


Fatemeh Shams 

## The Village in Contemporary Persian Poetry

*This paper explores the ever-shifting symbiosis between the village motif, social justice and populist politics in Iran over the past three decades. The village has remained a recurring motif in Persian literature, employed by a variety of writers and state institutions for a range of means. As a symbol, it has been a conduit into which any ideology can be poured; the village allegory can be manipulated to both condemn and support the official policies of the state. A comparison of Iran's pre- and post-revolutionary literature sheds light on the ways the state literati perpetuated an idealized picture of the village as an authentic, sacred space, increasingly associated with religious nationalism during the 1980s. The paper examines the key socio-political influences on the evolution of the pastoral motif, the work of state-sponsored official poets, and the impact of the village on the cultural doctrine of the Islamic Republic.*

### Introduction

Poetry across most cultures often draws on the tranquil simplicity of rural life to evoke pastoral serenity and feelings of nostalgia in the reader. In the case of post-revolutionary Islamic Republican poetry,<sup>1</sup> however, one can say that literary depictions of village life draw upon ideological transformations of the political regime.<sup>2</sup> In the space of just thirty years, the village depicted in Persian poetry shifted from the impoverished home of downtrodden farmers to a rustic utopia of noble peasants. In 1979, when these romanticizing revolutionaries seized power, the notion of the village was manipulated again to perpetuate a whimsical nostalgia that ignored the actual lived experience of most rural dwellers. If, as Ayatollah Khamenei, the current Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, asserted, the history of the Islamic Republic will be understood and remembered through poetry, then the official account of the poverty, alienation and lack of opportunity in rural Iran will be severely whitewashed.

How did literature play such a pivotal role in this political transformation? Poetry was crucial first in stirring up and unifying anti-state feeling pre-1979, then in creating and disseminating government propaganda with the establishment of the Islamic

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Republic. The message of pastoral aspiration was largely transmitted by state-sponsored official poets of the Islamic Republic from 1979 onwards, who formed (and still form) a key part of the regime's communication apparatus. Through close textual reading, this article examines the role such poets played in shaping the ideological state apparatus, and how significant the symbol of the village was in their work.

*From the Medieval Garden to the Contemporary Noble Peasant*

As the village motif in Persian literature is a relatively recent phenomenon, and has not yet developed into its own distinct literary genre, it is worth plotting its origins in wider pastoral thematics. While classical Persian literature does draw on rural themes, traditionally these references are to the garden (*bāgh*), particularly the rose garden (*golestān*), and are limited to generic nature imagery rather than countryside collectives or agrarian landscapes. Literary scholars and historians such as William Hanaway and Julie Scott-Meisami, who have studied the imagery of Persian gardens in traditional literature, highlight its commonalities with the Garden of Paradise and an aggrandizing vision of the cosmic order.<sup>3</sup> Beyond this—aside from some occasional references to the simple nature of villagers in the medieval genre of Wisdom Literature (*Adabiyāt-e Tālimi*)—there is no trace of an idealized depiction of the village as a symbolic entity. The few earliest examples, cited later in this article, were not originally intended as moralized standpoints on village life and can only be retrospectively analyzed as precursors to the contemporary village motif by a modern reader.

Village and peasant allegories first start to appear in Iran in the work of Constitutionalist poets in the wake of early twentieth century modernism and its concurrent rapid urbanization. These initial references are almost always a protest against social injustice, inequality and poverty in rural settings, as the macroeconomic focus of the state shifted to the industrialized city. Poets such as Farrokhi Yazdi (1889-1939), Seyyed Ashraf al-Din Hosseini (1872-1934) and Abolqāsem Lāhuti (1887-1957) were among the prominent voices of the Constitutional Revolution (1902-12) to introduce the “poor peasant” as a protagonist in their verse. The peasant represented the downtrodden masses whose rural lives had been deeply affected by the rapid pace of industrialization, as exemplified by Mohammad Farrokhi Yazdi: “If the peasant is the one who makes the wheat / Why is his share as tiny as a lentil seed?”<sup>4</sup>

Poet Farrokhi Yazdi came from a small village. From childhood, he witnessed the pain and suffering of the poor and became aware of the constant presence of social injustice in their lives. As an adult, Farrokhi Yazdi used his poetry to voice his protest against the monarchy and social injustice through appreciating the humble life of the peasants:<sup>5</sup>

I would sacrifice my life for the peasant  
As long as our life is dependent on him

After the Lord, it is the peasant  
Who feeds the king and the beggar.<sup>6</sup>

Other poets of the constitutional era embarked on the same theme in their verse to highlight social injustice and tyranny. The peasant protagonist came to represent the voice of a deprived nation in an increasingly socialist polemic of the haves and have-nots. Abolqāsem Lāhuti's poem, for example, pitches the macro-binary of despotism versus suffering against the micro-binary of the landowner and the peasant:

Bread and food and honor, all belong to the peasant  
The rest are spongers, dishonorable and cruel to the people  
Grains and commodities are made by the peasants and workers  
Why the are landlords and masters to store them all?<sup>7</sup>

Although Lāhuti and Farrokhi had socialist tendencies, and their politics was significant in their poetry, poets whose leanings were more religious than political also used the peasant protagonist to critique the status quo. This criticism was usually underpinned by a religious context, as illustrated by the following lines by Ashraf al-Din Hosseini (also known as Nasim Shomāl) during the Constitutional Revolution:

Ramadān is here and the peasant has no bread to eat  
His daughter has no clothing to wear  
Everyone's heart is broken for him  
For there is no justice in this country.<sup>8</sup>

Numerous poems like these, written in the wake of the Constitutional Revolution, provided the foundation for the development of the pastoral motif by modernist poets and writers from the mid-1930s onwards. The modernist movement, pioneered by Nimā Yushij (1897-1960), envisioned the pastoral as "organic." In Nimā's poetry, the rural environment is presented as synonymous with nature itself. His depiction of his village home in Yush evokes a natural retreat in which the poet seeks refuge from the pressures and exhaustion of urban life. As Houman Sarshar suggests, Nimā's depiction of the countryside as an integrated part of the organic wilderness "may further be interpreted as the poet's imminent departure from the rigid classical prosodic structures and his adoption of the more organic rhymes, rhythms, and verse paragraphs that he introduces in his famous poem, 'The Phoenix' (*Qoqnus*, 1937)."<sup>9</sup>

