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Modernity and Identity in Azeri Poetry:
Mo'juz of Shabustar and the Iranian Constitutional Era

by

Hadi Sultan Qurraie

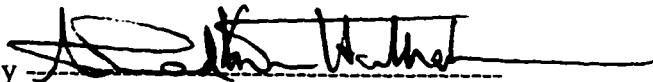
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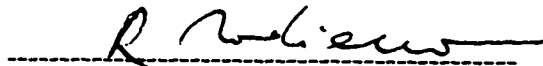
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Abstract
Modernity and Identity in Azeri Poetry:
Mo'juz of Shabustar and the Iranian Constitutional Era

by
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Chairperson of the Supervisory Committee:
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This dissertation focuses on a poet who has remained virtually unknown in his homeland, let alone anywhere outside it. Mirza Ali Mo'juz of Shabustar (1874-1934) was an Iranian Azeri poet of the early twentieth century who chose to write his poetry not in Persian, the dominant language in modern Iran, but in Azeri Turkish which had been historically suppressed as means of literary communication. As a result, Mo'juz's poetry is inaccessible to all but few scholars of Iranian culture or Persian and Azeri poetry. In the pages that follow, I will introduce Mo'juz and will discuss his deliberate choice of the Azeri language as the medium for his poetry. I will explain how the poet rejected elitism and social gain by focusing on the illiterate Azeri folk as his audience. Furthermore, I will try to define a locus for the poet within the poetry of the Iranian Constitutional era by comparing and contrasting him to some of the major poets of the period. This work will also attempt to examine Mo'juz with regard to the prevailing trend of humor and satire in modern Azeri literature by comparing him with five major Azeri authors. Finally, I will examine Mo'juz's awareness of his Azeri identity and his assertion of it throughout his work. In this work, I try to trace the genesis and development of Azeri identity and its articulation by modern Azeri authors and define Mo'juz's locus in that trend. I explain that men like Akhuzadeh canonized the Azeri language as a literary idiom which was later promoted by the authors of the *Mulla Nasreddin* circle. Mo'juz, in turn, became a promoter of *Mulla Nasreddin* ideals in Iranian Azerbaijan and handed down the legacy to the authors of the Pahlavi era. Mo'juz heralds the rebellious authors of the Pahlavi era during which the use of the Azeri language was politicized and was considered to be a subversive gesture.

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To My Father Who Taught Me the Alphabet

Introduction

Expressions such as “American English,” “Australian English” or “Indian English” sound quite familiar to us today. The literature of America, Australia and India is mostly written in the English idiom, but each bears the mark of its environment including local sensibilities and indigenous characteristics. I still remember the lively sessions of a seminar called “Indian Writers in English,” which was taught by our respected mentor, Professor C.D. Narasimaia, when I was a graduate student in Mysore University of India. I also remember Professor Narasimaia’s key expression, “Indian sensibility” being repeated on and on. Novels by R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao and biographies of Gandhi and Javahirlal Nehru were all studied in English, yet they belonged to the Indian literary tradition. Quite often, we used to speak of “Indian sensibility” or “Indian identity” --as opposed to those of British and other literatures in English. We talked about the elements which made Narayan’s or Rao’s novels Indian. Yet, I could never think of my own Azeri sensibility or Azeri identity during those days. Brought up in Iran with the paradigms set under the Pahlavi rule, like many naive Azeris, I was ashamed of not being a Persian speaking Iranian. Since I had not developed a rational approach to understanding differences, my feelings of “otherness” and “difference” were only manifested in the embarrassment I felt with my Azeri accent while speaking Persian. There was a sense of inferiority concerning why I was not born a Tehrani. Power displacement regarding language and ethnicity did not permit the birth of a concept such as Azeri literature in Persian. Minds framed by the paradigms set during the Pahlavi era and espoused by many intellectuals of the period would not even think of “Azeri” as a language. Concept such as Azeri literature was unthinkable for such people, and an idea such as Azeri literature in the Persian language was out of question.

