BBC is trying its best to give a distorted image of the harmony between the youngsters and the government. The legal Pashaei was the embodiment of this consonant relationship. Now, BBC and other apostate websites desperately try to confiscate his popularity on their own behalf and misrepresent him as a voice of a defiant generation opposing the regime.

Archenemy or an old-time reliable broadcaster, the BBC's question had in fact targeted a national /sociological problem. On 14 December 2014, a seminar was held in Tehran University's faculty of Sociology. The topic was "Phenomenology of a Death". The Adornoian sociologist Yousef Abazari's harsh criticism outshined the original event and became the main topic of a series of sociological debates afterwards. He stormed at his young audience for making much fuss over the archetype of vulgarity. For him the main question was: how and when a nation became so degraded, so miserable? Although enraged, even ill tempered, he conveyed his reasoning by clarifying the repetitive misreading and misusing of the theory and history, for which both the people and the regime must be held equally responsible.

First, he reminded his audience that while they were mourning for the pop singer in the streets, the state apparatus IRIB who had promoted Pashaei in the first place, also broadcasted a documentary of Sistan and Baluchestan [the second largest province in the country] in which people were dying of hunger and poverty. In Abazari's estimation no one saw the film, for the simple reason that the social phenomenon always overshadows the real facts.

Second, he outlines the historical symbiosis between hoodlums and dictatorships. Stressing the inherent discrepancy between the Bakhtinian carnival and its governmental mimicry, he cautions his young audience of this repetitive political trick and the fact that the first of these carnivalesque funerals belonged to Mahvash. Suspicious that the youngsters would not know what Mahvash was famous for, or just to show the unyielding vulgarity, he mimicked one of her most famous songs and performances in which Mahvash put forward her hips to the audience and sang: is this hip crooked? The audience sang: who says so? Mahvash's answer was: my mother- in law, and the audience answered back: she holds a grudge against you. Abazari stressed that in theory, the song and its performance had any grotesque figure needed to be Bakhtinian. But it was not. Mahvash's interlocutors were in fact the same hoodlums who were used for suppressing the people on the streets during the 1953 coup. These rough necks used to name their others' dandies, including the pop singers of that era. The same mechanism worked after the revolution. The pop singers were condemned to be dandies and were eliminated from the media. In Abazari's evaluation, nowadays the regime uses pop icons' attraction for gaining people's votes in presidential elections and shoves a bunch of wrestlers and athletes into the parliament and the city councils to derange the political from its productive direction. Abazari asserts that the result would be the current situation in which hoodlum and dandy are hand in hand ruining the real politics in Iran. Not that the regime has any problem with this fact, but it promotes and protects it. It applauds them, uses/abuses them in its propaganda machinery as spokesmen and kindles their fame on the national television.

> When a good-for-nothing pop singer dies, national television transforms him to a national hero. This event happens cordially by the government and the nation and it's so simple. After the happenings in 2009, both the government and the people are afraid of each other and are using the self- identification implicit in the aggressive mechanism. The regime wants to get close to a depoliticized nation, and the

> mortified people want to be in harmony with the aggressive regime. In Mr. Rohani's campaign people repeated the same worn-out questions and so were his answers. I don't mean that Mr. Rouhani is a fascist. But repetition is one of the tactics of fascism. And people applaused him, as if it is a ritual and they have been doomed to repeat themselves. They are like compulsives who must ask a repetitive question, get a repetitive answer and applause automatically. There is no content in the whole ritual, no demand. People have become miserable. Based on this mechanism, the regime and the people hand in hand are doing the same thing: mourning for a vulgar. Nothing has happened by this ceremonial death other than this mechanism. There is no rebel or resistance against the regime in one front, and there is no reaction against people on the other. They are merely two people who are afraid of each other and in a non-spoken consensus have made this obscene scenery, this disaster (Abazari).

Up until now, his addressee is the attendees of the seminar, the university's young students. In the second part of his long speech, he points to his own colleagues and admonishes them even harsher. He continues:

> I did not want to say anything in this seminar. I was just listening. Then I realized that millions of philosophers are referring to without mentioning the main problem. In my opinion art is either telling the truth or lies. The critic's job is to show whether a piece of art is telling the truth or not. This man is a liar. This moderate government's sole intention is resorting to pseudo-political issues to conceal the true ones. It uses economy, which is completely political, to conceal the politics; uses pop and rock singers to conceal the politics. It even uses the nuclear program to push the real politics away, and to render people astray. The whole story is too simple. The government and the people are in a self-identified union, whether you would call it a

> sacred one or not. In the midst of this union, where can you find the initial and real ideals of the revolution? Nowhere! The whole thing is an absolute decline and vulgarity. There is a hint of fascism in it that makes me scared, when two people who are totally afraid of each other but have no other choice than to jump into each other's arms. This is what I call depoliticization. This event is an ominous sign. This shows that depoliticization is getting dangerous day by day and the people themselves want it so (Abazari).

The sociologist's diagnoses and predictions for the using/abusing of celebrites in presidential campaigns proved to be true during the second round of Rouhani's presidency by his rival Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi. While as the sociologist has explained, Rouhani's electoral campaigns enjoyed the support of cinema and pop music superstars, Seyed Ebrahim Raisi managed a meeting with Amir Hossein Maghsouldloo, best known as Amir Tataloo, an inured underground musician who has never gained the Ministry's approval to release his music but has more than four million followers on Instagram, who call themselves *Tatalis*, meaning the true devotees of Tataloo. In the videos uploaded on social media, both by Raisi and Tataloo's supporters, the embarrassed Seyyed tries his best to conceal his bewilderment of Tataloo's full-blown tattoos and to find a satistafctory domain to conduct the dialogue. Finally, Seyyed resorts to Imam Reza, the eighth of Shia Imams, whose multimillion-dollar organization, is run by the Seyyed as his trustee. Raisi asks for the exact time Tataloo had released a track about the eighth Imam. "The exact date was two years ago, and the song's message is that the religious people cannot monopolize Imam Reza, he belongs to all Iranians" was Tataloo's answer to the Imam's trustee ("Amir Tataloo").

Rouhani won the election. Mohsen Chavoshi celebrated the victory by dedicating his song "Twenty Thousand Wishes" ["*Bist hezār ārezu*"] (2017) to the president letting everyone know that "he is bowing down out of his humble gratefulness to love the one who is the last resort in the midst of turmoil and misery" (Discography, Chavoshi "Twenty Thousand Wishes"). People

celebrated the victory by dancing to the "Twenty Thousand Wishes", wishes and hopes that were put on hold after Trump won the U.S presidency and pulled the United States out of The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in June 2018.

A year later, at the end of April 2019, when the USS *Abraham Lincoln* aircraft career and its fleet were placed in the Persian Gulf, students were celebrating Teacher's Day at schools. Many videos were uploaded onto social media in which students were singing and dancing to Sasy Mannequin's song "Gentleman" ["*Jentelman*"] (2019). The news agencies that cover Iran news from outside such as BBC Persian, Radio Farda, and Voice of America, to name just a few, interpreted the videos as "Children Dance to Sasy's Tune" or "Children Admire Sasy Mannequin". Ali Motahari, the deputy director of the parliament took the Minister of Education responsible and firmly asked for the schools' principles' punishment. The Minister's reaction was that these fake clips have never happened at our schools, and asked the prosecutor and the cyber police for their help to discover the hidden hands behind the plot while stressing on the fact that serious punitive measures are expected for the conductors of such misconduct. He also declared that from now on, the ministry's main focus would be on spreading the culture of righteousness by thrusting daily prayers at schools. The Imam of the Friday Prayer cautioned his audience about the enemy's maneuvers to topple the regime and destroy the country. Sasy posted on his Instagram page: "I couldn't have ever imagined that one day my song would be the subject of the Friday Prayer. This song has been heard at the schools just once, but it must have been played at homes thousands of times since everyone sings it by heart. Have you found a resolution for the homes as well? By the way, in the midst of this skirmish, I did not get who the enemy refers to?" (Sasy Instagram).

In the fall of the same year, the singer's derisive question got a somber answer by the government, by the people, and by his counterparts outside Iran. On Friday, 15 November 2019,

the government announced its decision to increase the fuel price from 1000 to 3000 Iranian toman per liter. The protests that had initially started against this decision in no time targeted the very existence of the Islamic Republic, called for the overthrow of the leadership, and spread expeditiously through 29 provinces and hundreds of cities all over Iran. On Saturday,16 November, the regime shut down the Internet for one week. The videos of the uprisings that were uploaded on social media after 23 November would chronologically depict the following narrative: people silently blocking the main streets and highways by stopping their cars resulting in the police brutally attacking them, people chanting “death to the dictator”, “we don’t want the Islamic Republic”, and also “our enemy is here, they deceitfully say it’s America"; throughout this chanting the Basij and IRGC rifle down the protestors on the ground. Amnesty International announced that more than 304 were killed, among them 18 children, mostly targeted on their head, heart, and neck and concluded that the aim of the shootings was not mere suppression but the intentional elimination of the protestors. Reuters reported the loss up to 1500 and Kaleme, the website related to Mir Hossein Mousavi, estimated it at 680. Reluctant to give the accurate amount of the deaths, the regime stigmatized the protesters as a bunch of thugs, riffraff, and saboteurs playing their role in a plot designed by the enemy. The speaker of the parliament’s committee of national security, Zolnoori publicly stated that there were 7000 detainees, among them were some gullible youngsters under the influence of the enemy’s propaganda through social media who will soon be released. He did not mention what would happen to the others. Many representatives of human rights organizations started to appeal through the Iranian news channels abroad asking for the families of the detainees to come forward and to disclose their names. They asked for the detainees’ names because they had realized a categorical difference between the current dilemma and the uprisings in 2009. In their estimation, in 2009, protesters were the educated middle-class, well aware of their civil rights, who had demanded their votes. In other words, they were fighting for democracy. Many of them who were detained were already

well-known public figures; therefore, their arrest was the headtitle of the news agancies. As for the others, although they were not public figures or famous political activists, but they were well aware of their civil rights to send their message to the human rights organizations or news agancies outside of Iran. In contrast, in 2019, the protesters were ordinary people, mostly come from Tehran's margins, who were asking for their daily bread. In human rights activists' estimation in the Islamic Republic jails, "a known detainee" has always been treated much better and more cautiously than "a nobody".

On the night of 19 December 2019, the previously underground musician [now living in London] Soroush Lashkari, stage-named as Hichkas [lit. nobody in Persian], released a song titled "He Has Fisted His Hands" ["*Dastāsh-o mosht kardeh*"] via Twitter. On 21 December 2019, Radio Farda had an article "A Song for Nobodies", written by Reza Shokrolahi. He wrote that the song was re-tweeted more than 7200 time and was played on Soundcloud more than 150000 times from the time of its release until the next morning. In Shokrolahi's estimation, the people's reaction to the song was so unprecedented that it would be not an exaggeration if we believe that the musical narrative of the two uprisings of the decade, the 2009 and the current one, has Hichkas' name as its author. Insisting that his analysis is not based on music theory, but a merely cultural and political one, he compares the two songs to show how far the people's concerns and demands had changed in a decade. In 2009, in "A Good Day Will Come" [*Yeh ruz-e khub miyād*], Hichkas had sung:

A good day will come in which
There is no chaos in the crowd
In the streets, instead of curses
Everyone offers candies and sweets
We're all happy, and everything is marvelous
We're just missing our friends who are not with us today

I know a good day will come

In which no mother would go

To her child's grave (Discography, Hichkas "A Good Day Will Come". Transliteration p. 252)

In 2019, in "He Has Fisted His Hands" ["*Dastāsh-o mosht kardeh*"], Hichkas sings:

The sound is of bawling, wailing

They say: these thugs are armed

He has fisted his hands

Many are detained, many are dead

But this is not the end

They've killed all his dreams

Without delivering the corpses to him

Any kind of protestation is a crime

People merely chanted in the streets

And were named: the enemy

He shouts

Who would forget this crime?

He is shouting all unbearable miseries:

We are all united (Discography, Hichkas "He has Fisted His Hands". Transliteration p. 252)

The track ends with actual sound bites from the uprisings in which a girl says: "Mama, they are shooting at us", and a boy repeats: "They are killing the people".

In Shokrolahi's point of view, by reviving "we are united", the main slogan in 2009 uprisings, Hichkas has given an expressive continuum to the protestations in contemporary Iran, from middle-class claim for stealing its vote in the 2009 election to the lower-class protests for looting its bread and freedom in 2019. Shokralhi believes that only time would show whether this song

would endure as long as the “ A Good Day Will Come" did, but for now, when the musicians inside Iran are concordantly silent in regard to the event, Hichkas’ song has played its historical role in respect to its audience which is the ordinary youngsters fighting in the streets. Shokrolahi concludes:

> If the 2009 protestations had heads [leaders], the 2019 uprisings had no head at all. Pouya Bakhtiari, one among hundreds perished in these protests, had said: ‘I’m also someone’s son’. In these uprisings numerous nobodies who were somebodies for their parents, spouses, children, or were somebodies just for themselves, were wounded, were killed, and many more hid their fiery rage under its ashes. Hichkas’ “He Has Fisted His Hands” is a song for all these nobodies (Shokrolahi “A Song”).