His biographical sketches may nostalgically depict his home as a romanticized idyll, but elsewhere in his later work, the village and the peasant are far from ideological allegories. Indeed, Nimā's rare depictions of the village often betray a darker tone. In his well-known poem "The Soldier's Family" (*Khānevādeh-ye Sarbāz*, 1947), the village is saturated with poverty, suffering and despair. In "Māneli" (1957), the village is depicted as a "dark, stagnant and unattractive place" to which Māneli, the protagonist, has no desire to return.<sup>10</sup> In his detailed analysis of "Māneli," Kamran Talattof suggests that "the village brings to mind old ideas and in some instances the old poetry."<sup>11</sup>

Nimā's village motif gradually faded as mid-century modernist poets became more involved with post-World War II politics and a growing engagement with post-colonial thinking. Despite their leftist leanings, poets of this period did not develop an interest in the symbolic cultivation of the village theme as a political allegory. Ideological ambivalence emerges in the works of *engagé* poets of this period; "Mist" (*Meh*, 1956) by Ahmad Shāmlu (1925-2000), for instance, portrays the village as a dusky, quiet place that brings to mind the post-1953 oppressed face of Iranian society:

The mist has thoroughly haunted the desert, the passer-by whispers to himself  
 The dogs of the village are silent,  
 The light of the village is invisible  
 A warm wave runs through the desert's blood.<sup>12</sup>

Although Shāmlu's poetics tended in general to be much more influenced by his urban upbringing, he occasionally made symbolic and aesthetic reflections on the idea of the village as a remote place. This is evident in the third part of the lengthy poem "Nocturnal" (*Shabāneh*, 1961), which can be interpreted as a powerful evocation of the aesthetic qualities of the village as a distant place:

Alas, the green valley and the old walnut tree  
 And the cheerful song of the river  
 When the village  
 On both sides of the magical waters  
 Was sinking into nocturnal sleep.  
 And alas *Bāmdād*,<sup>13</sup>  
 Who with such urge  
 Left the green valley, and  
 Came to the city,  
 In an era, eventful as such  
 A journey to make bread is as difficult as the journey of fame.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps no modernist poet of this period is more nostalgic than Sohrāb Sepehri (1928–80) when it comes to the pastoral and its sharp contrast with the dark side of the urban setting. A native of Mashhad-e Ardehāl village in Kashan, Sepehri spent most of his life in the countryside of his birth. The deep influence of both Indian Buddhism, and his passion for painting natural scenes, are two important factors that relate to his choice of the village and its surrounding countryside as a living space. Sepehri's poetic discourse can be easily distinguished from that of his contemporaries, mainly due to the strong presence of rural elements and a natural setting, neither of which are used in an allegorical or symbolic manner.<sup>15</sup> Sepehri's nostalgic depiction of the countryside stands out even more when one compares it with his dull portrayal of urban scenery in "Footsteps of Water" (*Sedā-ye pā-ye āb*, 1964):

The city was visible  
 The geometrical growth of cement, iron, stone

The roof of one hundred buses with not a single dove on them  
A florist putting out his flowers for sale.<sup>16</sup>

### *The White Revolution and Politicizing the Village*

In the 1950s and 1960s, the village as a politicized entity starts to emerge for the first time in Iranian literature; however, rather than in poetry specifically, the grittier depictions of the reality of village life appear in prose, short stories, novels and essays. The village emerges as a prevailing theme used by leftist intellectuals to protest against modernization and the destructive impact of land reforms on village life, offering literary critiques of the state's autocratic modernization policies.

Jalāl Āl-e Ahmad (1923–69), Gholāmossein Sā'edi (1936–85) and Mahmud Dowlatābādi (b. 1940) are three of the most prolific prose writers who shaped the village writing of this period with their novels, novellas, screenplays and anthropological monographs.

Āl-e Ahmad, a pioneering voice in village writing, published "Urāzān" (1954) and "Tat People of the Boluck of Zahrā" (*Tāt-neshinhā-ye bolūk-e Zahrā*, 1959) in the form of anthropological sketches of the extreme hardships of village life in the years preceding the White Revolution (1963). In "The Curse of the Earth" (*Nefrin-e zamin*, 1967), which tells the story of an urban schoolteacher commissioned to teach in rural areas, Āl-e Ahmad gives a detailed account of rural life in Iran after the implementation of the land reforms. The novel predominantly revolves around the difficulties of rural living caused by socioeconomic deprivation and the decline of the agricultural sector. Through the schoolteacher's eyes, we are presented with the sharp differences between rural and urban lifestyles and attitudes. The following passage from the novel is an example of Āl-e Ahmad's use of country scenes and vernacular, which in turn heavily influenced contemporary prose writers:

The problem is that when the tractor arrives at the village, Varzū becomes jobless. This problem should be resolved chief! Someone on the radio said that the factory produces one tractor per hour, pardon me chief, I meant per minute. But each cow gives birth to only one cow per annum. That's why even its shit is precious.<sup>17</sup>

Inspired by Āl-e Ahmad's village writings, Gholāmossein Sā'edi (1936–85), another influential writer of the same period, published a play entitled 'Gol Village' (*Kalāt-e gol*), which, in his own words, "tried to show how Reza Shah's modernization program destroyed and despoiled the landscape and ruined many villages."<sup>18</sup> Prior to the 1953 coup, when the 18-year-old Sā'edi was still based in Azerbaijan, he joined the Youth Organization of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party and began to work as a journalist.<sup>19</sup> "The main pillar of the Tabriz Democratic Party's ideology," according to Sā'edi, "revolved around the idea of the village. The party's main goal was to organize a peasant movement led by the peasants (*nehzat-e dehqāni*)."<sup>20</sup> In addition to Azerbaijani influence, leading prose writers of this period were deeply influenced by

the Bolshevik intelligentsia, whose peasant nostalgia and resentment of urban life was part of an attempt to even out the social differences between the peasantry and the proletariat.<sup>21</sup>

The state modernization program continued apace, however, and as inequality deepened, and rural dwellers moved to the cities for work, the prevalence of the symbolic village in literature increased.<sup>22</sup> The renowned novelist Mahmud Dowlatābādi (b. 1940) emerged as a significant documenter of village society, depicting rural life in the northeastern province of Khorasan. In his monumental ten-volume novel, *Kelidar* (1977-84), he tackles the impact of industrialization and land reforms on the lives of the peasant community. The cycle portrays the tragic fate of the Iranian peasantry and nomadic tribes under the reign of the Pahlavi dynasty. Dowlatābādi's typical theme is of a peasant community that finds itself in severe difficulties, usually as the result of outside forces.