Today what we call the Azeri language is spoken by the people of the Republic of Azerbaijan, termed Northern Azerbaijan in this work, Iranian Azerbaijan, termed Southern Azerbaijan, encompasses Western and Eastern Azerbaijan, the Arasbaran and Zanjan provinces, and parts of Gazvin and Gilan. Azeri, a branch of Oghuz Turkic, was introduced to these regions by Turks entering Iran during 11th and 12th centuries.¹ The language spoken by the Turkic tribes gradually replaced the original Azeri or “Medic which was the older Iranian language of the area.”² Oghuz tribes are believed to have brought their oral literature and folk stories with them to their new home, molding them under the influences of the new ecology, and recasting them into the epic stories called *Dada Gorgut*.³ This work was compiled in the 15th century, long after the Oghuz tribes had

occupied Azerbaijan. However, many biographers, especially those of Northern Azerbaijan, begin the history of Azeri literature with figures such as Qatran of Tabriz (ca.1009-1072). Qatran represents the “Azerbaijani” or “Transcaucasian” school of poetry in the Persian literature. In order to avoid confusion, it is important to note that most Iranian scholars and biographers do not differentiate the literature written by Azerbaijani literati from the main body of Persian literature. Other than geographical, they see no qualitative difference between the literature produced by Azerbaijanis and that of the Persian speaking parts of Iran. However, Mirza Ibrahimov opens his *Azerbaijani Poetry* as follows:

The writer of these lines is firm in his belief that art must always remain true to its native roots, both socially and aesthetically, and must never sever its links with the people and land that gave it birth.⁴

Later, Ibrahimov discusses poets such as Khaqani of Shirvan (1121-1199) and Nizami of Ganje (1141-1209) --both are considered to be major poets of Persian poetry by many Iranian scholars. Qatran, Khaqani and Nizami all wrote in Persian. Ibrahimov argues that “the Azerbaijanians love life,” and referring to the love episodes from Nizami, he claims that vitality and “inherent love of life” differentiate an Azerbaijani from a Persian poet who often advocates Sufism and asceticism.

Although there are a number of works associated with the Qarakhanid dynasty, the first national Moslem-Turkic dynasty, which ruled in pre-Mongol Central Asia during the 11th century, it was only late in the 13th century that ‘Ezz ed-Din Esfara’ini, known as Hasanoghlu, wrote *ghazals* both in Southwest Oghuz Turkic, from which today’s Azeri descends and in Persian.⁵ After ‘Esfara’ieni we come across a host of writers who wrote in Azeri and Persian. ‘Emad ed-Din Nasimi was born around 1370 in Shamakhi and was put to death in Aleppo around 1407. The founder of Safavid dynasty in Iran, Shah Ismail (1487-1524) also wrote poetry in two languages --Azeri and Persian. During the reign of early Safavid kings, Azeri language and literature saw its most brilliant years. Fuzuli of Baghdad, also called Suleyman Oghlu, was one of the most gifted Azeri poets of this period. Fuzuli (1498-1556) wrote in Azeri, Persian and Arabic.

After the afore-mentioned pioneers, we find many Azerbaijani poets who wrote in both Azeri and Persian and followed Persian classical poetry rhyme scheme, ‘*aruz*, which was borrowed from Arabic poetry. However, Azeri considered to be “strange, hard and unmalleable language” could only be adapted “poorly to *aruz* molds.”⁶ Therefore, on examining an Azeri poet’s works written in the two languages, he proves to be folk-

oriented, lively and real when he writes in the native Azeri language. The fact which facilitated a vast development of folk literature resulting in the production of a considerable amount of *bayatis*, *sayas*, and popular ballads after the Azeri language had been used as a poetic idiom.⁷ Poetry following the Persian classical conventions continued to flourish even after the transfer of the capital from Tabriz to Isfahan where Persian was favored Persian in court. It also marked the beginning of the departure from the classical tradition by many Azeri poets of popular base. Qowsi of Tabriz, a 17th century poet heralds this new trend. Qowsi “champions freedom of human feelings” and protests “against oppression”⁸ and his work is distinguished “with the candor of popular poetry.”⁹ The period also saw the birth of the breed of poetry called *Tarzilik*, which was a humorous mix of Azeri and Persian. The style was named after Tarzi Afshar, a poet of the period.