If the perished and the detainees of the uprisings were considered to be nobodies, grudgingly by the government, and sympathetically by the social connoisseurs and human rights activists, the victims of the following events were somebodies with spokesmen both on the national and international levels.

On 3 January 2020 the United States targeted General Ghasem Soleimani in Iraq. In an unprecedented reaction, the supreme leader paid a visit to the general’s family in their own home and promised to seek revenge. On 8 January 2020 Iran’s government informed its Iraqi counterpart of its intention to attack the United States air bases in Iraq and eventually launched missiles in the evacuated air bases in Al Anbar and Erbil. The Iranian government failed to inform the Iranian people, nor its own airports. The result was the misidentification and targeting of the Ukrainian passenger flight 752 by IRGC’s defense headquarters adjacent to Tehran’s international airport. All 176 passengers and crew were killed. Fifty-seven passengers on the flight were Iranian-Canadians, among them many university students and academics who were visiting Iran during the Christmas break. After three days of denial, the government’s officials finally accepted responsibility for the event. On 11 January, the students started protests in the

universities in Tehran and many big cities all over the country. Calling Soleimani a murderer and terrorist, they tore down Soleimani's pictures and asked for the supreme leader's resignation as Iran's military commander in chief, while chanting: "our enemy is here, they deceitfully claim it's America". The government suppressed the protests by arresting the students and enforcing a semi-curfew in and around the universities.

Eventually the artists also started to respond, with the likes of the popular singer Alireza Assar canceling his concerts in the following days from the incident. Assar stated in a viral video that under the current circumstances he is "left without a voice to sing" (Assar "Canceled"). In contrast, others such as the acclaimed musician Keyhan Kalhor held their concerts, asserting that musicians had endured all kinds of dilemmas to reach their current point and therefore, no opportunity for coming together at a concert must be lost (Kalhor "Serious"). Many artists in other fields also announced that they were boycotting Fajr, the annual film/art festival that commemorates the ten days from Khomeini's return to Iran until the victory of the revolution. They expressed that mourning for the passengers of the crashed flight has not left room for any festivity. Some attended the festival, and in line with Keyhan Kalhor, they reasoned that the festival is not only a platform for young filmmakers to show their films but a tribune to express their discontent, claiming that the loss of such opportunity would prove to be irreparable. The division among the artists proved worthy of social and cultural experts to demonstrate their divided political opinions' righteousness. The main question in numerous debates on the Iranian news outlets operating abroad was to attend or not to attend the Fajr Festival. Those in favor of attending the festival reasoned that making such a decision meant to be or not to be in the Islamic Republic of Iran's art scene. Although the connoisseurs came from all walks of life and political beliefs, it was hard to ignore the startling common point in their debates: a categorically polarized society. One representative of this polarity could be the response and counter-response between two popular figures in Iran's cinema.

One of the first among the protesting artists was Masoud Kimiaei, a veteran film director before and after the revolution. In a self-published video and with teary eyes, he referred to the perished passengers of Flight 752 and stated that he did not want his film to be shown at the festival (Kimiaei, M. "I'm with"). In a press conference during the festival, the winner for best actor at Cannes Film Festival, Shahab Hosseini, who when in Cannes dedicated his award to the people of Iran, and whilst in Iran dedicated the same prize to Imam Zaman [the twelfth Shia Imam], harshly attacked the reporter that mentioned this contrast. He also targeted Masoud Kimiaei as a declining filmmaker who had lost his audience and was well aware of his film's failure in the festival. According to Shahab Hosseini, Kimiaei had dedicated "the wasted oil to an Imam's shrine", a famous proverb in Farsi which means that a cunning man would cheat the sacred beliefs to make a reputation for himself by disguising its waste as a noble present (Hosseini "Press").

Hosseini's words sparked a harsh reaction from the people on social media. Among the attacks and critics was the actor Poulad Kimiaei, Kimiaei's son. In a viral video, he explained that although he firmly believes that no one should be so degraded to show any reaction to such a hoodlum, he also believes that giving a voice to hoodlums must not be normalized. He used an Iranian story to compare Hosseini and the artists like him to the docile dogs flattering and begging the regime to throw a bone towards them (Kimiaei, P. "Poulad").

Eventually the festival was held and its final ceremony in which the winners received their awards was broadcasted live by the IRIB as usual. The speech of the winner of the award for supporting role was censored by the IRIB during the live stream but went viral in no time after the ceremony. Amir Aghaei, the winner for the best actor in supporting role, instead of giving the usual speech in which the winners would thank a great amount of people who are considered to be responsible for their achievement, reminded the audience of a sentence an IRIB anchor

directed toward the discontented during the fall uprising: “this is the country. Take it or leave it.” Aghaei’s audience applauded enthusiastically and the actor continued: “leaving would be applicable for those who come to a place, to the newcomers. We were nowhere else, we were here since the time immemorial so we won’t go anywhere” (Aghaei “Censoring”).

As of early 2020 Iran’s economy suffered drastically under the United States’ full-blown sanctions. No one still knows the exact amount of the dead and detainees of the fall’s uprisings. In his press conference in 2020, President Rouhani announced that the exact amount of the deaths will be published. His reasoning for the delay to announce the exact amount of the death tolls was that he believes that the death toll must be evaluated based on the number of the insiders, Basij and police force, on the sum of the innocents who got shot by mistake, and not based on the total of those who were saboteurs. The foreign secretary, Mohammad Javad Zarif, condemned foreign countries for their request for the black box of the crashed plane as a devious political plot against Iran.

Writing a conclusion on an ongoing story would be an imaginary prediction. Nowadays, the catchphrase of almost all types of political experts answering to “in your opinion, what would happen to Iran next?” is: “ I cannot make a prediction. I’m an analyst”. If analysts never predict, artists do. Commemorating the perished in the fall’s uprisings, Mohsen Namjoo, wrote and sang “Remember” [“*Yād ār*”] (2019):

> But don’t forget
> On the day that you’re cheerful
> On the day that you’re happy
> As a rainy spring day
> On the day that you’re free
> On the day you can’t even believe it

On the day that enthusiastically

You're the dancer in the field

On the day that blood won't pour down

Cheaply on the soil

On the day you sing dearly, cheerfully

On the day: "We won!"

There is a festival

In all alleys

You're dancing in turns and twists

You're indulged in kisses

The day that it's too imminent

A day to commemorate

Hug after hug, ongoing kisses

But on that day,

Remember us

Who left in our lonesomeness

Clandestinely, voiceless

Take a shot on that day

Drink happily on that day

Cheers to the dead

Who are alive and you know it

Don't forget the blood

The blood that spouted

The blood that built for you

A tomorrow ornamented by light

Where are you godly martyrs? (Discography, Namjoo "Remember". Transliteration p. 253)

The track comes to its final stage through the sound bites of the people's cries targeted by the regime's rifles over which Namjoo re-sings: "Godly martyrs, where are you?", a verse from Rumi's poem that in the 1980s the regime used as an anthem to commemorate the Iran-Iraq war martyrs.

Is the verse re-created to equate the recent events to the war? Or is it a comparison between those whose deaths were commemorated with those who were killed by the same regime? Is it a reminder of an ever-transforming concept of martyrdom? Or is it a representative of what happens to the meanings of concepts in ideological propaganda? Or more humanly, who is the right one to decide which death is worth commemorating and which is not? Since the song is about a day in the near future in which the country is free, who will be cherished as a martyr on that day? Maybe by betraying all the promises he has made during the song; in the end the singer wittily reminds that martyrdom/freedom is a fabulous symbiosis in Iran's politics since the time immemorial and will endure. The song leaves all to its audience's imagination.

Conclusion

The ever-evolving conceptualization of the legal/illegal popular songs in the past four decades proves that in a totalitarian/interventionist regime, somethings will never change; somethings never endure.

An archenemy remains intact. In theory, it was, still is, and seemingly will ever be a laden cultural code with full capacity to be deciphered as the enemy's cultural invasion that disturbs the society's tranquility and demolishes the country's national security. In the practice of everyday life, the very archenemy never endures. It must ever be renewed. The conceptual archenemy of one decade would be the propagated cultural ideal in the next. In the 1980s, the forbidden western music vanishes from the state apparatuses in a revolutionary execution to dawn in the eulogies for a war, which its recuperation in the 1990s needs the emanation of a pious mysticism that soon would be checkmated in the 2000s by the very pop song that had been vanished in the first place.

The Iranian official pop icon, was, still is, and will be the boy next door. Although, in the practice of everyday life, the boy next door's official fashion style proves to be the most ephemeral at the beginning and the end period of each presidency, whether it is a hardliner or a more moderate one. The fight with the moral police over the exact amount of the hair has given its place to the debate over having a veil at all. In the fourth decade of the Islamic Republic's reign over Iran, young women are arrested when they put their white shawls on a stick as a form of protest to imposed hijab, waving them as a flag that could be symbolized as anything but a truce.

The us and them demarcation endures. The labels change. Michael Jackson's decline from his *Ubermensch* pedestal to an amazingly nostalgic pop icon would disfigure the government's militia. There are no Michaels in the society for Basij to be Michael Jamkon [making a rhyme with Jackson, literally in Persian: "those who arrest Michael"]. Since, other than the brutal suppression of the people's dispersed and fragmentary public demonstrations, the Basij's omnipresence is limited to march in the governmental spectacles, chanting death to the regime's latest enemy in the IRIB's ever-present cameras at these spontaneous epics. For now, Basij is *Sāndis-khor*, the one who drinks free juices served by the government during public performances and marches.

Javadness endures as a concept, changes as a label. In the second round of Rouhani's presidency using the term *Javad*, is the terminal *javadness*. The unstylish other is *khaz*, a word with no linguistic reference other than an unbearable otherness. Nowadays, one has to be *khosh-fāz*, to have a good vibe, in order to be one of 'us' who resists against the regime's *khaz* cultural yardsticks.

The cultural dissymmetry in the symbiosis of wealth and vibe endures, its representative changes. *Āghā- zādehhā*, [literally the descendants of the noble race] the children of the closed circle of the Islamic Republic's insiders have taken the place of haji, the traditional embodiment of having wealth, lacking style. Occupying the north Tehran's multi-million-dollar villas and penthouses and loitering in their *lākcheri* [luxury's localized pronunciation] Porsches and Maseratis, the *nouveau riche*, the *khaz,* would transplant the *khosh- fāz* into the previously dilapidated downtown, now progressively in renovation, meticulously following the blueprint of the good vibe's corrective luxury. For now, the *khosh fāz* compares Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu with Alfonso Cuarón, shares the music of Drake and Weekend, and decides on whether Alex Turner better performs individually or as member of the Arctic Monkeys, and spreads its good

vibe on the Instagram that has been diagnosed by the *khosh fāz* being polluted by the fake "suddenness" (*yeh- hoii*) of fake gestures of the *khaz* influencers.

The intellectual's vindication endures. It will always be accredited when it claims that art must be the non-identical expression of a dysfunctional status quo, its nemesis. Detached from the imposed atrocities of the imposed reality, it must be its negation. If it is art and not propaganda, then it is as bleak as any picture of a collapse.

The intellectual's indignation would change. Depoliticization is the teratoid offspring of the morbid mates' copulation. In so much as the voice stands against its miscellaneous counterparts, expands its claimed possession to the most trivial practices of everyday life and fights ceaselessly to mold it, it is doomed to endure a perpetual depoliticization of what it had made politicized in the first place. Shattered and fragmented, a priori ideology transubstantiates to the rattles of its daily commerce by its merchants to bargain for the grand narrative of the ideology in the serial story's afterthoughts. Lost its fortress in the grand narrative of the voice, it tries to find a delayed satisfaction in its shacking up with a voice evanesces decade after decade.

Bibliography

Abazari, Yousef. "Abazari's Controversial Comments on the Phenomenon of Morteza Pashaei" ["*Ezhārāt-e janjāl bar-angiz-e Abazari darbāreh-ye padideh-ye Morteza Pashaei*"]. YouTube [Audio File]. 2014/1393. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PzWMvYScfeM. Accessed 23 April 2017.

Abrahamian, Ervand. *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic*. California UP, 1993.

_____. *Iran Between Two Revolutions.* Princeton UP, 1982.

Adorno, Theodor. *Aesthetic Theory.* Translated by Robert Hullet Kentor. Minnesota UP, 2011.