### *The Role of the Rural Revolutionary*

Opposition to the state program of industrialization and agrarian denigration grew, both among the people and in the literary works produced during this period. As revolutionary sentiment intensified, poetry became a way for the “downtrodden” to find a voice and communicate their protest. If the city was the home of the government, the village was the spiritual home of the people; if autocracy belonged to the factories, collectivity belonged to the fields. Authors with leftist backgrounds who spent time in prison for their political activities composed literature with sympathetic depictions of the proletariat and rural folk that became hugely influential in the build-up to the 1979 revolution. A good example of such work comes again from Dowlatābādi, entitled “Missing Soluch” (*Jāy-e khāli-e soluch*, 1979), published in the wake of the revolution. The novel is about village life in a fictional place in northern Iran in the 1960s, a time when many people from the countryside were moving to the cities. It shows how the poor struggle with everyday calamities such as theft, starvation and violence, paralleling the demise of the village to the forces of modernity. “Missing Soluch,” and to a certain extent also the work of Al-e Ahmad, perhaps has more in common with the ideas and views of the revolutionaries with Islamist leanings who overtook the revolutionary movement than with other works composed by the leftist literati of this time. It is important to note, however, that they did not aim to represent the village as a utopian space; overall, their treatment of the pastoral motif was empathetic and realistic, directly criticizing the aggressive urbanization process undertaken by the Pahlavi state.

The damaging effects of rapid modernization, and the migration of considerable numbers of village dwellers to marginal zones on the edges of towns, continued to affect Iranian society after the revolution. The emergent Islamist intelligentsia adopted a sympathetic approach to villagers as “invisible masses” who suffered in order to survive. A new wave of village writing emerged, this time more prevalent in poetry than in prose. This poetic genre was informed by new leader Khomeini's

frequent references to rural life, highlighting the destructive impact of the 1960s land reforms on the livelihood of villagers; thus reminding his people of the persuasive rhetoric that had got him into power in the first place. Khomeini—himself a former villager and a fan of classical poetry—heralded the displaced villagers residing in the city slums (*kukh-nesbinān*) as the engine of the revolutionary movement.

Policy and poetry moved in symbiosis with one another as the Iranian rural sector was revived by Khomeini's new government. In June 1979, the Construction Jihad (*Jahād-e sāzandegi*) was established to reconstruct Iranian agriculture and improve the quality of peasants' lives. The Ministry of Agriculture expanded considerably in the first decade after the revolution. According to Linda Darling, "with five times the funding of the White Revolution and the social enthusiasm of crowds of young people concerned for social justice," the Construction Crusade succeeded in enhancing agricultural productivity and contributing to the housing, health and essential needs of farmers.<sup>23</sup>

And so the village gradually became a keyword in Islamic revolutionary discourse, one that initially resonated with the ideals of the left, but was redefined and manipulated by the ideologues of the Islamic state (including the official poets) immediately after the revolution. While exhibiting some common features with the realist accounts of village life by Jalal al-e Ahmad, and the gritty, empathetic portrayals by Dowlatābādi, these emerging official poems presented a different image of village life—one that was overtly nostalgic. The official poets, under state jurisdiction, identified the village with an authentic lifestyle that was to be promoted in alignment with revolutionary ideas.

### *The Village in the Works of Official Poets*

Who were these official poets? How did the work of the Islamic Republican poets interact with the state? The arrival of the new regime in 1979 heralded a cultural revolution (1980–83). Secular and dissident scholars and students were purged, teaching materials were redrafted, and a new group of Islamist intellectuals gained influence in the official cultural scene.<sup>24</sup> The provincial poets and writers whose voices had been at the forefront of the revolution were now an official part of the state apparatus, embedded in the doctrine—and the pockets—of the Islamic Republic. Newly established cultural institutions funded by the state, most notably the Center for Islamic Art and Thought (*Hawzeh-e honar va andisheh-ye eslāmi*, est. 1980) and the Organization for Islamic Propaganda (*Sazmān-e tabliqāt-e eslāmi*, est. 1981), played a significant role in mobilizing this new intelligentsia. Islamic revolutionary rhetoric was largely preached and conceptualized by Ayatollah Khomeini, himself a passionate and popular poet, and fed to the cultural organizations for official poets to craft and deliver. The slogans and texts created by these poets, under the state's watchful eye, came to define the ideological agenda of the Islamic Republic; particularly the core message of social justice. Islamic Republican poets were quick to adopt these themes and slogans in their work. In terms of form, many of these poets revisited

classical structures such as quatrain, *mathnavi* and *ghazal* in the wake of the revolution, as well as moving into modern forms such as *Nimā'i* and *Sepid*.

*Spotlight: Abdolmalekiān and the “gaze that tastes of milk.”*

One of the leading voices of Islamic Republican poetry is Mohamadreza Abdolmalekiān (b. 1952), whose early poems (1974–86) largely venerate the village and tribal life, while offering an unfaltering critique of urbanism. Moreover, his nostalgic poems about the village stand out in terms of both quantity and quality when compared with those by his fellow revolutionary poets. As a native of Nahāvand in Hamedan and a graduate student of agricultural engineering, Abdolmalekiān was appointed to work at the Ministry of Agriculture after the end of the revolution, where his main responsibility was to reconstruct and improve ruined villages. Poems such as “Village” (*Qaryeh*, 1974), “Evil City” (*Shahr-e bad*, 1974), “Father! Let’s Return to the Farm” (*Pedar biā beh mazra‘eh bargardim*, 1977), “Tribal Man” (*Iliāti*, 1984), “With this Entrenched, Rainy Heart” (*Bā in del-e rishehdār-e bārāni*, 1984) and “Identity Card” (*Kārt-e shenāsā'i*, 1985) are just a few examples of his many poems narrated by a disheartened urban dweller who greatly misses the village of his birth. Abdolmalekiān is clearly sympathetic to the peasantry, as well as to revolutionary ideas that advocated the superiority of villagers; in the works of ideologues such as Khomeini<sup>25</sup> and Ali Shariati,<sup>26</sup> for example, villages are portrayed as authentic, the home of the deprived masses, embodying the primacy of the rustic lifestyle.