With the fall of the Safavid dynasty and the advent of the Qajars at the close of 18th century, Azeri literature moves further toward popularism, almost entirely abandoning classical traditions of Persian poetry. Molla Panah Waqif, born in 1717, marks this new “realistic” movement in the Azeri poetry. “He left us many love poems glorifying earthly joys and beauty of real, flesh-and-blood women, written in an idiom closely approaching popular speech.”¹⁰ In his old age, the poet was executed by being thrown from a precipice in 1797. Mirza Shafi Vazeh (1792-1852) and Said ‘Azim Shirvani (1835-1888) represented the new generation of poets who devoted their efforts to social realism through their employment of satire and humor.

The demographic changes of 1828 and the Russian acquisition of the Azeri speaking regions as a result of the defeat suffered by Iran did not sever ties between the people living under Russian rule in the territory to the north of the Araxes River and those to the south of the river under Iranian government. The events of 1828, however, ushered in many social and economic changes which resulted in the emergence of authors who were neither Russian nor Iranians.¹¹ Political severance from Iran and the “otherness” of Moslem Azerbaijanis with respect to Christian Russia prepared the way for the formation of an Azeri political identity which carried a cultural, literary and linguistic heritage. Mirza Fathali Akhundzadeh (1812-78) is a prominent author of this era who firmly established the Azeri language as a literary idiom, –relegating Persian to less significance. Akhundzadeh considered satire and criticism major tools for undoing classical traditions and effecting social change in the Moslem world. Influenced by Molière and other European writers, Akhundzadeh is considered to be “the first original playwright ...in the whole Islamic East.”¹²

The seat of crown princes, Tabriz developed under the Qajar dynasty. Poets and writers in Iranian (Southern) Azerbaijan continued to write in Azeri and Persian. A huge body of devotional poetry was produced during Qajar rule as a result of folk orientation and the popular base of Azeri literature. "Whereas non-religious topics were expressed in either Persian or Azeri, religious sentiments were almost always in Azeri."¹³ However, social criticism advocated by Akhundzadeh became almost the only trend in Azeri literature in the early twentieth century. Azerbaijani prose writers such as 'Abdu'r-Rahim Talibuf (1835-1909) and Zeyn al-Abedin Maraghe'i (1837-1910) played a role in changing people's minds and introducing modern views to Iran which culminated in the Constitutional Revolution of 1906. The first issue of Jalil Mamed Qoli-Zade's paper *Mulla Nasreddin* came out on April 7, 1906.¹⁴ A playwright and an essayist of high caliber, Mamed Qoli-Zade (1866-1932) had brought together a group of talented writers and poets who contributed to the paper. Writers such as 'Abdu'l-Rahim Haqverdiev (1870-1933), Mohammad Sa'id Ordubadi (1872-1950), and poet Ali Akbar Saber (1862-1911) brought new momentum to the Azeri tradition of satire. During Lesser Despotism (1908-1909), when "the Constitutionalists were fighting the Royalists in Tabriz would recite the poems of Saber to keep up their morale."¹⁵ These authors resided in the Caucasus and in Northern Azerbaijan, and they wrote only in the Azeri language while Iranian Azerbaijanis wrote in Azeri and Persian as well.

Miza Ali Mo'juz of Shabustar (1874-1934), the focus of this study, was a follower of the *Mulla Nasreddin* circle. Although an Iranian Azerbaijani, Mo'juz emulated the poets and writers of Northern Azerbaijan in his poetic choice of the Azeri language. After the establishment of Communism in Northern Azerbaijan during early years of 1920s and the fall of Qajar dynasty in Iran in 1923, the ties between Northern and Southern Azerbaijan were effectively severed. Establishing Pahlavi dynasty, Reza Shah had himself proclaimed king in 1925. Under Pahlavi rule restrictions were imposed upon Azeri poets and writers in Iran, and publishing in the Azeri language was discouraged. During the years 1941-46s with the presence of the Allied forces in Iran and Reza Shah's abdication, his son, Mohammad Reza, succeeded to the throne. During these chaotic years, the government of Tehran did not have full control over the country, and in 1945 an autonomous government was established in Iranian Azerbaijan under the leadership of Seyyed Ja'far Pishavari with active support from Soviet Azerbaijanis. The National Government, *Hukumati Milli*, of Pishavari was overthrown a year later by the forces from Tehran and due to the compromise which was reached between the US and the Soviet Union. However, this