Adorno, Theodor & Horkheimer, Max. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception".1947. Translated by John Cumming. *The Norton Anthology of Theory & Criticism.* Edited by Vincent Leitch. Norton, 2010. P. 1110-1126.

Afshari, Reza. *Human Rights in Iran: The Abuse of Cultural Relativism.* Pennsylvania UP, 2001.

Aghaei, Amir. "Censoring Aghaei for Criticizing the IRIB's Performer" ["*Sānsur-e Aghaei bārāy-e enteqād az mojri-e sima*"]. YouTube [Video File]. 2020/1398. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n62QJkSM6sw. Accessed 19 February 2020.

Ahangaran, Sadegh. "Ahangran on His Eulogies and Anthems" ["*Nāgoftehā-ye Ahangaran az nohehā va sorudhāyash*"]. Isna.ir. 2004/1382. Accessed 15 April 2018.

Ahmadinejad, Mahmoud. "Before the Elections". YouTube [Video File]. 2009/1388. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crLUJQHfH0Y. Accessed 10 April 2019.

Alavi, Nasrin. *We are Iran, The Persian Blogs: Todays Real Iranian's in Their Own Words.* Soft Skull, 2005.

Al-e Ahmad, Jalal. *Westoxication* [*Gharbzadegi*]. Khoram, 1962/1341.

"Amir Tataloo & Ebrahim Raisi". YouTube [Video File]. 2017/1395. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6_izwEOvrk. Accessed 2 May 2019.

Arjomand, Amir Saïd. *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors.* Oxford UP, 2009.

_____. *The Turban for the Crown; The Islamic revolution in Iran.* Oxford UP, 1988.

"Arm Wrestling Between Inside Pop and Los Angeles' Stars" ["*Moch-andāzi-e pāp-e dākheli bā setārehha-ye los anjelesi*"]. Masreq News. 2015/1393. Retrieved from: https://www.mashreghnews.ir/news/470898 Accessed 12 February 2016.

"Artists Are Summoned to the Court" ["*Honarmandān-e beh dādgah ehzār shodand*"]. Iranian History.1980/1359. Retrieved from http://tarikhirani.ir/fa/news/96/bodyView/2433/ Accessed 13 August 2015.

Asemani, Mehrdad. "*Uncut*: Mehrdad Asemani and Alireza Amirghasemi" ["*Ān-kāt: Mehrdad Asemani va Alireza Amirghasemi*"]. YouTube [Video File]. 2015. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4792YRHSIos&t=418s. Accessed 20 December 2018.

Aslan, Reza. "From Here to Mullahcracy". *My Sister, Guard Your Veil; My Brother, Guard Your Eyes.* Edited by Lila Azam Zanganeh. Beacon, 2006, p. 41-52.

"Assar Cancelled His Concert". ["*Assar konsert-e khod rā kansel kard*"]. Ilna News. 2019/1397. Retrieved from https://www.ilna.news/. Accessed 12 January 2020.

Auliffe, Sarah. "Popular Music and Memory Construction in Iranian Diasporic Context". *Context.* Vol.35/36. 2011.p. 59-76.

"Aunt Narges' Reaction to Farnood's Event" ["*Vākonesh beh hādeseh-ye farnood*"]. Farda News. 2011/1389. Retrieved from https://www.fardanews.com/fa/news/159245/. Accessed 10 April 2019.

Avanesian, Vartan. "From Avang to Taraneh" ["*Az āvang tā tarāneh*"]. YouTube [Video File]. 2014. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZB0YeWS460&t=171s. Accessed 18 March 2016.

"Ayatollah Khamenei's Assignment" ["*Entekhāb-e āyatollāh Khamenei*"]. YouTube [Video File]. 2018/1396. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_UvvEwAqZo&t=203s. Accessed 5 October 2018.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World.* Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Indiana UP, 1984.

Bashiri, Abbas, et al. *Hard Days and Times: The Iran-Iraq War According to its High Rank Officials* [*Ruzhā va ruzgārān-e sakt beh ravāyat-e farmāndehi-e āli-e jang*]. Daftare Nashre Maaref Eslami, 2016/1394.

Basmenji, Kaveh. *Tehran Blues: Youth Culture in Iran.* Saqi, 2005.

Bastani, Hossein. *The Poisoned Chalice: Iran's Lost Opportunities in the War.* [*Jām-e zahr: forsathā-ye azdast raftheh Iran dar jang*]. YouTube [Video File]. 2018. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVL3cr-DKNM. Accessed 12 February 2021.

_____. "Rereading a Thirty Years old File: The Continuation of War After the Redemption of Khorramshahr" ["*Bāz-khāni-e yek parvandeh-ye si sāleh: edāmeh-ye jang b'ad az āzadi-e khoramshar*"]. BBC Persian. 2017. http://www.bbc.com/persian/iran-features-40038731. Accessed 20 March 2019.

_____. *The Stealth Coup d'état in the IRGC*. [*Kudetā-ye khazandeh dar sepāh*] YouTube [Video file]. 2020. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8WVU- jBjis&t=0s. Accessed 12 February 2021.

Bayat, Asef. "A Wave for Life and Liberty: The Green Movement and Iran's Incomplete Revolution". *The People Reloaded: The Green Movement and The Struggle for Iran's Future*. Edited by Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel. Melville House, 2010. p. 41-52.

Bazargan, Mehdi. *Iran's Revolution in Two Moves* [*Enqelāb-e Iran Dar Do Harekat*]. Mazaheri, 1984/1363.

"Be Careful with Your Washing Machines" ["*Movāzeb-e māshin lebās-shuii-tān bāshid*"]. YouTube [Video File]. 2017/1395. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dw74MwGcAvc. Accessed 30 July 2019.

Beyley, GJ and Sasan Fatemi. *Iranian Music and Popular Entertainment: from Motrebi and Beyond.* Routledge, 2016.

Chavoshi, Mohsen. "Harsh Attack on the Overseas Singers" ["*Hamleh-ye Tond-e Mohsen Chavoshi beh Khānandehhā-ye ān-var-e āb*]. Khabaronline. 2020/1398. Retrieved from https://www.khabaronline.ir/news/1388198/. Accessed 12 February 2021.

Cohen, Stanley. *Folk Devils & Moral Panics; The Creation of the Mods and Rockers.* Routledge, 2002.

Dabashi, Hamid. *Iran: A People Interrupted.* New Press, 2008.

Dariush. "Interview with Dariush Eghbali". ["*Mosāhebeh bā Dariush Eghbali"*] Interview by Enayat Fani. *Beh Ebārat-e Digar.* 2011. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/tvradio/2011/12/111220. Accessed 28 June 2017.

De certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life.* Translated by Steven, Rendall. California UP, 1984.

Delijani, Sahar. *Children of the Jacaranda Tree.* Atria Books, 2013.

"Destroying the Musical Team" ["*Enhedām-e tim-e musiqi*"]. ISNA. 2012/1390. Retrieved from https://www.isna.ir/news/91102012573/ . Accessed 5 June 2014.

"Detention of Five Lyricists and Composers inside Iran" ["*Dastgiri-e panj tarāneh-sarā va āhang-sāz dar Iran*"]. Javanan. 2012. Retrieved from www.javanan.com/5-4. Accessed 3 May 2018.

"Dust Revolution- How Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's Jibe Backfired". *The Guardian.* 2009. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/2009/mahmoud-ahmadinejad. Accessed 13 July 2018.

Ebadi, Shirin and Azadeh Moaveni. *Iran Awakening; From Prison to Peace Prize: One Woman's Struggle at the Crossroads of History*. Vintage, 2006.

Ehteshami, Anoushirvan. *After Khomeini: The Iranian Second Republic.* Routledge, 1995.

Etedali, Shahla and Javad Mirmiran and Amir Hoessein Ghahgharaei. *Stories of Little Ali* [*Qesehhā-ye ali khuchulu*]. IRIB, 1985/1364.

"Everyone Came to See Mohsen Yeganeh in Los Angeles" ["*Dar Losanjeles hameh barāy-e Mohsen Yeganeh Āmadand*"]. *Mardom-Salari.* 2015/1394. Retrieved from: https://www.mardomsalari.ir/gallery. Accessed 12 February 2021.

Fatemi, Sasan. "From the Days of Radio to the Decline of Los Angeles" ("*Az ruzhāy-e rādio tā fetrat-e los anjeles*"). Interview by Reza Samim. *Angah*, vol.8. 2018/1398, pp. 106-121.

Fazeli, Mahmoud. "First Round of Execution of the Shah Army's Generals" ["*Eādam-e avalin amiran-e artesh-e shah*"]. Iranian Oral History. www.oralhisotry.ir. 2016/1395. Accessed February 2018.

Fiske, John. *Reading the Popular.* Routledge,1991.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* Translated by Alan Sheridan. Vintage Books, 1995.

Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny". *The Uncanny Experiments in Cyborg Culture.* Edited by Bruce Grenville. Arsenal Pulp, 2001. P. 58-95.

Ganji, Akbar. "With Akbar Ganji: From Serial Killings to the Movement for Democracy". ["*Bā Akbar Ganji: az qatlhā-ye zanjirehei tā jonbesh-e demokrāsy khāhi*"]. Interview by Enayat Fani. *Be Ebārat-e Digar.* 2010. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/persian/iran/2010/01/100111_l12_ef_with_ganji. Accessed 22 February 2019.

Golesorkhi, Khosrow. *Khosrow Golesorkhi's Last Defences* [*Ākharin Defa'iyāt-e Khosrow Golesorkhi*]. Ed. by Bozorg Kharazei. Arman,1979/1358.

"Googoosh's First Concert after the Revolution"["*Avalin konsert-e Googoosh pas az enqelāb*"] . BBC Persian. YouTube [Video File]. 2016. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-sZIhhQNKQ&t=11s. Accessed 10 January 2018.

"Heavy Hearted for Mousavi who Stood Bravely" ["*Deltangi keh barāye Mir Hossein Mousavi mardāneh istād*"]. Kaleme. 2011/1389. Retrieved from https://www.kaleme.com/1390/04/27/klm-65742/. Accessed 26 May 2012.

Hemmasi, Farzaneh. "Intimationg Dissent: Popular Song, Poetry, and Politics in Pre Revolutionary Iran". *Ethnomusicology*. Vol. 57, No.1. 2013. P. 57-87.

_____. "Iran's Daughter and Mother Iran: Googoosh & Diasporic Nostalgia for the Pahlavi Modern". *Popular Music.* Vol 36/2. Cambridge U Press. 2017. P. 157-177.

_____. *Tehrangeles Dreaming.* Duke U Press, 2020.

"Honor of Being Received by Imam Zaman and been ordered to built Jamkaran Mosque" ["*Eftekhār-e sharafyābi beh hozur-e emām zamān vā amr-e beh sākht-e masjed-e jamkarān*"]. Rasekhoon. 2010/1389. Retrieved from https://rasekhoon.net/calender/show/557671/. Accessed 2 February 2015.

Hosseini, Shahab. "Press Conference". YouTube [Video File] 2020/1398. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ou0PPKPrDg. Accessed 29 May 2020.

"Introducing One Hundred Hits in Four Decades" ["*Mo'arefi-e sad tarāneh-ye bartar-e in chahār daheh*"]. Musicema. 2015/1393. Retrieved from http://www.musicema.com/node/236608. Accessed 23 July 2016.

Jafari, Ghasem. *Gharibaneh.* IRIB, 2004/1382.

Jahanbegloo, Ramin. *Time Will Say Nothing: A Philosopher Survives an Iranian Prison.* Regina UP, 2014.

Jalaeipour, Hamid Reza. "Types of Reformism and Why insisting on Reform?" ["*Anv'ā-e eslāh talabi va cherā esrār bar eslāh*?"]. *Etemad,* Vol, 4059. March 2017/1395.

Jamehbozorg, Behzad. "The Superhero of the Burnt Beneration: Babak Ahmadi's Service and Treachery in Iran's contemporary Thought" ["*Abar qahremān-e nasl-e sukhteh: Khedmat va khiānat-e Babak Ahmadi dar andisheh-ye Iran-e Emrooz*"]. *Farhang-e-Emrooz,* Vol, 20. November 2017/1395, p.1-5.

Janati Ataei, Iraj. "Interview with Iraj Janati Ataii" ["*Mosāhebeh bā Iraj Janati Ataei*"]. Interview by Enayat Fani. *Beh Ebārat-e Digar.* 2011. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/tvandradio/2011/06/110601_hardtalk_iraj_janati_ataie.shtml. Accessed 2 June 2014.

"Journey to the West" ["*Siyāhat-e gharb*"]. Written by Seyed Hassan Najafi Ghoochani. [Audio File]. Rajeoon. 1985/1364. Retrieved from http://www.rajeoon.com. Accessed 10 April 2017.