The peasant figure in Abdolmalekiān’s work has a “gaze with the taste of milk,” “hands with the scent of wheat,” “a knap-sack full of companionship and love,” “sandals made of compassion” and “a shirt the color of sincerity.”<sup>27</sup> Typical of romantic depictions of authentic village life, such imagery laments the peasant’s unhappiness and bewilderment in the city. The scent of “gunpowder and homesickness” present in the city’s air upon arrival prompts recollections of the oppressive nature of the urban setting at the peak of industrialization in Iran. “The frowning square,” “stone-made, dull alleyways,” “grey, hazy sky” and “the deceiving absurd sunshine” are all parts of the urban setting that become essential imagery in Abdolmalekiān’s peasant poetry, thus creating a form of protest literature in the years preceding the Islamic revolution.<sup>28</sup>

Abdolmalekiān penned most of these poems during the four to five years leading up to the revolution, or at least during the first decade after its completion. Except for a few examples, almost all were written during his stay in his native provincial town of Nahāvand. In the “Evil City,” the poet’s cynicism about urban life reaches its climax, as the city becomes a “zone of scarecrows where the ants think about leprosy.”<sup>29</sup> The poet clearly feels the weight of the skyscrapers pushing on his chest as breathing becomes impossible. He expands and deepens a strain of class-oriented cynicism that goes against city life by involving real scenes from the everyday lives of secular urban dwellers and contrasting them with scenes from the lives of the lower and deprived classes: “Perfumed women swallowing thirsty gazes” versus “poor men throwing up in their



night seclusion and dreams”; “beautiful body organs all labeled by different factory brands” and “the seductive fake eyelashes that deceive hearts.” The poem offers a critical view of urban industrialization, placing it in contrast with the natural beauty of rural life. Whatever belongs to urban life seems artificial in the eyes of the poet.

In another poem, “Shepherd” (*Chupān*, 1984), Abdolmalekiān recounts the story of a shepherd and his herd and their deteriorating state and all-consuming confusion in the urban life. His depiction of the city as the source of alienation and ugliness echoes in the voices present in his poetry throughout this period:

The herd is confused and fearful  
The harvesters have left the plain  
The cold city has swallowed the shepherd  
The head, confused by a fear of solitude  
Is in search of the shepherd.  
Who has made the border of separation?  
Who has uprooted the lion, the shepherd and the cedars?  
Who has enlarged the number of wolves?  
Who has wiped out the herds?  
Oh, shepherd, shepherd,  
In these catastrophic events  
They stole the mountain from you  
They stole the river  
And the horse  
You have been taught  
That the mountain will bow down  
The river will pour into the swamp  
And the horse will fall in an asphalt forest.<sup>30</sup>

In his poems written prior to the 1979 revolution, the rural or tribal identification of the poet seems to convey a sense of resistance towards the ruling state. The narrator of “The Tribal Man” is a deprived man of the Bakhtiāri tribe who describes himself as belonging to the “generation of despair with fractured hands.”<sup>31</sup> The ending lines of the poem render the protesting voice of the poem more apparent as the narrator openly portrays the city as an oppressive environment that calls upon him to surrender:

I have a deep sorrow  
Here, the invite to the child of the mountains  
To the oppression,  
To chains, to fear and to submission.  
I am a tribal man  
I am not made for the city  
I have been abandoned here, homesick and alien  
I am not a stone.<sup>32</sup>

Abdolmalekiān's poems touching on the theme of rural life and the village are too numerous to cover comprehensively in this article. But the examples quoted above, as well as similar work, show how prevalent the theme of the village had become among adherents of the Islamic Republican trend.

*Spotlight: 'Machine-made bread' and the work of Aminpur.* Another early practitioner of village poetry from a rural background is Qaysar Aminpur (1959-2007), a native of Gotvand in Khuzestan province and originally a member of the Bakhtiāri tribe. Aminpur's 'Machine-Baked Bread' (*Nān-e māshini*, 1978) features a critical narrative of urbanized developments in his home village. More specifically, Aminpur depicts a rural setting with an idle and lifeless nature in a way that is deliberately political:

The sky takes a break  
 The winds, unemployed  
 The clouds: dry and niggardly  
 They swallow the lumps in their throats  
 I wish to  
 Spread a damp handkerchief  
 Over the desert's fevered forehead  
 Alas!  
 The machine-made loaf of bread  
 Has appropriated my handkerchief  
 They have destroyed the reputation of our village.<sup>33</sup>

The resident of a deteriorating village, the narrator of the poem finds his natural surroundings to be completely lifeless and polluted by the industrial gloom that fills the sky and engulfs nature. Even the bread-making tradition, one of the most important symbols of village life, has been demolished at the monstrous hands of industrialization. The fall of the village, Aminpur reflects, is the fall of authenticity. The rural lifestyle has been replaced by a material and spiritual void.

In another poem, "Composition" (*Enshāʾ*, 1978), Aminpur draws attention to the deep disturbance that the land reforms created in the rural area of his boyhood. The poem is narrated by the collective voice of primary school children obliged to write about the White Revolution. As the poem begins, the narrators are placed under constant surveillance during an examination. They eventually rebel by standing up and refusing to write:

They made us sit the exam  
 The topic was the years before  
     We were chewing the lock of silence  
 At the bottom of our pens  
 And were looking at each other in pain  
 The pen was not willing to lie  
 I stood up

And handed in my paper  
It was blank  
Our topic too was  
The White Revolution.<sup>34</sup>

The positive and, to a large extent, romantic depiction of the village in a great number of works produced by both Aminpur and other Islamic Republican poets should be read and understood in relation to the socio-political context of their time. The collective voice of revolution and war on the one hand, and the special attention paid to agricultural reform by the revolutionary state on the other, prompted these writers to leave their own mark on the rise of village writing during this period.

There is a shift, however, in Aminpur's perception of rurality as the reign of the Islamic Republic goes on. In "The Ancient Heritage" (*Mirās-e bāstāni*, 1980), for instance, he draws on the inaugural Day of the Downtrodden (*Ruz-e mostaz'afān*) to echo the main slogans of the revolution that focused on the noble nature of the poor and the empowerment of the working classes, both of which were embraced under the aegis of Islamic justice. Concepts such as "decaying shoes," "shoes of fatigue" or "shoes made up of calluses" in the second part the poem refer to the physical sensation and rustic qualities of such people and recapitulates a famous saying by Khomeini, who often alleged that the revolution belonged to the barefoot and the poor.<sup>35</sup>

Our shoes are made of calluses  
Even though  
These decaying shoes of ours hurt  
We have arrived  
Having walked in these shoes of fatigue  
We carry the legacy of Abraham with us.<sup>36</sup>