brief period of popular governance provided an unprecedented occasion to flourishing Azeri language and literature and resulted in enormous developmental and constructional activities. In fact, Mo'juz's manuscripts were discovered during this time, and they were published in the same year. After the collapse of the autonomous government of Azerbaijan, Mohammad Reza Shah's reign (1941-79) saw perhaps the strictest ban on the publication of Azeri works. According to M.T. Zehtabi, in the years following 1946 "Azerbaijan was subjected to the most strict autocracy, tyranny, and oppression unprecedented in Iranian history."¹⁶

While Azeri works were becoming part of "forbidden" literature and their publication was going underground in Iranian Azerbaijan, poets and writers wrote in Azeri without any prohibition in Northern Azerbaijan under Soviet rule --changing the centuries old Arabic script into Cyrillic. Huseyn Javid (1882-1944) who wrote many historical tragedies represents Azeri Romanticism. He was slandered and arrested in 1937 under the Communists. Samad Vurghun (1906-1956) was also a poet and playwright whose poems have turned into popular songs. Suleyman Rustam (1906-89) organized *Krasnoye Pero*, the Red Pen literary society, and he was at the service of Communism for many years. In many poems, Suleyman Rustam deals with the problems of Iranian Azerbaijan and the Pahlavi regime's suppression of Azeri language and literature in Iran. Bakhtyar Vahabzada, born in 1925, is a very popular poet; the people of Azerbaijan sing his lyrics and love songs. Hakima Biluri was born in 1926. She is a gifted poetess and a literary scholar of high caliber who has spent a good deal of her life in Southern Azerbaijan. She also has written on the issues such as "separation" between Northern and Southern Azerbaijan.

The freedom allowed to the Azeri authors in Northern Azerbaijan and the encouragement of cultural activities during Soviet rule became a tantalizing desire for the people of Southern Azerbaijan under Pahlavi rule; as a result, a huge body of "literature of mutiny" was produced both in Azeri and Persian by Iranian Azeri authors. Works by Samad Behrangi (1939-68), Bulut Qarachorli (1926-79) and many Azeri poems by Sharyar (1907-86) belong to this category. The authors of this period, nostalgically, look back to the freedom fighters of the Constitutional Era (1906-1909), the national movement of 1918-20 under Sheikh Muhammad Khiyabani, and the 1945-46 autonomous government of Pishavari. They speak on behalf of the people whose "mouths have been locked and their tongues tied."¹⁷ Following the Islamic Revolution in Iran, tension over publishing in Azeri has considerably relaxed, and a great number of works have been published both in

Tabriz and Tehran. Currently, a journal of literary value, *Varlig*, is being published under the editorship of Dr. Javad Hey'at. Dr. Hey'at's regular contributions to *Varlig* have been made into a book entitled *Azerbaijan Adabiyyat Tarikhina Bir Bakhish*, (A Look at the Literary History of Azerbaijan).¹⁸ A daily newspaper named *Ark* is currently being published in Tabriz, mainly in the Azeri language.

As referred to earlier, Mo'juz of Shabustar is an Iranian Azeri poet who has remained almost unknown to Persian speaking Iran. His choice of Azeri to convey his message can be cited as a major reason for his anonymity. Mojuz left his birth place, Shabustar, after his father's death. He was 16 years old. He joined his brothers in Istanbul who were engaged in a small business of selling stationary. After sixteen years in Istanbul, Mo'juz returned to Shabustar. The poet's return to a small village after living in a major city such as Istanbul was an anomaly. All poets and authors of his rank would leave behind a rural environment such as Shabuster in pursuit of the advancement opportunities which were available in centers such as Tehran or Istanbul. Poets and authors of Mo'juz's caliber placed themselves in the service of newly born and thriving business of journalism. Conversely, Mo'juz did not write to be published, he wrote to be recited to the illiterate rural Azeris.¹⁹ During the years when Iranian society was changing from oral into a written one, Mo'juz chose to remain an oral story-teller. This is another reason for his anonymity. The name of Mo'juz does not appear in the biographies written before 1945, when a selection of the poet's works was published. Muhammad Ali Tarbiyat's *Daneshmandan-e Azerbaijan*,²⁰ published in 1314 /1935 (a year after the poet's death), names almost every minor poet and writer except Mo'juz. It appears that Tarbiyat has mainly relied on the biographies written before himself in preparing his work although he might have heard about Mo'juz. An unpublished poet like Mo'juz of Shabustar had not established his position in the *tazkiras* (biographies) yet.