Kalhor, Keyhan. "Serious Music Must Never Be Stopped." ["*Musiqi-e jedi hich-gāh nabāyad t'atil Shaved*"]. BBC Persian. 2020. Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/persian/arts- 51091177. Accessed 20 January 2020.

Kar, Mehrangiz. "Death of Mannequin". *My Sister, Guard Your Veil: My Brother, Guard Your Eyes*. Edited by Lila Azam Zanganeh. Beacon Press, 2006. p. 30-38.

Khamenei, Ali. *The Leader's Opinions on Moral Security: A Study on the Meaning, the Domain and the Strategies of the Embodiment of Moral Security in the Society.* [*Nazarat-e Rahbar Darbāreh-ye Amniat-e Akhlaqi: Barresi-e M'anā, qalamro, va esterātejihā-ye tahaqoq-e amniyat-e akhlaqi dar jām'eh*].Majles Shoraye Meli, 2010/1389.

"Khamenei Says Ya Ali" ["*Khamenei goft yā Ali*"]. YouTube. [Video File]. 2011/1389. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3w_VocORRPg . Accessed 10 February 2019.

Khomeini, Ruhollah. "Imam's Comments on Listening to Music" ["*Ezhārāt-e emām darbāreh shenidan-e musiqi*"]. YouTube [Video File]. 2012/1390. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VC7XVQSteY0 . Accessed 15 January 2017.

———. *Religious Problems* [*Masāel*]. Institution of Editing and Publishing Imam Khomeini's Works, 2013/1391.

———. "Speech at Behesh-e Zahra"["*Sokhan-rāni dar behest-e Zahra*"] YouTube [Video File]. 2014/1392. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yeWHkEaWoUw&t=1077s. Accessed 19 June 2019.

———. *Tahrir ol Vasile.* Translated by Seyed Mohammad Baquer Musavi. Institution of Editing and Publishing Imam Khomeini's Works, 1980/1358.

———. *The Treatise.* [*Resāleh*]. The Institution of Editing and Publishing Imam Khomeini's Works, 1980/1358.

Khoshnam, Mahmoud. *From Tradition's Whisper to Pop's Fuss* [*Az Najvāy-e Sonnat Tā Ghogha-ey Pāp*]. Farhang-e Javid, 2018/1396.

Khosravi, Shahram. *Young and Defiant in Tehran.* Pennsylvania UP, 2008.

Kimiaei, Masoud. "I'm with the People" ["*Man bā mardom hastam*"]. YouTube [Video File]. 2020/1398. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mM-lmXYQOR0. Accessed 19 February 2020.

Kimiaei, Poulad. "Poulad Kimiaei and His Harsh Response to Shahab Hosseini's nonsense and insulations to his Farther" ["*Pāshokh-e kubandeh-ye Poulad Kimiaei beh charandiyāt va ehanat-e Shahab Hosseini beh pedarash*"]. YouTube [Video File]. 2020/1398. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nMJJBejZA4 . Accessed 19 February 2020.

King Raam. "The Art of Selling". *Zirzamin: The Ultimate Iranian Underground and Alternative Music Magazine.* 2007. Retrieved from www.zirzamin.se/?q=node/75. Accessed 23 May 2007.

Laripur, Niloufar. "Interview with Niloufar Laripur". Musicema. 2018/1396. Retrieved from http://mail.musicema.com/Niloofar-Lari Poor-Interview. Accessed 20 February 2019.

"Leadership Adores Habiballah Moalemi" ["*Rahbari az Habibollah Mo'allemi tajlil mikonad*"]. http://mail.musicema.com/Niloofar-Lari Poor-Interview Fars News Agency. 2014/1392. Retrieved from https://www.farsnews.com/news/13920403000189/. Accessed 13 November, 2019.

Lotfollahzadegan, Alireza, et al. "*Passing the Boarder: Chasing the Intruder through Ramadan Operation"* ["*Obur az marz: t'aqib-e motejāvez bā amaliyāt-e ramezān*]. Sepahe Pasdarane Enqelabe Eslami, 2008/1386.

"Maestro Hossein Alizaedeh's Narrative of Ney-Nava- part of the documentary Baz-Razm produced by Vahid Hosseini" ["*Ravāyat-e ostād Hossein Alizadeh az ney-navā- bakhshi az*

mostanad-e bazm-razm sākhteh-ye Vahid Hosseini"]. YouTube [Video File]. 2019. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8tTzy8MO2c. Accessed 11 February 2021.

Mahdavi, Pardis. *Passionate Uprisings; Iran's Sexual Revolution.* Stanford UP, 2009.

"Manifestos: Organization of Iranian People's Fadaei Guerillas Manifestos from 1979-1980" ["*Bayaniehā-ye sāzmān- e cherikhā-ye fadāie khaq az sāl- e 1357-1359*"]. 1980/1358. Retrieved from Siahkal.com/Publication/beanie-ha-ta-sal-1980.pdf. Accessed 15 January 2016.

Mansur Fallah, Akbar. *For the Last Time* [*Barāy-e ākharin bār*]. IRIB, 2005/1383.

Milani, Abbas. *Eminent Persians: Men and Women who Made Modern Iran1941-1970.* Syracuse UP, 2008.

_____. "Iran Democratic Movements". Edited by Abbas Milani and Larry Diamond. *Politics & Culture in Contemporary Iran; Challenging the Status Quo.* Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2015. p. 3-12.

Mirafshar, Homa. "A Dialogue with the Poet and Lyricist Homa Mirafshar: Fresh Spring and a Fair Share of Iran's Beauties" ["*Nowbahār va sahmi az zibāihā-ye* Iran"]. Interview by Pejman Akbarzadeh. Ahange Zamane. 2010. Retrieved from http://zamaaneh.com/music/2010/04/post_316.html. Accessed 22 October 2018.

Mohammadi, Majid. "Jamkarn, Mahdists' Well, and the Competitive Market of Religion". ["*Jamkaran, chāh-e mahdaviun, va bāzār-e reqābati-e din*"]. Radio Farda.2011. Retrieved From https://www.radiofarda.scom/aft. Accessed 10 February 2018.

———. "Reformism Died Years Ago. That's it!" ["*Eslāh-talabi sālhā pish mord. Tamām*!"]. Radio Farda. 2017. Retrieved from https://www.radiofarda.com/a/iran-reform-movement review-rouhani-khatami/28818048.html. Accessed 24 April 2019.

Moqadam, Afsaneh. *Death to the Dictator: A Young Man Casts a Vote in Iran's 2009 Election and Pays a Devastating Price.* Sarah Crichton Books, 2010.

Monfaredzadeh, Esfandyar. "Interview with Esfandyar Monfaredzadeh" ["*Mosāhebeh bā Esfandyar Monfaredzadeh"*]. *In Exile.* 2012. Retrieved from https://www.manoto1.com/videos/monfaredzadeh/vid3776. Accessed 3 June 2015.

_____. "With Esfandyar Monfaredzadeh" ["*Bā Esfandyar Monfaredzadeh"*]. *Most Indelible Songs* ["*Mandegartarin tarāneha*"]. 2014. Retrieved from https://www.manoto1.com/videos. Accessed 3 June 2015.

Naeimi Astarabadi, Fazlollah. *The Collection* [*Majmu'e Āsār*]. Sokhan,1999/1377.

Nafisi, Azar. *Reading Lolita in Tehran; A Memoir in Books.* Random House, 2004.

Namjoo, Mohsen. "Honesty and Minor Scale". YouTube [Video File]. 2014. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKbimDu3-Ug. Accessed February 2017.

———. "The Revolution and Music: A Personal Odyssey". *Politics & Culture in Contemporary Iran: Challenging the Status Quo.* Edited by Abbas Milani and Larry Diamond.Diamond. Lynne Rienner, 2015. p. 180-214.

Navai, Ramita. *City of Lies: Love, Sex, Death and the Searching for Truth in Tehran.* Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2014.

Nikpay, Hamed. "Interview with Hamed Nikpay". ["*Mosāhebeh bā Hamed* Nikpay"]. *Shabahang.*YouTube [Video File]. 2009. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch/v. Accessed 5 June 2017.

"No Difference Between Jamkaran and any other Water" ["*Hich farqi beyn-e Jamkaran va ābhā-ye digar nist*"]. ISNA. 2018/1396. Retrieved from https://www.isna.ir/news/97042513530/. Accessed 12 February 2019.

No One Knows About Persian Cats. [*Kesi az gorbehhā-ye Irani khabar nadāreh*]. Directed by Bahman Ghobadi. Screen play by Bahman Ghobadi, Hossein Mortezaeian Abkenar, Roxana Saberi, 2009/1388.

Nooshin, Laudan. “The Language of Rock; Iranian Youth, Popular Music and National Identity”. *Media, Culture and Society in Iran; Living with Globalization and the Islamic State*. Edited by Mehdi Semati. Routledge, 2008. p. 69-93.

———. “Underground, Overground: Rock Music and Youth Discourses in Iran”. *Iranian Studies.* Vol, 38, no. 3. 2005. p. 463-494.

Norouzi, Kambiz. “Youth and the problematic of cultural crimes”. www.noormags.ir. Vol. 19. 1998/1376. Accessed 17 February 2017.

“ Nowruz 69”. YouTube [Video File] 2012. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qN2Yzr6rCjQ. Accessed 20 May 2018.

“Our Seyed, Our Leader”. [“*Seyyed-e mā, molā-ye* mā”].YouTube [Video File]. 2009/1388. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7Lyh4K0bgU. Accessed 2 August 2019.

Pahlavi, Mohammad Reza. *Towards the Great Civilization* [*Beh Suy-e Tamadon-e Bozorg*]. Pahlavi Library 1978/1356.

Pahlavi, Reza. “Interview with Persian Euronews”. YouTube [Audio File]. 2012. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNMbzRJ41aA. Accessed 17 October 2017.

“Pashaei’s Death and BBC Persian’s Strange Reportage” [“*Dar-gozasht-e Pashaei va gozāresh ajib-e BBC Farsi*”]. Tebian.ir. 2014. Accessed 3 January 2017.

“ People’s Reaction to The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action”. Aparat [Video File]. 2015/1393. Retrieved from https://www.aparat.com/v/VeP1K. Accessed 6 August 2019.

“Prize for Killing the Singer” [“*Jāyezeh barāy-e koshtan-e khānandeh*”]. Farsnews. 2012/1390. Retrieved from https://www.farsnews.com/news/13910309000689/. Accessed 15 January 2019.

"Project of Improving Social Security" ["*Tarh-e amniyat-e ejtem'āi*"]. Hamshahri Online. 2007/1385. Retrieved from https://www.hamshahrionline.ir/news/55421/. Accessed 30 July 2017.

Rafighdoosh, Mohsen. "Unread Lines: Dialogue with Mohsen Rafiqdoost". ["*Satrhā-ye nākhāndeh: goft-o-gu bā Mohsen Rafighdoost*"]. YouTube [Video File]. 2014/1392. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xdYojMYH98. Accessed 12 February 2021.

Rezaii, Mohsen. "Unread Lines: Dialogue with Mohsen Rezii" [*Satrhā-ye nākhāndeh*: *goft-o-gu bā Mohsen Rezaii*]. YouTube [Video File]. 2014/1392. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xD40SLNQX_Q. Accessed 12 February 2021.

Ricoeur, Paul. *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*. Edited by George Taylor. Columbia UP, 1986.

Robertson, Bronwen. *Reverberations of Dissent; Identity and Expression in Iran's Illegal Music Scene.* Continuum, 2012.

Sadr, Benyamin. "Twenty Years after the Event" ["*Bist sāl pas az vaq'eh.*"]. Radio Farda. 2019. Retrieved from https://www.radiofarda.com/a/students-protest-in-tir18-after-20 years/30044213.html. Accessed 2 August 2019.

Santuri. Directed by Dariush Mehrjui. Screenplay by Vahideh Mohammadifar and Dariush Mehrjui, 2007/1385.

Sarfaraz, Ardalan. *From Root to Eternity* [*Az Risheh Tā Hamisheh*]. Varjavand, 2002.

_____"With Ardalan Sarafraz" [*Bā Ardalan Sarafraz*]. *Most Indelible Songs* [Māndegārtarin tarānehā]. 2014. Retrieved from https://www.manoto1.com/videos/songs. Accessed 3 June 2015.

Sasy. Instagram Photos and Videos. 2019. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/sasy/?hl=en. Accessed 10 August 2019.

"Satanism and Rock & Roll" ["*Sheytān parasti va rāk and rol*"]. Shafiei Sarvestani, Esmaeil. Mo'ud Organization [Video File]. 2010/1388. Retrieved from Yaraneh Montazer Accessed 5 January 2013.