The pastoral motifs evident in poems of this kind provide important evidence of an evolution in Islamic Republican ideology. During this period, village poems often represented a departure from the secular, modernist views of the Pahlavi regime that had pursued the industrialization of villages, seeing them as culturally inferior and politically backward. The Islamist doctrine, however, provided ideological justification for the revival of villages and pastoral culture and largely implemented this plan under the Construction Crusade program. This Islamist doctrine is more explicit in Aminpur's third collection, "Storm in Parentheses" (*Tufān dar parāntez*, 1985). This collection of prose for young adults was published during a period when the revitalization of the agricultural sector was still at its peak. In a piece entitled "Spring Manifesto" (*Mānifest-e bahār*, 1985), a farm is depicted in a state of severe trouble and its improvement rests in the hands of the revolutionary forces working under the Construction Crusade plan:

Oh spring! Don't you know that in our land still there are feudals who eat up hectares of land with such primordial appetite? We will stop hoarding the spring. Our

peasants migrate to cities, in search of the spring. We should follow Imam Khomeini's order and bring the spring to the villages. We must take the spring to the slums (*Jonūb-e shahr*). We should implement the equal distribution of spring as soon as possible.<sup>37</sup>

In his poems of the late 1980s, Aminpur touches upon the most troublesome part of peasants' lives: displacement and migration to the city. Internal migration from rural to urban areas in Iran in the 1970s and 1980s led to what Saïd Amir Arjomand has described as "an explosive geographic expansion of cities that was followed by extensive land seizure by squatters, and the so-called revolutionary housing." Islamic Republican authors responded to this social change by drawing on ideas that secular socialists and leftists had subscribed to prior to the 1979 revolution, blending them with their Islamic pro-justice values. Their works served the state's agenda of both promoting its rhetoric of social justice and subverting the secular leftist literary trend. Imagery such as those of village peasants and the villager were gradually superseded by depictions of the slum-dwelling, marginalized urban population; people who had joined the frontline during the Iran-Iraq war. In Aminpur's poetry of revolution and war, the poor of metropolitan cities (*Mardom-e pā'in-shahr/jonub-e shahr*), the factory workers (*Kārgarān-e kārkhāneh*) and slum dwellers (*Hāshiyeh-neshinhā*)—all originally villagers (*Rustā'i*)—become martyrs of the war. Poverty, inferiority, ideological commitment and martyrdom became directly related in the official poetry of this period.

*"Simple, Like a Village": The Rise of a Rustic Utopia*

During the 1980s, the attitudes and imagery of the simple rural lifestyle were adopted extensively by Islamic Republican poets as a way to dismiss the secular lifestyles of Iranians who did not conform to the Islamic norms valued by the state. Such attitudes were mostly informed by the pro-justice rhetoric of the Islamic left. A poem by Salmān Harāti (1959–86), originally published in the early 1980s, is a unique example of this trend. It recounts the ideological disagreements evident within a family after the revolution. Within this piece, the utopian image of the village is manifested in the chastity of a woman and her Islamic dress. The piece describes in detail differences in the belief systems and lifestyles of revolutionaries and "modern" Iranian citizens, as represented by the poet's brother:

We left the dying land  
 When it was under the attack of poisonous locusts.  
 We left the sheep  
 In the terrifying solitude of the desert, filled with wolves  
 We came [to the city] and got lost in the dust of iron and smoke  
 But today  
 My brother still loves football  
 And he does not care

What is written in the newspaper  
He never comes to the acacia garden  
And he has forsaken  
When the wheat blossoms  
And he has exchanged the beehives for “Yek-o-Yek” conserves  
    And he prefers Brut cologne  
To the scent of the wild jasmine  
And instead of the running water of the lake  
He prefers to drink Coca-Cola  
Yesterday I saw a woman in the street  
With a manly laughter, licking an ice-cream, playing with her car keys  
I was saddened by seeing incredible boldness  
But my brother was grateful and said “what a civilized country we have!”  
I remembered my mother  
Who never came to the street without the chādor  
My mother is full of honor and modesty  
She is simple, like a village.<sup>38</sup>

Harāti never embraced urban settlement and preferred to commute between the village of his birth in the north and the capital city, where he attended the poetry sessions of the Hawzeh. He eventually died at the age of twenty-eight in a car accident on one of his return trips from Tehran to his hometown. Though he was mainly based in Tonkābon and only occasionally visited the capital, his poetry expresses a constant sense of loss and nostalgia for his village, which may come from his fear that the village as a manifestation of an authentic lifestyle would disappear.

For most Islamic Republican poets of rural origin, to die in the city was to face a miserable fate filled with a sense of isolation and absurdity. The best manifestation of such imagery can be found in a poem, again by Harāti. In “I Too Shall Die” (*Man ham mimiram*, 1984), dying in a village is contrasted with dying in a city, with the former portrayed as meaningful while the latter is seen as absurd. The beginning and ending lines of the poem are as follows:

I too shall die  
But not like Gholām-ali  
Who fell off the tree  
And the starving cows moored for him  
Who will feed the cows after him? [...]  
I too shall die  
But in a crowded street  
In front of eyes filled with indifference  
Under the cruel wheels of the car  
The car of a grumpy doctor  
On his way back from a public hospital  
So, two days later,

In the newspaper's condolences column  
 Under a formal photo, they will write:  
 Oh, you who are gone!  
 Who will fill the trash bins?<sup>39</sup>

The central feature of the above poem, along with that found in "Life" (*Zendegi*, 1986), quoted below, is the dismissal of an undesirable urban life and an escape to the village to take refuge from urban gloom. In terms of syntactic features, most of the village poems of this period are straightforward and uncomplicated, which perfectly fits the simplicity of village life and village attitudes. The unpretentious contrast between village and city in "Life" by Harāti is a fitting example of this:

In the city, seasons are alike  
 In the city, life is mechanized  
 It all depends on the petrol  
 It all depends on the oil  
 In the village, however,  
 Life depends on the horse  
 Simple and colorful.<sup>40</sup>

*From Noble Peasant to Migrant Margin Dweller*

As the eight years of war with neighboring Iraq ended in 1988, the resulting destruction and economic hardship gave rise to a new wave of internal migration. The lives of these peasant immigrants later coalesced with those of the country's margin dwellers and urban proletariat in the works of the Islamic Republican poets; the struggles and sentiments of the villagers were transposed onto more urban settings. During this period, a number of Islamic Republican poets were engaged extensively in creating literature for children and young adults. Village and margin dwellers therefore entered into the realm of children's literature. Published in 1991, Aminpur's fifth prose collection, "Flying Without Wings" (*Bi-bāl paridan*), contained many poems of this kind. The bitter story of migration and dwelling in the margins is portrayed alongside the destruction of the villages, a contrast that constitutes a leading theme in this collection. In the poem "Life in the Margins" (*Zendegi dar hāshiyeh*, 1986), the narrator is a youngster living on the margins of the city who describes his family background throughout the work:

We are margin dwellers. Your father was a margin dweller too, my mother says. He was born in the margin zone, he toiled in the margin zone and he died in the margin zone. I too was born in the margin zone. But I don't want to die in the margin zone.<sup>41</sup>

The word "margin" (*Hāshiyeh*) informs the entire piece. More specifically, the margin is presented as a black zone, and one that makes both death and a lifetime spent there

seem equal. At the end of each stanza, we hear the narrative voice of a young adult and margin dweller and he speaks of his urge to “reform” the status quo:

My brother died at the margin line of a hospital. My sister is always sick. She always cries. Sometimes in the margins; she rarely laughs. “Our destiny is also written on the margin line of the tablet of fate,” my mother says. Every night she shows me my fortune star in the sky’s margin. But I say: “That is not my star.”<sup>42</sup>

The same collection contains anti-industrialist prose pieces written in defense of the urban proletariat. In “Equal Distribution” (*Taqsim-e ‘ādelāneh*, 1986), the leftist and religious pro-justice doctrines are bridged by way of a confrontational tone:

I am the same age as your son,  
You are the same age as my father  
Your son studies and doesn’t work,  
I work and don’t study,  
My father has neither a job nor a house  
You have both a job and a house  
I work in your factory.  
And in this factory everything has been distributed equally:  
Its profit for you, its dusty smoke for me.  
I work, but you hoard  
I load, but you store  
I suffer, but you gain treasure,  
I work in your factory  
And there is no difference between you and me:  
When I work, you devastate,  
When I am devastated, you go to the seaside to holiday  
When I become ill, you go abroad for a medical trip.<sup>43</sup>

Such a critical depiction of the economic hardship experienced in Iran during the 1980s, as well as the prevailing tensions and conflicts between the rich and the poor, is rooted in the war and the development policies of the postwar state. By the end of the war in 1988, the state and society both came under economic pressure and serious ideological challenges emerged within state factions. Furthermore, “it was a period of continuity with and change from the revolutionary past during which new economic, social and political developments pushed the state and society in new directions.”<sup>44</sup> Many of the development plans of the Pahlavi period that focused on industrial development and urbanization had initially been rejected as part of an agenda for westernization; however, these were now revived as part of the reconstruction project that commenced during Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani’s presidency. Indeed, Rafsanjani’s development policies promoted economic growth and prosperity without earlier attention to the demands for social justice.

“Equal Distribution” and “Life in the Margins” represented a new critical response to the newly established policies.

*The Postwar Era and the Fading Village*

Many Islamic Republican poets were engaged in elegy writing following the death of Khomeini in 1989 and subsequently they ceased to write about the village. With Khomeini's death, the Islamic Republic as a political entity and ideology entered a new stage. Hashemi Rafsanjani's presidency, and his political and economic pragmatism, heralded a new phase in Iranian politics. One of its major components was a new wave of both rural and particularly urban reconstruction, which accelerated in the first half of the 1990s. Cities grew larger and denser. Villages too went through a phase of reconstruction. One of the outcomes of rehabilitating villages was a rapid decline in the rate of internal migration. The urban dwellers were accustomed to their urban lifestyle and began to lose ties with their village homesteads. Amid this rapid postwar urbanization, those official poets who once had conveyed a sense of nostalgia for their rural homes as a gesture of authenticity began to feel alienated from their origins. They responded to this separation in a rather melancholic and exilic literary tone. In 1993, when Aminpur published his sixth and most famous collection, *Sudden Mirrors* (*Āyenehbā-ye nāgahān*), he no longer identified himself as a villager but as a middle-aged urban poet with a sense of remorse for the lost connection he had felt for his village. In the poem “The Sun of the Village” (*Khorshid-e rūstā*, 1989), he speaks wistfully of the village as a faded place that exists in his inner world to which he still yearns to return:

In my poems  
 The sun  
 Stops shining  
 The yellow cardboard-made suns  
 And the lead sky  
 With cold winds blow through my poems  
 Although these straw leaves  
 Along with these heavy lead letters  
 Travel on the wings of the wind  
 But, here  
 The suns of my poems,  
 Are not real suns  
 Here,  
 The suns of my poems are gone with the wind  
 And this is not a minor sorrow  
 In our village  
 People no longer read my poems with enthusiasm  
 As if these simple, honest people  
 No longer understand the language of my poems



And do not buy the straw pages of my poetry  
Which is not about wheat.  
I'm done  
But my heart  
Still speaks with its local accent  
With the local accent of the villagers  
With the eloquent accent of roses and wheat  
Wheat is the sun of the village  
When the wind  
Weaves the blond hair of the wheat fields  
The suns of my poem are there.<sup>45</sup>

Another poem, "Utopia" (*Madineh-ye fāzeleh*, 2000), published in Aminpur's second collection after the Iran–Iraq war, is also of interest. Feeling distant and uprooted did not stop poets like Aminpur from considering the village a divine entity created by the Almighty, while resembling the sanctuary of allegorical gardens as Paradise in classical Persian poetry. The village clearly stands against the mundane nature of the city as the human creation as well as the utopia of the poets, which in fact was never successfully created:

God created the village  
People created the city  
And poets created utopia  
A place that they never saw in their dreams.<sup>46</sup>

### *Reviving the Village*

With the ascendancy of a new conservative politics during Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency, the government returned to promoting the village as representative of an authentic lifestyle. Newly emerging voices in the official literary trends have been encouraged to pay special attention to the village as a symbol of the downtrodden, forsaken, according to Ahmadinejad and his supporters, by pragmatists and reformists. Sa'īd Haddādiān (b. 1965), the flamboyant official eulogist who regularly appears at the annual state poetry nights with Ayatollah Khamenei, once voiced his concern about the absence of the village as a symbolic representation of the simple life of the deprived masses in Islamic Republican poetry:

Writing poetry about poverty and the poor was very visible in the works of the first generation of the revolutionary poets and it should therefore be revived. Committed poets of the Islamic republic should not be deceived by the luxurious life.<sup>47</sup>

As we trace the theme of the village through the works of three generations of officially sanctioned literary authors, similar patterns of village politicization and romanticization emerge. It is a conviction shared by many Islamic Republican poets that the village consistently represented goodness in all its capacity.