Ghulam Memmedli, the most prominent Mo'juz scholar, was an officer in the Soviet Red Army which occupied Northern Iran (Iranian Azerbaijan) during 1941-46. He gives detailed information about his discovery of the "bundle" of Mo'juz's manuscripts in his introduction to his 1982 edition of the poet's collection of works.²¹ Speaking about the first publication of Mo'juz's poetry in 1945, Memmedli says that a selection of the poet's works entitled *Mirza Ali Mo'juz: Sechilmish Asarlari* (Mirza Ali Mo'juz Selected Works) was published in 2000 copies in Tabriz and sold out in "ten to fifteen days."²² After the withdrawal of the Red Army from Iran, the collapse of the National Government of Azerbaijan and the flight of its members to Soviet Azerbaijan, Mo'juz's works and Mo'juz

scholarship also took leave from Iran, and they became part of Soviet Azerbaijani assets. Thus having been discovered and published by the Soviet Azeris, Mo'juz was fully accommodated by the Communist system of Northern Azerbaijan. On the contrary, in Iranian Azerbaijan, Mo'juz remained part of the "forbidden literature" read and memorized by the populace. I became familiar with some of Mo'juz's lines during my elementary school years. Some wandering lines by Mo'juz had become part of Azeri folk knowledge yet very few people knew about the identity of the author.²³ Many people would think they were from the *Hophop-Nama*--the renowned satirical work of Saber. It was only during my high-school days that I heard Mo'juz's name from some Azerbaijani vine-growers who were reciting the poet's famous poem, "Addressed to Sparrows." While I was a student in Tabriz University, my friendship with some of the people who had been teachers in the rural areas close to Shabustar helped me learn more about Mo'juz. I bought my first copy of Mo'juz's *divan* in those days. Reading it became a hobby for me -- something with which I used to entertain our guests and friends. My appreciation of Mo'juz during those days was to the extent that the poet had meant --to read the poems and laugh at my own and my people's follies. My subsequent readings of other literatures, especially that of English, and my acquaintance with modern literary theories, provided me new tools to develop a more professional approach to Mo'juz's poetry.

Reading poetry in the Azeri language, roused mixed emotions in me back then that only today I am capable of analyzing them. It was as if I had been taught that an Azeri poem could only be recited and memorized; it could neither be read or written. I had been taught to listen to Persian and Azeri poetry through different ears. As a result, a guilty conscience would fret me if I listened to Persian and Azeri poetry equally, or if I took an Azeri poem seriously. An Azeri poem would sound like a joke, like a vulgar banter because Azeri was the language of the illiterate masses and the lower class. Saber's and Mo'juz's popular satires and their employment of colloquial language as the idiom of their poetry also fostered this sentiment. Azeri was denied its development into a written language under the Pahlavi rule, and it was rendered to remain only in its oral usefulness. Thus the notion that Azeri was the language of the illiterate was not out of the ordinary since orality and illiteracy carry parallel associations. Listening to the Persian and Azeri poems on equal aesthetic standard would violate cultural priorities, it would be an infringement on the prerogatives of a superior language.

The main purpose of this study is to uncover a man who essentially chose to remain anonymous to Persian speaking Iran, to make him accessible to the world outside

Azerbaijan and define his locus in the literature of the Iranian Constitutional Era. Five chapters comprise this work. Chapter I provides a biographical account of Mo'juz. While speaking about the poet's life story, I will rely on three categories of sources: (1) Works produced on Mo'juz including a number of essays, the brief accounts of biographers quoting from each other, and introductions to the collections of the poet's works by different editors. (2) Mo'juz's own letters and handwritten autobiographical notes (3) Mo'juz's poetry. Like other authors of the period, social realism is the most prominent aspect of Mo'juz's poetry. I believe that this study of Mo'juz's poems will compensate for the conciseness of his handwritten notes as well as for the inadequacy of the works produced on the poet.