Schmitt, Carl. *Dictatorship.* Translated by Michael Hoelzl and Graham Ward. Polity Press, 2014.

Semati, Mehdi (ed). *Media, Culture and Society in Iran; Living with Globalization and the Islamic State*. Routledge, 2008.

"Serious Music Must Never Be Cancelled" ["*Musiqi-ye jedi hichvaqt nabāyad t'atil shaved*"]. BBC Persian. 2019. Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/persian/arts-51091177. Accessed 12 January 2020.

Shabpareh, Shahram. "We Iranians Who Were Living in the Shah's Era, Saw the Paradise by our Own Eyes" [*Mā irāniā-i keh dar zamān-e shāh zendegi mikardim, behesht row beh cheshm didim*). YouTube [Video File]. 2020. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ngs7hS1sBU. Accessed 10 February 2021.

Shirazi, Mohammad Ali. "Interview with Mohammad Ali Shirazi" [*Mosābeh bā Mohammad Ali Shirāzi*]. *Most Indelible Songs* [*Mandegartarin Tarāneha*]. 2014. Retrieved from https://www.manoto1.com/videos/songs Accessed 3 June 2015.

Shock. Directed by Shahin Samadpoor. IRIB. 2010/1388. Retrieved from http://www.zahra-media.ir. Accessed 6 January 2013.

Shokrollahi, Reza. "A Song for All Nobodies" ["*Tarānehii barāy-e hameh hickhasha*"]. Radio Farda. 2019. Retrieved from https://www.radiofarda.com/a/a-song-for-people-like-nobody/30322353.html. Accessed 10 February 2020.

"Siahkal's Epic: The 50th anniversary of Siahkal's Resurection" ["*Hamāseh-ye Siahkal: Panjāhomin sālgard-e rastākhiz-e Siahkal*"]. 2021. Retrieved from https://www.siahkal.com/. Accessed 22 January 2020.

Siamdoust, Nahid. *Soundtrack of Revolution: The Politics of Music in Iran.* Stanford UP, 2017.

"Singing in the IRIB was Prestigious". ["*Dar sedā o simā khāndan hormat dāsht*"]. Tasnim News Agency. 2016/1394. Retrieved from https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1395/12/22/1352731. Accessed 20 July 2019.

Storey, John. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction.* Sunderland UP, 2009.

"Twenty Five Kilometers of Human's Chain of Mousavi's Supporters in Tehran" ["25 kilometr zanjireh-ye havādārān-e Mousavi dar Tehran"].BBC Persian. 2009. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com.persian/green_chain. Accessed 12 March 2019.

"Verdict on Apostasy" ["*Hokm-e* ertedād"]. Shianews. 2012/1390. Retrieved from http://www.shia-news.com/fa/news/34940/. Accessed 15 January 2019.

"The Well for Plea". ["*Chāh-e 'arize*"]. Wikishia. 2013/1391. Retrieved from http://fa.wikishia.net/view/ . Accessed 10 February 2019.

"What happened to 1990s Singers? ["*Bar sar-e khānandehhā-ye daheh-ye shast che āmad?*"]. Fars News Agency. 2014/1392. Retrieved from https://www.farsnews.com/news/13930310000426/. Accessed 20 May 2018.

"Who Was Bijan Jazani and How He Was Executed?" ["*Bijan Jazani ke bood va chetor 'edām shod*?"]. Tarikhirani. 2020. Retrieved from: http://tarikhirani.ir/fa/news/8411. Accessed: 15 February 2021.

Wings to Fly [*Par-e* Parvāz]. Directed by Khosrow Masoumi. Screen Play by Kianoush Ayari and Khosrow Masoumi. Negin Shahr Film, 2000/1378.

Zibakalam, Sadegh. "I'm Afraid of this New Generation" ["*Man az in nasl-e jadid mitarsam*"]. Interview by Seyyed Javad Mousavi. YouTube [Video File]. 2020/1398. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twQ26DnuS64&t=132s. Accessed 12 February 2021.

Discography

Afshar, Ghasem. "Dedication to Birds" ["*Vaqf-e parandeh-hā*"]. Words and Music Mohammad Ali Shirazi and Akbar Azad. *Fasl-e Āshnayi.* Soroush, 1996/1375. Audio cassette.

Aghili, Shadmehr. "Passenger" ["*Mosāfer*"]. Words and Music by Niloufar Laripur and Shadmehr Aghili. *Mosāfer.* Peyghame Sahar, 1998/1377. CD.

_____. "Practicing Silence" ["*Mashq-e sokut*"]. Words and Music by Niloufar Laripur and Shahmehr Ahgili. *Mosāfer.* Peyghame Sahar, 1998/1377. CD.

_____. "Question Mark" ["*Alāmat-e soāl*"]. Words and Music by Niloufar Laripur and Shadmehr Aghili. *Par-e parvāz.* Hamavaz Ahang, 2000/1378. CD.

_____. "Villager" ["*Dehāti*"]. Words and Music by Mohammad Ali Bahmani and Shadmehr Aghili. *Dehāti.* Farsnava, 2001/1379. CD.

_____. *"*What the Hell" ["*Khiāli nist*"]. Words and Music by Shahkar Bineshpajooh and Shahmehr Aghili/Soroush Tahmasbi. *Khiāli Nist*. Navamedia, 2002. CD.

_____. "Wings to Fly" ["*Par-e parvāz*"]. Words and Music by Niloufar Laripur and Mohammad Reza Cheraghali. *Par-e Parvāz.* Ham Avaz, 2000/1378. CD.

Ahangaran, Sahdegh. "Saheb Zaman Troop" ["*Ey laskar-e Sāheb Zamān"*]. Words by Habibollah Mo'allemi. 1980/1359. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=km0pwWI4l7U.

_____. "To Free Quds" [*"Bahr-e āzādi-e Quds"*]. Words by Habibollah Mo'allemi.1982/1361. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_qmCwn3zOFM.

_____. Ahangaran, Sadegh. “Towards the Lovers’ Land” [“*Suy-e diyār-e āsheqān*”]. Words by Habibollah Mo‘allemi.1982/1361. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OD-URbOckas&t=46s.

Alizadeh, Hossein. *Ney-Navā.* Mahoor,1983/1362. Audio cassette.

Aramnejad, Arya. “Ali Riseup” [“*Ali barkhiz*”]. Words and Music by Arya Aramnejad. 2009/1388. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5a-X3ZENDjk&t=170s.

Asemani, Mehrdad. “Give me Back My Songs” [“*Tarānehām-o pas bedeh*”]. Words and music by Iraj Janati Ataei and Mehrdad Asemani. *T‘ame Roya.* Avang, 2011. CD.

Asgari, Hamid. “Destiny” [“*Sarnevesht*”]. Words and Music by Hamid Asgari. *Sarnevesht.* Nashre Pouya, 2007/1385. CD.

Assar, Alireza. “Heaven’s Celestials” [“*Qodsiān-e āsemān*”]. Words and Music by Fazlollah Naeimi (Horufi) Astarabadi and Foad Hejazi. *Qodsiāne āsemān.* Hamavaz, 1999/1378. CD.

Bahadori, Abbas. “Flower Blossoms” [“*Gol miruyad”*]. Words and Music Mahmood Shahrokhi and Farid Shabkhiz. IRIB, 1993/1372. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iAPVFMtKAEg.

Bahadori, Benyamin. “A Champion” [“*Yeh pahlevun*”]. Words and Music by Farid Ahmadi and Benyamin Bahadori. *Mahe Mehraboon.* Avaye Nakisa, 2005/1383. CD.

_____. *Kind Moon* [*Mah-e mehrabun*]. MSB, 2005/1383.CD.

Banan, Gholam Hossein. “Ey Iran”. Words and Music by Hossein Gol-Golab and Ruhollah Khaleqi, 1944/1323. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SvgVHjqOrc.

Chavoshi, Mohsen. “Twenty Thousand Wishes” [“*Bist hezār ārezu*”]. Words and Music by Rumi and Mohsen Chavoshi. *Bist hezār ārezu.* Nasim Ava, 2017/1395. CD.

Dariush. “Blood Game” [“*Khun- bāzi*”]. Words and Music by Roozbeh Bemani and Alireza Afkari. *Donyā-ye in ruzāye man.* DBM Enterprise, 2010. CD.

_____. “Forest” [“*Jangal*”]. Words and Music by Iraj Janati Ataei and Babak Bayat. Olympic, 1972/1351. Vinyl Sp.

———. “Good Scent of Wheat” [“*Buy-e khub-e gandom*”]. Words and Music by Shahyar Ghanbari and Varoojan. Royal, 1974/1353. Vinyl SP.

———. “Home” [“*Khuneh*”]. Words and Music by Iraj Jananti Ataei and Babak Bayat. Caspian, 1973/1352. Vinyl SP.

———. “Karun”. Words and Music by Karo Derderian and Babak Afshar. *Khāk-e khub-e man.* Caspian, 1983. Audio cassette.

———. “My World in These Days” [“*Donyā-ye in ruzā-ye man*”]. Words and Music by Roozbeh Bemani and Alireza Afkari. *Donyā-ye in ruzā-ye man.* DBM Enterprise, 2010. CD.

_____. *My World in These Days.* [*Donyāh-e in ruzā-ye man*]. Words and Music by Roozbeh Bemani and Alireza Afkari. DBM Enterpresie, 2010. CD.

———. “Salute” [“*Salām*”]. Words and Music by Abbas Moradi and Babak Afshar. *Salām ey khāk-e- khub-e mehrabāni.* Caspian Records,1983. Audio cassette.

———. “Take Me Back to My Home”. [“*Marā be khāneh-am bebar*”]. Words and Music Iraj Janati Ataei and Armik. *Marā be khāneh-am bebar.* Taraneh, 1986. CD.

———. “Torturer” [“*Shekanjeh-gar*”]. Words and Music by Roozbeh Bemani and Alireza Afkari. *Donyā-ye in ruzā-ye man.*DBM Enterpreise, 2010. CD.

Ebi. “Hunting”. [“*Shekār*”]. Words and music Mohammad Ali Shirazi and Hassan Shamaizadeh. *Tāzehtarin Tarānehā.* Avang, 1976/1355. Audio cassette.

Etemadi, Khashayar. “Dust of Ali’s Threshould”. [“*Khāk-e āstān-e Ali*”]. Words and Music Mazaher Mosafa and Foad Hejazi. *Fasl-e Āshnāii.* Soroush, 1997/1375. Audio cassette.

_____. “ Me and You, Tree and Rain”. [“*Man o to, derākht-o bārun*”]. Words and Music by Ahmad Shamlu and Shadmehr Aghili. *Fasl-e Āshnāii.* Soroush, 1998/1376. Audio cassette.

“Fresh Spring” [“*Nowbahār*”]. Group Singers. Words and Music Homa Mirafshar and Morteza Barjesteh. Caltex, 1993. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2LnZ43qPYA.

Ghanbari, Shahyar. “Forbidden” [“*Qadeghan*”]. Words and Music Shahyar Ghanbari. *Qadeghan.* MZM Records, 1999. CD.

Ghomeishi, Siavash. “Mask” [“*Neqāb*”]. Words and Music by Yaghma Golrouei and Siavash Ghomeishi. *Neqāb.* Caltex, 2002. CD.

Golriz, Mohammad. “Pure Martyr” [“*Shahid-e Motahhar*”]. Words and Music by Hamid Sabzevari and Ahmad Ali Rageb. *Saba,* 1980/1359. Audio cassette.

_____. “This Victory” [“*In piruzi*”]. Words and Music by Hamid Sabzevari and Ahmad Ali Rageb. *Peyk-e Soroush.* Soroush, 1982/1361. CD.

Golrouei, Yaghma. “Little Ali” [“*Ali kuchulu*”]. Words and Music by Yaghma Golrouei, 2009. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3x4LrNGxqA.

Googoosh. “Captivated Soil” [“*Khāk-e asir*”]. Words and Music by Nosrat Farzaneh and Babak Amini. *Zartosht.* Kia Entertainment, 2000. CD.

———. “Melancolia” [“*Deltangi*”]. Words and Music by Nosrat Farzaneh and Googoosh. *Zartosht.* Kia Entertainment, 2000. CD.

———. “Qiu, Qiu, Bang, Bang”. Words and Music by Zoya Zakarian and Mehrdad Asemani. *Qiu, Qiu, Bang, Bang.* Taraneh, 2004. CD.

———. “Scent of the Voyage” [“*Buy-e safar*”]. Words and Music by Nosrat Farzaneh and Babak Bayat. *Zartosht.* Kia Entertainment, 2000. CD.

———. “Secluded” [“*Gusheh neshin*”]. Words and Music by Nosrat Farzaneh and Babak Amini. *Zartosht.* Kia Entertainment, 2000. CD.