Proponents of this sentiment received state-sponsored poetry prizes, and their verse was largely praised by newly appointed members and directors of the *Hawzeh* during the 1990s and 2000s.<sup>48</sup>

This trend continues with the next generation, as younger Islamic Republican poets have inherited the theme of the dark imagery of the city, filled with skyscrapers, cafes, smoke, hospitals and a population deceived by “westruckness.” A poem by Abbas Ahmadi (b. 1978), “Parenthetic Poems” (*She’r hā-ye mo’tarezeh*, 2013), is worth mentioning in order to briefly note the prevailing rural versus urban themes in officially sanctioned poetry:

The cities build drunken skyscrapers,  
The cities make idol worshippers of people  
Our city, alas, drowned in the vicious West,  
They drowned you in the heavy smoke of the café.<sup>49</sup>

Although, as mentioned above, the nostalgic notion of scaled-down community life gradually faded, replaced by the critical treatment of urban life after the Iran–Iraq war, conservative hardline media and politicians—especially under the presidency of Rafsanjani and Khatami—have again used the village as a political tool to delegitimize progressive reformist strategies.

#### *#WeTooAreVillagers: The New Voice of Protest*

In August 2015, Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani’s<sup>50</sup> derogatory remark about revolution and villagers sparked a major online protest campaign, reviving this pastoral motif and resurrecting concomitant quotes by Khomeini and other revolutionary figures. The catalyst was a public lecture by Hashemi-Rafsanjani, criticizing a group of hard-liner revolutionaries for their unjustifiably violent actions. He referred to them as “former villagers who did not take part in the revolution and now claim to be revolutionaries.” It sparked a huge backlash from the hardliners, who allegedly launched an online campaign with the hashtag #WeTooAreVillagers, condemning Hashemi-Rafsanjani for insulting villagers and the poor as, in Khomeini’s words, “the main owners of the Islamic Revolution.” The campaign garnered a profound response across Iran; even the conservative newspaper *Vatan-e emruz* led with the headline: “I, too, am a villager.”

In the wave of attacks, Hashemi-Rafsanjani was criticized for his own rural origins. His opponents accused him of corruption as his way of making it to the top echelon of the Islamic Republic. The collective tone of their slogan functioned as a reminder of past revolutionary slogans, which were not to be forsaken at any cost. However brief, this ideological scandal involving Rafsanjani and his supporters who have often been labeled as “bourgeois” by radical right-wingers, clearly suggests that the struggle over the conceptualization of the village and its ideological implications for politicians is still very much in place and perhaps will continue in one way or another in the coming years.

### Conclusion

The villagers depicted across three decades of contemporary Persian literature are mercurial avatars of external ideologies; the term “villager” is as ambiguous as other terms used in revolutionary slogans such as “people” (*Mardom*), “revolutionary faith-community” (*Ommat-e enghelābi*) or “downtrodden” (*Mostaz’afin*). For all its political agency, the village as a concept remains an empty vessel into which any political ideology can be decanted.

The village as the symbol for a collective voice has persisted, however—even if what that voice is saying has changed. The village has always represented the plural personal pronoun, the dominant “we” of the time—even if that “we” defines different groups of people across different time periods and political agendas. When village poetry was at its peak, just before and just after the 1979 revolution, the collective voice belonged to “the people”: the people of the villages, the people of the revolution, official and independent poets included. It was a time when the “masses” had triumphed and the collective voice was righteously amplified. Over time, however, this unity fragmented and collective interests dissolved as the rise of the individual began in Iran; the sense of collectivity that originally emerged organically and authentically had to be reproduced and perpetuated artificially by the official poets. While in reality the village became a shattered and distant community, in poetry it became more salient as one half of an ideological binary than as an entity in itself. This binary continues to be leveraged for political gain, re-popularized by the emerging younger wave of official poets.

Binaries such as villager versus city dweller, poor versus rich, and counter-revolutionary versus revolutionary still prevail in the Islamic Republic’s rhetorical writings and proclamations, as explosively illustrated by Hashemi-Rafsanjani’s insult and the momentum of the #WeTooAreVillagers campaign. Whether politicians’ use of such binaries is genuine, or merely a technique to gain the votes of deprived villagers at the time of an election, the enduring deployment of rural themes in both politics and poetics suggests that such rhetoric is still vital in maintaining the state’s control. The valorization of the village as representing simplicity demonstrates the intense nostalgia at the heart of the religious revolutionary project in Iran; a glorification of the past further illustrated by the state’s revival of traditional ceremonies and rituals. The village has been anointed with the same reverential sensitivities as the revolutionary community (*Omat-e enghelābi*), the sacred establishment (*Nezām-e Moqadas*) and the late imam (*Imam-e rāhel*). The focus on the village as an authentic space and as the home for the revolutionary spirit has been a powerful popular trend propagated within other, supposedly secular, revolutions (the example of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution is here particularly pertinent) and it is certainly no less influential in Iranian revolutionary discourse, as this article has endeavored to illustrate.

### Notes

1. The term Islamic republican poetry is used here in reference to a poetic trend that rose to prominence during the Islamic revolutionary insurgency (1979–82), with the consolidation of post-revolutionary

state-sponsored poetry. This term is used to describe the works and general literary trend discussed herein since alternative terms and titles, such as Islamist poetry (*Shé'r-e eslāmgarā*), revolutionary poetry (*Shé'r-e enqelābi*) and state poetry (*Shé'r-e hokūmati*) are expressive of determinative ideological readings that elide the ambiguities, inconsistencies and temporal evolution of the works and poets that fall under the rubric of such titles. Alternatively, Islamic republican poetry indicates a literary phenomenon that bears a specific relation to the hierarchy as far as the content of the poems is concerned. Poets of this trend identified themselves with the goals of the revolutionary state and played a significant role in the formation of the state ideological apparatus during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88). "Official poets" and "Islamic Republican poets" will be used interchangeably throughout this article. This type of literary production may also be referred to as "doctrinaire" or "ideological." However, I have chosen "Islamic republican" over these terms for scholarly and historiographical purposes. Other terms are either not comprehensive enough or lack academic, ideologically neutral connotations in their analytical approach. "*Maktabi*," which is another term that has been used to refer to state-sanctioned literati in the post-revolutionary Iran was a term used by Khomeini in reference to the zealot revolutionary mindset/person, one who is ready to sacrifice him/herself for the ideals of the revolution. The term was later employed to describe the state-sanctioned literature produced during 1980s. However, "*Maktabi*" as a term to describe official literature became outdated in the post-Khomeini era and especially following the rise of the reform movement in Iran. Another reason for choosing "Islamic republican" as title for this specific literary trend is that it serves as a term to convey the nationalism that is embedded in the current ideological doctrine of the Islamic republic. This literary trend is purely a governmental phenomenon which is the immediate outcome of consolidating political power following the 1979 revolution.