Chapter II speaks to the modernistic aspects of Mo'juz's poetry. Mo'juz is considered to be a modern poet since he deals with the social and political issues relevant to his time and place. In fact, Mo'juz's poetry is part of a massive movement toward fundamental changes in literature as well as in the social and political life of Iran in general, and in Azerbaijan in particular. For Mo'juz and his Azerbaijani precursors, social and political changes were of paramount importance. Mo'juz saw himself as a social reformer rather than a poet. Modernity in the Persian and Azeri literatures is marked by the poets' attempts to subvert traditional themes and loosen the strict rules of classical prosody. The thematic change, however, preceded the subversion of classical conventions and the loosening of the *aruz* rules.

Thus chapter II deals more with Mo'juz's thematic innovations rather than his technical ones. Five different sections comprise the chapter, each pertaining to some of the major themes which we find in the poet's works. Section One discusses Mo'juz's treatment of the classics and classical rules, cliches and conventions. Studying selected pieces from the poet, we notice how Mo'juz makes a mockery of conventional devices of the classical Persian poetry and shuns people's conventional responses to them. Section Two speaks to Mo'juz's radical stand against superstitions and irrational traditions. It discusses how the poet attacks dogma and superstition by upholding major social problems such as women's issue. The poet demonstrates how superstitions originate from a handful men and are perpetuated by the ignorant masses (men) who apotheosize and deify the originators of the superstitions. Section Three discusses Mo'juz's approach to women's problems and gender issues. By quoting relevant passages from the poet, we see how Mo'juz recognizes women's literacy as a key factor in social improvement. "If Tukaz's ignorance is not removed, his son will not be inclined toward civilization," Mo'juz says.

Section Four illustrates how the poet is able to see the women's side of the issues when talking about women. Woman is not an abstract term for Mo'juz. A woman is his mother, sister, wife and daughter. Mo'juz's contemporaries wrote about women because it was a fashion to write about them; they wrote for their own sake. Conversely, Mo'juz wanted to save women for women's sake. Section Five addresses the poet's advocacy of sciences and knowledge and demonstrates how the poet tried to "fight" illiteracy and ignorance.

Chapter III studies Mo'juz in the spectrum of the Iranian Constitutional Era. It tries to define a locus for the poet in the literature and among the poets of the era. In order to facilitate a direct approach to the issue, the chapter is subdivided into two sections, each analysing a major theme dealt by the majority of the poets of the period. Section One deals with the treatment of women's issues by poets such as Bahar, Lahuti, Iraj and Ashraf ud-Din of Gilan who are considered to be notable poets of the period. After discussing the named poets with an eye toward the treatment of women's problems in their poetry, some relevant poems and passages from Mo'juz are discussed, and it is demonstrated how the mentioned poets vary from each other, and how Mo'juz varies from them. Section Two compares and contrasts two major poets of the period --Bahar and Iraj-- with Mo'juz regarding their criticism of ignorance, illiteracy, and the prevalence of superstitions. The poems discussed in this section specifically deal with superstitious acts of self-flagellation and self-mutilation during the month of Moharram.

Chapter IV studies Mo'juz in respect with the Azeri tradition of humor and satire. The chapter starts with a reference to Mirza Fathali Akhundzadeh who upheld "satire and criticism" as his major tools to subvert the classical tradition of "exhortation and advice."²⁴ Then we have references to other major Azeri authors such as Talibuf, Maraghe'i, Mamed Qoli-Zade and Saber for whom any literary endeavor meant social criticism, satire and humor. "A poet I am, the mirror of my time and place/In me everyone will see his eyes and eyebrows,"²⁵ Saber avers. After an introductory discussion on the tradition of humor and satire in Azeri literature, the remaining discussion in the chapter is dealt under two sections. The first section deals with "Bath-House As An Object of Satire" and the second one compares Mo'juz and Saber as the two masters of humor and satire in Azeri poetry. Section One discusses how the bath-house motif becomes a metonymy, standing for the society as a whole in the works of Talibuf, Maraghe'i, Mamed Qoli-Zadeh and Mo'juz. By quoting passages from the mentioned authors, the chapter discusses how the stinking water of the bath-reservoir stands for the decaying Iranian social fabric. It is rotten both inside

and outside, it stinks from outside with the filthy appearance of “fat” on its “surface” and “feces” in the bottom from inside. “It disseminates the bad odor all around like a decomposing carcass” in Mo’juz’s words. Section Two of the chapter draws parallels between Saber and Mo’juz and discusses each poet’s unique way of employing satire and criticism in order to effect changes in their societies.