———. *Zoroaster* [“*Zartosht*”]. Words and Music by Nosrat Farzaneh and Googoosh. Kia Entertainment, 2000. CD.

Haydeh. “Bright Days” [“*Ruzā-ye rowshan*”]. Words and Music by Ardalan Sarfaraz and Andranik. Pars video, 1982. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wd5jYXumLo8.

———. “Sign” [*Neshāneh*]. Words and Music Bahman Forsi’s adaptation of Sheykh Bahaei and Mohammad Heydari. *Jadidtarin-e Haydeh.* Avang, 1974/1353. Audio cassette.

Haydeh & Vigen. “Housemate” [“*Ham- khuneh*”]. Words and Music by Ardalan Sarfaraz and Andranik. Jam-e Jam, 1982. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EL9BzJEci6c.

Hichkas. “A Good Day Will Come” [“*Yeh ruz-e khub miyād*”]. Words and Music by Hichkas and Mahdyar Aghajani. 2009/1388. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQj_B9TkEBc.

———. “He Has Fisted His Hands” [“*Dastāh- o mosht kardeh*”]. Words and Music by Hichkas and Mahdyar Aghajani. 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=joEh2EQJeVQ.

Hypernova. “Consequences”. Words and Music by King Raam and Hypernova Band. *Who Says You Can’t Rock in Iran,* 2004/1382. CD.

———. “No One”. Words and Music by King Raam and Hypernova Band. *Who Says You Can’t Rock in Iran,* 2004/1382. CD.

———. *Who Says You Can’t Rock in Iran.* Hypernova, 2004/1382. CD.

Kamkar, Bijan. “Where Are You Godly Martyrs” [“*Kojāyid ey shahidān-e khodāyi*”]. Words and Music by Rumi and Hushang Kamkar. Bell, 1979/1357. Audio cassette.

Khaje Amiri, Ehsan. “Estrangement” [“*Hess-e gharibi*”]. Words and Music by Afshin Yadollahi and Ehsan Khaje Amiri. *Barāy-e āvalin bār.* Payam, 2005/1383. CD.

———. *For the First Time* [*Barāy-e avalin bār*]. Words and Music by Afshin Yadollahi and Ehsan Khaje Amiri. Payam, 2005/1383. CD.

———. “For the Last Time” [“*Barāy-e ākharin bār*”]. Words and Music by Afshin Yadollahi and Ehsan Khaje Amiri. *Barā-ye avalin bār.* Payam, 2005/1383. CD.

———. “Your Dream”. [“*Khiāl-e to*”]. Words and Music by Ehsan Khaje Amiri and Pedram Keshtkar. *Barāy-e avalin bar.* Payam, 2005/1383. CD.

Mazaheri, Peyman. “Mosquito” [“*Pasheh*”]. Words and Music by Fara Band, 2002/1380. CD.

Mazyar. “Iran Iran”. Words and Music by Alireza Meybodi and Emad Raam. *Shabāneh bā shab zendeh-dārān,* 1979/1358. Audio cassette.

Mokhtabad, Abdolhossein. “Longing for Union” [“*Tamannā-ye vesāl*”]. Words and Music Sheykh Bahaei and Abdolhossein Mokhtabad. *Tamanā-ye vesāl.* Golnavaye Honar, 1991/1370. Audio cassette.

Monfaredzadeh, Esfadyar. “May Spring Be Blissful” [“*Bahāran khojasteh bād*”]. Music and Words by Keramatollah Daneshyan and Esfandyar Monfaredzadeh. 1979. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVM-M4IuoNI.

Najafi, Shahin. “In a Time When…” [*“Vaqti keh… ”*]. Words and Music by Shahin Najafi and Majid Kazemi. Shahin Najafi and iTunes, 2014. Audio file.

_____. “Mahdi”. Words and Music by Shahin Najafi. Shahin Najafi and iTunes, 2010. Audio file.

———. “Naghi”. Words and Music by Shahin Najafi. Shahin Najafi and iTunes, 2012. Audio file.

———. “Shaban” [*Sh‘abān*]. Words and Music by Shahin Najafi. Shahin Najafi and iTunes, 2013. Audio file.

Namjoo, Mohsen. “Remember” [“*Yād ār*”]. Words and Music by Mohsen Namjoo. Mohsen Namjoo and iTunes, 2019. Audio file.

Nikpay, Hamed. “The Owner of this Land” [“*Mālek-e in khāk*”]. Words unknown. Music Hamed Nikpay. NMP, 2009. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-akqjnssMo.

Sadeghi, Reza. “Black is the Color of Love” [“*Meshki rang-e eshq-e*”]. Words and Music by Reza Sadeghi. *Meshki rang-e eshq-e.* Dolate eash.com, 2003/1381. CD.

Sasy. “Gentleman” [“*Jentelman*”]. Words and Music by Sasy. Radio javan, 2019. Audio file.

Shabpareh, Shahram. “Homeland” [“*Diyār”*]. Words and music by Shahram Shabpareh. *Diyār.* Caletex, 1979. Audio cassette.

———. “Hot Kiss” [“*Dāgh-e buseh”*]. Words and Music by Shahram Shabpareh and Eric Kant. *Behrarinha-ye rooz.* Avang, 1975/1355. Audio cassette.

———. “Pariya”. Words and Music by: Shahram Shabpareh. *Pariyā.* Caletex, 1984. Audio cassette.

———. “Two Doves” [“*Do kabutar*”]. Words and Music by Shahram Shabpareh. *Tāzehhā-ye Shahram Shabpareh.* Avang, 1976/1355. Audio cassette.

Shamaizadeh, Hassan. “Hearth” [“*Ojāq*”]. Words and Music by Ardalan Sarfaraz and Hassan Shamaizadeh. Caspian Records, 1974/1353. Vinyl SP.

———. “More and More” [“*Bishtar o bishtar*”]. Words and Music by Bijan Samandar and Hassan Shamaizadeh. *Entekhābi- 2.* Taraneh, 1984. Audio cassette.

———. “Swamp”. [“*Mordāb*”]. Words and Music by Ardalan Sarfaraz and Hassan Shamaizadeh. Caspian Records, 1974/1353. Vinyl SP.

Shams, Siavash. “Iranian Girl” [“*Dokhtar iruni*”]. Words and Music by Leila Kasra and Farrokh Ahi. *Hamsāyehā.* Caltex. 1985. Audio cassette.

“Stories of Little Ali”. [“*Qesehay-e ali kuchulu*”]. Words and Music by Mahmoud Moshrefazad Tehrani and Babak Bayat. IRIB, 1985/1364. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3lKovNdBGc.

Transliterations

Shabpareh, Shahram. "Homeland" ["*Diyār"*]. Words and music by Shahram Shabpareh. *Diyār.* Caletex, 1979. p. 24.

Man beh chashm-e khishtan, didam negāram miravad

Sorkhi-e rokhsāram az donbāl-e yāram miravad

Man gereftāram beh tufan

Dar del-e daryā-ye eshq

Yār-e man bā kashti-e Nuh

Az kenāram miravad

Haydeh. "Bright Days" ["*Ruzā-ye rowshan*"]. Words and Music by Ardalan Sarfaraz and Andranik. Pars video, 1982. p. 25.

Hameh azādār, sar beh garibun

Mardā sar-e dār, zanā tu zendun

Na tu āsemun, na ru zaminim

Engār ke khābim, kābus mibinim

Nobat migirim, gij-o bi- hadaf

Vāseh mordan ham, bāyad raft tu saf

Ruzā-o shabā injur migzaran

Har jā keh bekhān, mā ro mibaran

Mazyar. "Iran Iran". Words and Music by Alireza Meybodi and Emad Raam. *Shabāneh bā shab zendeh-dārān.* 1979. Appendix A, p. 255.

Agar Iran beh joz virān-sarā nist

Man in virān- sarā rā dust dāram

Agar āb-o havāyash nist delkash

Man in āb o havā rā dust dāram

Tamām-e ‘ālam az ān-e shomā bād

Man in yek tekeh jā rā dust dāram

Digeh nadāram tāqat-e mundan

Man in shahr-o rahā mikonam az dard-e shabuneh

Del-e muten-e man mordeh ze bidād-e zamuneh

Hāy hāy, hāy hāy, saram ruy-e tan-e man

Nabāsh-e gar keh bigāneh besheh ham-vatan-e man

Ageh khāk-e man az dast bereh Jāyi nadāram

Delam mimireh az ghosseh digeh nāyi nadāram

Beh joz nām-e to ey mām-e vatan ey muten-e man

Degar bar ruy-e labhā-ye khod āvāii nadāram

Iran, Iran

Saram ruy-e tan-e man

Nabāsheh gar ke bigāneh besheh ham-vatan-e man

Āri!

Gozāresh in ast, Khabar in ast

Iran-e man

Tanhāt gozāshtand

Tanhā-tar az tanhā

Yārān nāmi az to nemibarand

Ey āberu-ye eshq

Ghosseh dar cheshmānat favāreh mizanad

Āy vatan!

Guyi gharib māndehyi dar gharibānehhā-ye khod

Bā vāy vāy-e bi kasān-e o

Hāy hāy-e shabāneh-at

Beh to keh bā hezāran zakhm bar del istādeyi migeryam

Cheh konam?

Geryeh-am dast-e khodam nist

Digeh nadāram tāqat-e mundan

Man in shahr-o rāhā mikonam az dard-e shabuneh

Haydeh & Vigen. "Housemate" ["*Ham- khuneh*"]. Words and Music by Ardalan Sarfaraz and Andranik. Jam-e Jam, 1982. p. 31-33.

Az man napors khunat kojās

Tu in hameh viruneh

Ey ham-qabileh chi begam

Qabileh sargarduneh

Mā dar beh dar-tar az hamim

Ham-kuneh-ye bi khuneh

Ghorbat-e mā diyār-e mās

Khunin-tarin viruneh

Dar-beh-dari fāl-e to bud

Amā nasib-e mā shod

Kudak-e nāzādeh-ye mā

Bā dast-e mā kafan shod

Az man napors dard-e delam

Shekasteh sang-e sabur

Khātereh-hā: viruneh-hā

Qessehā: zendeh beh gur

Cheh ārezuahyi keh namord

Cheh sinehāyi keh nasukht

Kasi digeh tu un diyār

Rakht-e arusi nadukht

Bāvar kon ey ham-āvāz

Nashkasteh bāl-e parvāz

Bā ham biyā besāzim

Un khun-a-ro az āghāz

Ahangaran, Sahdegh. "Saheb Zaman Troop" ["*Ey Laskar-e Sāheb Zamān"*]. Words by Habibollah Mo'allemi. 1980. p. 33.

Ey lashkar-e Saheb Zaman, āmādeh bāsh, āmādeh bāsh

Bahr-e nabardi bi amān, āmādeh bāsh, āmādeh bāsh

Razmandehgān-e jān beh kaf

Ruz-e shojā'at āmadeh

Ey lashkar-e ruh-e khodā

Gāh-e shahādat āmadeh

Ahangaran, Sadegh. "Towards the Lovers' Land" ["*Suy-e diyār-e āsheqān*"]. Words by Habibollah Mo'allemi.1982. p. 34.

Suy-e diyār-e āsheqān

Beh Karbala miravim

Hasti-e khod beh rāh-e haq

Yek-sareh qorbān konim

"Karun". Words and Music by Karo Derderian and Babak Afshar. *Khāk-e khub-e man.* Caspian, 1983. p. 34.

Tā key tanad bar pud-e mā

Tār-e siyāh-e bandegi

Tā key khelad khār-e setam

Bar pāy-e lokht-e zendegi

Zahmat az ān-e mā hameh

Rahmat az ān-e digarān

Zellat be kuy-e mā hameh

Ezzat be kuy-e digarān

Ey shāhed-e dard-o balā-ye

Ruz-o shab āfzun-e mā

Karun-e dard-āludeh-o del-khasteh-o mahzun-e mā

Beshnow hadis-e suz-e mā

Karun-e mā, Karun-mā, Karun- mā

Beshnow hadiseh suz-e mā

Az hasrat-e diruz-e mā

Az mātam-e emruz-e mā

Ahangaran, Sahdegh. "To Free Quds" ["*Bahr-e āzādi-e Quds"*]. Words by Habibollah Mo'allemi. 1982. p. 35.

Bahr-e Āzādi-e Quds

Az Karbala bāyad gozasht

Az kenar-e marqadeh ān sar jodā bāyad gozasht

Khiz ey razmandeh shir

Khāneh az doshman begir

Dariush. "Salute" ["*Salām*"]. Words and Music by Abbas Moradi and Babak Afshar. *Salām ey khāk-e- khub-e mehrabāni.* Caspian Records, 1983. p. 36.

Harāsat key bodi az doshman-e dun?