2. In most of the poems that will be discussed in this paper, village embodies the collective sense. It is pertinent to note that although in later periods (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), orientalist fascination with both "the countryside" and "the village" did not make a significant impact on the Iranian or Persian literati, Maoism in the second half of the twentieth century did. This paper will not delve into such thematic parallels and will only focus on such thematic transformations in modern and more particularly post-revolutionary official literature. But it is important to keep in mind that Marxist and communist ideology played a significant role in planting the seeds of village writing among the Iranian literati of the 1960s and 1970s.
3. Hanaway, "BĀĠ iii. In *Persian Literature*"; Meisami, "Allegorical Gardens," 253.
4. Makki, *Divān-e Farrokhi-Yazdi*, 98.
5. Gheissari, "The Poetry and Politics of Farrokhi Yazdi."
6. *Ibid.*, 145.
7. Lāhuti, *Divān-e ash'ār*, 11.
8. Hosseini, "Ash'ār-e tanz va hazliyāt."
9. Sarshar, "From Allegory to Symbol," 99.
10. Talattof, "Ideology and Self-Portrayal," 83.
11. *Ibid.*, 84.
12. Shāmlu, "Meh," 49-50.
13. Bamdād, Shāmlu's penname, meaning dawn.
14. Shāmlu, "Shabāneh," 116-19.
15. As will be noted later, this form of reception of the urban setting was prevalent among Islamic Republican poets, some of whom were inspired by Sepehri's poetic discourse and spiritual take on village life. Sepehri's apolitical discourse was one of the main reasons for his high level of acceptance and fame during the Islamic Republican era. While works by poets such as Shāmlu, Nāderpur or Farrokhzād are constantly subject to censorship and criticism under the Islamic Republic, Sepehri's poetry collections are regularly published in a variety of editions by publishers who are subsidized by government and/or by those that are independent.
16. Sepehri, "Sedā-ye pā-ye āb," 267.
17. Al-e Ahmad, *Mizā*, "25.
18. *Kānun-e nevisandegān dar tab'id.*

19. This party was supported by the Soviet Union and founded by Ja'far Pishāvari in September 1945 in Tabriz.
20. *Kānun-e nevisandegān dar tab'īd*, 16.
21. This brief, but consequential, background might help to understand Iran during the pre- and post-revolutionary eras. The first literary works to focus on the village that can be identified within Russian literature date back to the mid-eighteenth century, with the theme later becoming prevalent in the works of Karamzin, Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Bunin and Gorky. The pastoral has also been pursued by both prose writers and poets of twentieth-century Russia. The words of Sergei Esenin (1895-1925), the popular poet of Soviet Russia, are particularly pertinent in this context. Esenin spoke of his emotional attachment to the village as the site of his roots and understood it as having shaped a fundamental element of his identity. Esenin's personal perspective on the pastoral perfectly suits the theme that runs through this chapter since it addresses the nostalgic and ideological meanings of the village for Islamic Republican poets: "I was on the side of the October Revolution, a most fiery fellow traveller, but I interpreted it in my own way, giving it a peasant slant." For further details, Chakravarti and Basu, *Soviet Union: Land and People*, 82. As far as the Russian Marxist ideology is concerned, however, it is worth noting that there was clear conceptual hierarchy among Russian Marxists who viewed workers subjectively as superior to peasants, which can be traced back to Hegel. Russian intelligentsia's glorified references to Russian peasantry stemmed mostly from their glorification of "poverty" (with a distinct Orthodox residue) rather than something that would have been based on a conceptual logic or theoretical reasoning that otherwise was so customary among them.
22. It is pertinent to note that land reform released a substantial labour force into the market, such as former peasants with no land rights and hence landless; and the construction boom mostly in and around cities which could absorb such numbers of workers, as it did. However, due to inflation, new forms of poverty and hardship perpetuated for this newly migrated workforce in cities.
23. Darling, *Social Justice and Political Power*, 208.
24. For further details of the Cultural Revolution, see Khomeini, "The Meaning of Cultural Revolution," 295-307.
25. In his public lectures, Khomeini often criticized the White Revolution as a "shameful and bloody revolution" that, in his view, made the life of the peasants and farmers more miserable. For more details, see Khomeini, *Sabīfeh-ye nūr*, 170-85.
26. Fond of Frantz Fanon, who considered the "return to the true self" as the only way to defeat colonialism, Ali Shariati praised the peasantry as living an authentic lifestyle and often spoke in defence of the real rights of the workers and peasants. For more details, see LeVine and Salvatore, "Socio-Religious Movements," 45.
27. Abdolmalekiān, "Qaryeh," 20.
28. *Ibid.*, 21-2.
29. *Ibid.*, 26.
30. Abdolmalekiān, "Chūpān, Gozīneh-ye ash'ār," 50.
31. Abdolmalekiān, "Iliyāti," 31-7.
32. *Ibid.*, 37.
33. Aminpur, "Nān-e māshini," 11-12.
34. Aminpur, "Enshā," 71.
35. For more details, see Jamārān, "Bāzkhāni-e seh mafhum-e mostaz'afin."
36. Aminpur, "Mirās-e bāstāni," 15-16.
37. Aminpur, "Mānifest-e bahār," 28.
38. Harāti, "Dar rūzgāri keh māshīn savār-e ādam shod," 53.
39. Harāti, "Man ham mimiram," 48-50.
40. Harāti, "Zendegi," 81-2.
41. Aminpur, "Zendegi dar hāshiyeh," 19.
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*

44. Gheissari and Nasr, *Democracy in Iran*, 106-7.
45. Aminpur, "Khorshid-e rustā," 114-16.
46. Aminpur, "Madineh-ye fāzeleh," 62.
47. Sa'īd Haddādian, "Tavajjoh beh mostaz'afin dar she'r-e Mo'addab jelveh mikonad," *Fārsnews*. Accessed October 14, 2014. <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13930522000179>
48. See, for example, Jalili, *Marāsem-e nekudāsh-t-e Mo'addab*.
49. Ahmadi, "She'rhā-ye mo'tarezeh."
50. Hāshemi-Rafsanjāni is considered one of the main pillars of the revolutionary regime. Throughout his lifetime, Hashemi has served as the president for eight years and also as the head of the Guardian Council and the Parliament.

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