Kojā Changiz o Teymur o Sekandar

Tavānā-ye nabardat ey qalandar?

Shegeft-ā !

Gar bemirad roshanāyi

Nahān mānad navā dar bi-navāyi

Mokhtabad, Abdolhossein. "Longing for Union" ["*Tamannā-ye vesāl*"]. Words and Music Sheykh Bahaei and Abdolhossein Mokhtabad. *Tamanā-ye vesāl.* Golnavaye Honar, 1991. Appendix B, p. 257.

Tā key beh tamannā-ye vesāl-e to yegāneh

Ashkam shaved az har mojeh chon seyl ravāneh

Khāhad beh sar āyad gham-e hejrān-e to yā na

Ey tir-e ghamat rā del-e oshāq neshāneh

Jam'ei beh to mashghul o to ghāyeb ze miyāneh

Bolbol beh chaman zān gol-e rokhsār neshāndi

Parvāneh dar ātash shod o asrār 'ayān did

Āref sefat-e vasf-e to dar pir o javān did

Y'ani hameh jā aks-e rokh-e yār tavān did

Divāneh neyam man keh ravam khāneh beh khāneh

Har dar keh zanam sāheb-e ān khāneh toyi to

Har jā keh ravam partow-e kāshāneh toyi to

Dar meykadeh o deyr jānāneh toyi to

Maqsud-e man az k'abeh-o bot-khāneh toyi to

Maqsud toii k'abeh-o bot-khāneh bahāneh

Hayedeh. "Sign" [*Neshāneh*]. Words and Music Bahman Forsi's adaptation of Sheykh Bahaei and Mohammad Heydari. *Jadidtarin-e Haydeh.* Avang, 1974. Appendix C, p. 258.

Ey tir-e ghamat rā del-e oshāq neshāneh

Jam'ei beh to mashghul

To ghāyeb ze miāneh

Dar meykadeh ghāfel

Dar madreseh āqel

Dar som'eh 'ābed

Ham sukhte-ye khaki, ham bi-del-e aflāiki

Ham sāken-e masjed

Zāhed suy-e masjed shod

Man jāneb-e khammār

Man yār talab kardam

Ou jelveh-gah-e yār

Hāji beh rah-e k'abeh, man rāhi-e didār

Parvāneh dar ātash shod o asrār 'ayān did

Y'ani hameh jā aks-e rokh-e yār tavān did

Divāneh manam, man keh ravam khāneh be khāneh

Har dar keh zanam khāneh toyi to

Dar khāneh toyi partow-e kāshāneh toyi to

Dar meykadeh o deyr

Jānāneh toyi to

Maqsud-e man az k'abeh o bot-khāneh toyi to

Maqsud toyi k'abeh o bot-khāneh bahāneh

Bahadori, Abbas. "Flower Blossoms" [*Gol miruyad*]. Words and Music Mahmood Shahrokhi and Farid Shabkhiz. IRIB, 1993. p. 62.

Gol miruyad be bāgh, gol miruyad

Bā shabnam-e sobh-gah rokh mishuyad

Gol jelveyi az jamāl-e jānāneh-ye mā

Bolbol be tarāneh vasf-e u miguyad

Abr āmad o bar sar-e chaman gowhar rikht

Az jāmeh beh jāhm-ha akhtar rikht

In qāsed-e kuy-e dust, in peyk-e bahār

Dar sāghar-e ruh-e ārefān bāvar rikht

Barkhiz to ham navāy-e towhid bekhān

Bar bām-e jahān beh sān-e khorshid bekhān

Az showq cho morq-e eshq ghowghā sar kon

Gol naqmehi az jamāl-e jāvid bekhān

"Fresh Spring" [*Nowbahār*]. Group Singers. Words and Music Homa Mirafshar and Morteza Barjesteh. Caltex, 1993. p. 65.

Āmadeh nowruz dar iran-zamin

Khāk-e mā shod rashk-e ferdows-e barin

Buy-e nārenj o toranj o atr-e bid

Mitavān az torbat-e hafez shenid

Khun-e pāk-e āsheqi dar jān-e māst

Risheh-ye in eshq dar iran-e māst

Ham-vatan Nowruz-e to piruz bād

Ey vatan har ruz-e to Nowruz bād

...

Ham-vatan āmad dobāreh nowbahār

Shod sarāsar khāk-e Iran lāleh-zār

Shod falak az bād-e nowruzi javān

Bāz kardeh chatri az gol arghavān

Āsemān bardāsht zir -abru-ey eshq

Por shodeh donyā ze atr o buy-e eshq

Bakht agar khāb ast bidārash konid

Āsheqāneh bāz didār-ash konind

Ebi. "Hunting". ["*Shekār*"]. Words and music Mohammad Ali Shirazi and Hassan Shamaizadeh. *Tāzehtarin Tarānehā.* Avang,1976. 1976. p.74.

Vaqti resid āhu hanuz nafas dāsht

Dāsht hanuzam barehhā-sho milisid

Vaqti resid qalbi hanuz tapesh dāsht

Ammā unam cheshmeyi bud keh khoshkid

Del-tangam, del-tangam, del-tang az in bidād

Del-tangam, del-tangam, del- tang az in sayyād

In-o migan jang-e bedun-e e'āln

Jangi keh hich qā'edeyi nadāreh

In-o migan jedāl-e nā-barābar

Jedāli keh fāydehyi nadāreh

Yek nafar az dasht-e bedun-e āhu

Migoft to gham ruy-e delam gozāshti

Man nemikhām dashtā-ro khoshk-o khāli

Āsheq-e un āhu budam keh koshti

Afshar, Ghasem. "Dedication to Birds" ["*Vaqf-e parandehā*"]. Words and Music Mohammad Ali Shirazi and Akbar Azad. *Fasl-e Āshnaii* Soroush, 1996. 1996. p. 76.

Āy ādamā-ye mehrabun vājeb-e keh komak konim

Fekri be hāl-e bastan-e zakhmā-ye shāparak konim

Vājeb-e ke jalā bedim ābi-e āsemuni ro

Vaqf-e parandeh-hā konim duneh-ye mehrabuni ro

Peykar-e nāz-e nastaran, bastar-e sabzeh o chaman

Heyf-e keh farsudeh besheh

Āb-e zolāl-e cheshmehā, bārun-e rahmat-e khodā

Heyf-e gel-āludeh besheh

Pākiyā-ye donyā ro āludim

In jur ageh begzareh nābudim

Āy ādamā bā nadunam-kāritun

Zendegi ro koshtin o khoshnudin

Ku kojā raft āsemun-e ābimun

Ku kojā raft berkeh-ye morghābimun

Cherā bāyad bemiran az teshnegi

Māhiyā-ye kuchik-e sorkhābimun

Dasht ageh sahrā besheh qāsedaki nemimuneh

Qesse-ye zendegi ro baz chakāvaki nemikhuneh

Dariush. "Good Scent of Wheat" ["*Buy-e khub-e gandom*"]. Words and Music by Shahyar Ghanbari and Varoojan. Royal, 1974. Appendix D, p. 259.

Buy-e gandom māl-e man

Har chi keh dāram māl-e to

Yeh vajab khāk māl-e man

Har chi mikāram māl-e to

Ahl-e tā'uni-e in qabileh-ye mashreqiam

Toyi in mosāfer-e shishehyi-ye shahr-e farang

Pustam az jens-e shab-e

Pust-e to az makhmal-e sorkh

Rakhtam az tāval-e tan-push-e to az pust-e palang

Buy-e gandom māl-e man

Har chi keh dāram māl-e to

Yeh vajab khāk māl-e man

Har chi mikāram māl-e to

To beh fekr-e jangal-e āhan o āsemun kharāsh

Man beh fekr-e yeh otāq andāzeh-ey to vāseh khāb

Tan-e man khāk-e maneh, sāqeh-ye gandom tan- to

Tan-e mā teshnehtarin teshneh-ye yek qatreh-ye āb

Buy-e gandom māl-e man

Har chi ke dāram māl-e to

Yeh vajab khāk māl-e man

Har chi mikāram māl-e to

Shahr-e to shahr-e farang

Ādamāsh termeh qabā

Shahr-e man shahr-e do'ā

Hameh gonbadāsh talā

Tan-e to mesl-e tabar

Tan-e man risheh-ye sakht

Tapesh-e aks-e yeh qalb

Mundeh ammā ru derakht

Nabāyad marsiyeh-gu bāsham vāseh khāk-e tanam

To ākheh mosāferi, khun-e rag-e injā manam

Tan-e man dust nadāreh zakhmi-e dast-e to besheh

Hālā bā har ki keh hast, har ki keh nist

Dād mizanam

Buy-e gandom māl-e man

Har chi ke dāram māl-e man

Yeh vajab khāk māl-e man

Har chi mikāram māl-e man

Ghanbari, Shahyar. "Forbidden" ["*Qadeghan*"]. Words and Music Shahyar Ghanbari. *Qadeghan.* MZM Records, 1999. p. 83.

Ābi-e daryā qadeghan

Showq-e tamashā qadeghan

Eshq-e do māhi qadeghan

Bā ham o tanhā qadeghan

Barāy-e eshq-e tāzeh

Ejāzeh bi ejāzeh

Pech pech o najvā qadeghan

Raqs-e sāyeh-hā qadeghan

Kashf-e buseh-ye bi havā

Beh vaqt-e royā qadeghan

Barāy-e khāb-e tāzeh

Ejāzeh bi ejāzeh

Dar in ghorbat-e khānegi

Begu har chi bāyad begi

Ghazal begu beh sādegi

Begu zedeh bād zendegi

Barāy-e sh'er-e tāzeh

Ejāzeh bi ejāzeh

Az to neveshtan qadeghan

Gelāyeh kardan qadeghan

Atr-e khosh-e zan qadeghan

To qadeghan

Man qadeghan

Barāy-e ruz-e tāzeh

Ejāzeh bi ejāzeh

Naeimi Astarabadi, Fazlollah. *The Collection* [*Majmu'e Āsār*]. Sokhan,1999/1377. p. 113.

Nafs ast kadbānu-ye man, man kadkhodā vow shuy-e u

Kadbānu gar bad mikonad, bar ruy-e kadbānu zaman

…

Ta dust dārandam khasān az bahr-e ārāyesh konun

Hamchon zanān-e fāhesheh key shāneh bar gisu zanam?

Assar, Alireza. "Heaven's Celestials" [*Qodsiān-e āsemān*]. Words and Music by Fazlollah Naeimi (Horufi) Astarabadi and Foad Hejazi. *Qodsiāne āsemān.* Hamavaz, 1999. p. 114.

Hey cārvān, hey cārvān, man dozd-e shab-row nistam

Man pahlevān-e 'ālam-am, man tigh ruyāru zanam

…

Khāqān-e ordu-dār agar az jān nagardad khish-e man

Sāhebqerān-e ālamām bar iyl o bar ordu zanam

Khiz ey tavāngar pish-e man benshin be zānu-ye adab

Man pādeshāh-e keshvaram, key pish-e to zānu zanam?

"Question Mark" ["*Alāmat-e soāl*"]. Words and Music by Niloufar Laripur and Shadmehr Aghili. *Par-e parvāz.* Hamavaz Ahang, 2000. p. 118.

Dāgh-e tarāneh tu negām

Shoq-e residan tu tanam

Tu hajm-e sard-e in qafas

Montazer-e par zadanam

Man az tabār-e ghorbatam

Az Ārezu-ha-ye mahāl

Qesse-ye mā tamum shodeh

Bā yeh ʻalāmat-e soʻāl

Aghili, Shadmehr. "Wings to Fly" ["*Par-e parvāz*"]. Words and Music by Niloufar Laripur and Mohammad Reza Cheraghali. Ham Avaz. *Par-e Parvāz,* 2000. p. 119.

Esm-e to barāy-e man moqadas-e

Tā nafas tu sineh par-par mizaneh

Bāvaram kon keh faqat bāvar-e to

Mituneh qofl-e qafas ro beshkaneh

Manam o yeh āsemun-e bi-darigh

Manam o yeh kureh-rāh-e nāgozir

Ey setāreh-ye shabā-ye mashreqi

Pār-e parvāz-e man-o azam nagir

Googoosh. *Zoroaster* ["*Zartosht*"]. Words and Music by Nosrat Farzaneh and Googoosh. Kia Entertainment, 2000. p. 126.

Sedāyam rā be tārikh qarz khāham dād

Va faryād-e to rā

Ey zan khānomam

Ey sarzamin dādeh, pesar dādeh

Beh man rokhsat bedeh ey habs geryeh

Geryeh-at rā man bekhānam

Ghomeishi, Siavash. "Mask" ["*Neqāb*"]. Words and Music by Yaghma Golrouei and Siavash Ghomeishi. *Neqāb.* Caltex, 2002. p. 128.

Ey bāzigar geryeh nakon

Mā hamamun mesl-e hamin

Sobā keh az khāb pā mishim

Neqāb beh surat mizanim

Yeki mo'allem misheh o yeki misheh khuneh beh dush

Yeki tarāneh-sāz misheh

Yeki misheh ghazal-forush

Kohneh neqāb-e zendegi

Tā shab ru surathā-ye mās

Geryehhā-ye posht-e neqāb

Mesl-e hamiseh bi-sedās

Har kesi hasti yeh dafeh

Qad bekesh az posht-e neqāb

Az ru neveshteh harf nazan

Rahā sho az pileyeh-ye khāb

Naqsh-e ye daricheh-ro

Ru mileyeh qafas bekesh

Barāy-e yek bār ham shodeh

Jāy-e khodet nafas bekesh

Kāshki mishod tu zendegi

Mā khodemun bāshim o bas

Tanhā barāy-e yeh negah

Hattā barāy-e yeh nafas

Tā key beh jay-e khod-e mā

Neqāb-e mā harf bezaneh

Tā key sokut-o raj zadan

Naqsh-e namāyesh-e man-e

Mikhām hamin tarāneh ro

Ru sahneh faryād bezanam

Neqābam-o pāreh konam

Jāy-e khodam dād bezanam

Mazaheri, Peyman. "Mosquito" ["*Pasheh*"]. Words and Music by Fara Band. 2002. p. 135.

Āhāy! Pasheh bā to-am

Chi mikhāi digeh az jun-e man

Tā key mikhāy hey bokhori az khun-e man

Pasheh boro rāhatam bezār

Cherā nemizāri bekhābam

Mageh khodet jāy-e khāb nadāri

Keh miyay tu rakht-e-khābam

Kāshki digeh khun nadāshtam

Yā inkeh to khun nemikhordi

Kāshki beh jāy-e vez-vez

To ham bā man āvāz mikhundi

Nikpay, Hamed. "The Owner of this Land" ["*Mālek-e in khāk*"]. Words unknown. Music Hamed Nikpay. NMP, 2009. p. 166.

Ān khas-o- khāshāk toyi

Past-tar az khāk toyi

Shur manam, nur manam, āsheq-e ranjur manam

Zur toyi, kur toyi, hāleh-ye bi nur toyi

Dalir o bi-bāk manam

Mālek-e in khāk manam

Aramnejad, Arya. "Ali Riseup" ["*Ali barkhiz*"]. Words and Music by Arya Aramnejad, 2009. p. 170.

Ali barkhiz o bātel kon basāt-e in daghal-bāzān

Keh inān jāmeh-ye haq rā be-pushāndand tan-e sheytān

Chenān din-e Mohammad rā beh kām-e khod biyāludand

Keh guyi Hazrat-e Hojjat az inān mibarad farmān

Muharram gharq-e dar khun shod

Beh dast-e lashkar-e sheytān

Khavārej dar lebās-e din

Beh ruy-e neyzehhā Qur'an

Holul-e ruh-e dajjal ast

Dar in shab-rāheh-ye marmuz

Khodā-yā āftābat rā betābān bar sar-e Iran

Najafi, Shahin. "Mahdi". Words and Music by Shahin Najafi. Shahin Najafi and iTunes, 2010. p. 175-177.

Āqā yeh chizi begam khālesāneh

Shish māheh-e hoquqam ro nemidan māhiāneh

Shomā keh kol-e donyā dastet-e

Yeh nim negahi bokon beh ma āsheqāneh

...

Aslan mohem nist keh pedar-e shahidam

Man keh az bonyād shahid chizi nadidam

Gonāhesh beh gardan-e hamunāyi keh migan

Migan inā khodeshun dozd-e sar-e gardan-an

Mā keh chizi nemifahmim az siyāsat

Yeh e'deh miān o miran dar nahāyat

Mā hamun badbakhti keh budim hastim

...

Yeh zamān vāseh yeh kesi mā mostaz'afim

Yeh zaman bāyad bejangim o bemirim

Alaki alaki Karbalā mā miyāim

Hasht sāl sāzandegi-e sar-e kāri

Hasht sāl goft goftmān o mā khandidim

Hijda-ye tir o shahid-e dāneshgāhi

…

Gham dārim o por-e boghzim Mahdi

To nisti o cheshāt-o basti Mahdi

Mahdi sang-e ru yakh kardi mā ro

Najafi, Shahin. "Shaban" [*Sh'abān*]. Words and Music by Shahin Najafi. Shahin Najafi and iTunes, 2013. p. 182.

Shabān inā chi migan?

Dobāreh del-e āsemun por shod

Mahtāb zir-e ābrā-ye siāh kur shod

Dariush. "Torturer" ["*Shekanjeh-gar*"]. Words and Music by Roozbeh Bemani and Alireza Afkari. *Donyā-ye in ruzā-ye man.*DBM Enterpreise, 2010. p. 191.

Ru beh to sajdeh mikonam, dari beh ka'abeh bāz nist

Bas keh tavāf kardamat marā beh haj niyāz nist

…

Az hameh towbeh mikonam

Balkeh to bāvāram koni

Qalb-e ma az sedā-ye to

Cheh āsheqāneh kuk shod

Tamām-e parsehā-ye man

Kenar-e to soluk shod

Azāb mikesham vali azāb-e man gonāh nist

Vaqti shekanjeh-gar toyi

Shekanjeh eshtebah nist

Hichkas. "A Good Day Will Come" ["*Yeh ruz-e khub miād*"]. Words and Music by Hichkas and Mahdyar Aghajani. 2009. p. 200.

Yeh ruz-e khub miyād

Yeh ruz-e khub miyād keh harj-o-marj nist o

Tu shulughi-ya beh jā fosh

Beh ham shirini midim o zulbiā, bāmiyeh

Hameh shangulim o hameh chi āli-e

Faqat jāy-e rafiqāmun keh nistan khālieh

Khun mimuneh tu rag o āshna nemishe

Bā āsemun o āsfālt

Digeh favāreh nemikoneh, lakhteh nemisheh

Hich mādari sar-e khāk-e bacheh nemireh

Hichkas. "He Has Fisted His Hands" ["*Dastāh- o mosht kardeh*"]. Words and Music by Hichkas and Mahdyar Aghajani, 2019. p. 201.

Sedā terekidaneh boghz miyād o

Migan in ashrār mosallahan

Dastāsh-o mosht kardeh

Kheyliā habs shodan-o mordan

In pāyān nist

Hanu naresidim tah-e qesseh

Hameh arezu-hāsh-o koshtan

Vali jenāzehyi tahvil nagerefteh

Hameh e'terāz-ā jorman

Tu khiābun sedā sho'ar umad o

Mardom shodan doshman

Dād mizaneh

Ki in jenāyat-o az yād mibareh

Dāreh juneh beh lab resideh ro

Faryād mizaneh

Mā hameh bā ham hastim

Namjoo, Mohsen. "Remember" ["*Yād ār*"]. Words and Music by Mohsen Namjoo. Mohsen Namjoo and iTunes, 2019. p. 205.

Amā naravad yādat

Ān ruz keh khandāni

Ān ruz keh az shādi

Bārān-e bahārāni

Ān ruz keh āzādi

Ān ruz keh: bāvar kon!

Ān ruz keh shurideh

Raqsadeh-ye meydāni

Ān ruz keh khun az ān

Bar khāk nemirizad

Ān ruz keh jān jān jān

Bā qahqaheh mikhāni

Ān ruz keh mā bordim

Bazm ast beh barzan-hā

Micharkhi o pā-kubān

Gharqeh buseh bārāni

Ān ruz keh nazdik ast

Ān ruz keh yādash khosh

Āghush pas az āghush

Riseh-ha-ye tulāni

Ān ruz vali az mā

Yādi beh miān āvar

Raftim gharibāneh

Bi-sedā o penhāni

Yek jor'eh benush ān ruz

Bā khandeh benush ān ruz

Yād-e mordegani keh

Zendeh-and o midāni

Az yād nabar khun rā

Khuni keh shatak mizad

Khuni keh az ān āmad

Fardāt-o cherāghāni

Kojāid ey shahidan-e khodāyi?

Appendix A

"Iran, Iran"

Mazyar. "Iran Iran". Words and Music by Alireza Meybodi and Emad Raam. *Shabāneh bā shab zendeh-dārān,* 1979.

If Iran is but a reuined home

I love this ruined home

If it lacks a fascinating weather

I love this weather

May the whole universe be yours

I love this tiny spot

O God! I love it

I love it

Can't bear it anymore

I will leave this city, this nightmarish sorrow

Time's cruelty

Has killed my country's soul

Ay ay ay…

I prefer to be decapitated

When a stranger would be my fellow-citizen

Imagining of losing my country

Having nowhere to go

Eats my heart out

Leaves me numb, soulless, dead

There is no song, no voice in my mind

But your name

My homeland, my mother

Iran, Iran,

I prefer to be decapitated

When a stranger would be my fellow-citizen

Yes! This is the reportage, this is the news

My Iran, everyone has left you alone

Lonelier than the lonely

Your companions do not even mention your name

You, the dignity, the grace of love

Into your eyes, a deep seated sorrow

O Country, you've been left with nothing

Other than your endless loneliness

Left alone in your daily roars, nightly cries

I feel for you

Who despite the thousands of wounds in your heart

Still is standing upright

I cry

What should I do?

I can't help it

Can't bear it anymore

I will leave this city, this nightmarish sorrow

Appendix B

"Longing for Union"

Mokhtabad, Abdolhossein. "Longing for Union" ["*Tamannā-ye vesāl*"]. Words and Music Sheykh Bahaei and Abdolhossein Mokhtabad. *Tamanā-ye vesāl.* Golnavaye Honar,1991.

Till when in longing to join you

Tears must have run on my face as a flood

Would your sorrowful separation comes to an end or not

Your sorrow has targeted the lovers' hearts

Absent among many who're obsessed by you

You've placed the nightingale in lawn

To see your flower-like beauty

The butterfly threw herself on fire and saw all secrets

The mystic saw you in the faces of the old and young

I'm not mad in my wanderings after you

Door to door, place to place

Any door that I knock, you're the landlord

Any place I go, you're its light

In tavern or in shrine, you're the bloved

What I mean by K'aba or any shrine is just you

The end is you, K'aba or shrine are just excuses

Appendix C

"Sign"

Haydeh. "Sign" [*Neshāneh*]. Words and Music Bahman Forsi's adaptation of Sheykh Bahaei and Mohammad Heydari. *Jadidtarin-e Haydeh.* Avang, 1974.

Your sorrow has targeted the lovers' hearts

Absent among them but they're obsessed by you

When in tavern, I'm befuddled

When at school, I'm wise

When in monastery, I'm devoted

I'm the earthly wretched

I'm the heavenly lover

I'm the mosque dweller

I desired the beloved, so I went to the tavern

The ascetic desired the showcase, so he went to the mosque

Haji is on his way to K'aba

I'm on my way to the date

The butterfly threw herself on fire and saw all secrets

This means: one can see the beloved anywhere

The mad is me who is wandering door to door

Any door that I knock, you're its landlord, you're its light

In the tavern and shrine

You're the beloved

What I mean by K'aba or any shrine is just you

The end is you, K'aba or shrine are just excuses

Appendix D

"Good Scent of Wheat"

Dariush. "Good Scent of Wheat" ["*Buy-e khub-e gandom*"]. Words and Music by Shahyar Ghanbari and Varoojan. Royal, 1974.

The scent of wheat be mine

Whatever I have be yours

A bunch of soil be mine

The whole harvest be yours

I'm the plagued dweller of this oriental tribe

You are the crystalline voyager of the magnificent occidental shrine

My skin, the heir of night

Yours, the heir of the red velvet

My rag is of the rotten blisters

Yours is of the panther, glisters

The scent of wheat be mine

Whatever I have be yours

A bunch of soil be mine

The whole harvest be yours

Your dream: an iron jungle, high rises

Mine: a room, just fit to your body, for sleeping

My body is the soil, yours is the wheat

Our bodies are the thirstiest, captivated in the heat

Whatever I have, be yours

A bunch of soil be mine

The whole harvest be yours

Yours, the city of golden chevaliers, marble arches, occidental

Mine, the city of golden shrines, gloomy prayers, oriental

Your body, the harsh ax, brute

Mine, the deepest root

There, remains a bit of a heart

Alas, engraved on a tree's trunk

Lest I sing eulogies for my body-soil

You're just a voyager, I'm the blood, I'm vein, I'm the soul

My body won't be surrender to your hands

And now, I cry out, loud

Whether there is all, or not even a soul

The essence of wheat is mine

Whatever I have is mine

A Bunch of the soil is mine

The whole harvest is mine