Chapter V analyzes the development of Azeri identity, its problems, the Azeri authors’ articulation of their identity and Mo’juz’s stand in regard to his native tongue and Azeri cultural heritage. The chapter proposes that almost all Azeri authors articulate their identity in their works. However, each author’s articulation of identity is different. Being protectorates of Russian and Iranian governments in recent history, Azerbaijani authors do not accentuate an Azerbaijani nationhood or national identity until the years after the WWI. Akhundzadeh, who died in 1878, contributed under the sobriquet of *wakil-e mellat-e nama’lum* (the guardian of an unknown nation) to his contemporary newspapers such as *Akinchi*.²⁶ Although a Russian citizen nominally, he shares many traits with the Iranians. Yet, he was neither Russian nor Iranian, but in search of his real identity out of the “unknown” nationhood. Thus he produced his works in native Azeri and canonized it as a literary idiom.

Chapter V continues to name major Azeri authors of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, discussing each one’s unique way of articulating his/her identity. Talibuf articulates his Azeri identity by emotionalizing his love to his birthplace (Tabriz), his pessimism and cynicism toward Iranians’ attaining democracy and subverting the Persian language through his rife employment of Azeri lexicon while using Persian medium. Maraghe’i also accentuates his Azeri identity by his deliberate subversion of the Persian language through abundant use of Azeri expressions on the one hand, and his numerous references to the Turk/Fars dichotomy on the other. Kasravi, an Azeri historian of the period, articulates his Azeri identity through his denial of the Turk/Fars dichotomy and his Azeri attributes on a conscious plane, but in an unconscious plane, he manifests his attachment to Azerbaijan by glamorizing and over-glorifying every aspect of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis which he deems to be admirable.

A good portion of Chapter V deals with Mo’juz’s articulation of his Azeri identity. Mo’juz’s choice of the Azeri language as the medium of his poetry becomes an axial move in his articulation of his Azeri identity. By his choice of his mother tongue, the poet discards the Persian language as a literary medium, and disregards its supremacy as the language of power. As an Iranian Azeri, Mo’juz’s choice is an anomaly. He distances

himself from the mainstream of the Iranian Azeri authors who only wrote in the Persian language. Mo'juz joins Akhundzadeh, Mamed Qoli-Zade, Saber and other Northern Azerbaijani authors regarding his choice of the Azeri language as a literary vehicle. In fact, Mo'juz heralds the rebellious poets and writers of the Pahlavi era in Iran, and he marks the beginning of the "literature of mutiny." The last section of Chapter V addresses the Azeri authors' articulation of identity in the face of anti-Azerbaijani policies of the Pahlavi rule. The section speaks about the literature of mutiny, and it discusses how the Turk/Fars dichotomy develops into other binary oppositions such as Tehran/Tabriz and Damavand/Sahand in Shahryar's poems like "Sahandim."

Before I close my introduction, I would like to mention a few procedural points which have been taken into consideration in preparing the present work. First, as mentioned earlier, because of the hostile policies of Pahlavi rule toward publication and production of works in the Azeri language, most of the works produced by the Iranian Azeris during the mentioned time span --even after the Islamic Revolution-- are defensive and apologetic in nature. In fact, they are responses to those hostile policies and unfair treatments of the Azeri language, or they are reactions against those mistreatments.²⁷ This work will try to keep itself unaffected by the mentioned trend. Second, since the main goal of this work is to make Mo'juz's works available to a wider audience, translating and analyzing a good number of the poet's poems will be my main objective. However, I have always felt the constraints rendered by the limits of my work while quoting from Mo'juz and the different authors examined here. I consider this work as an initial step taken toward the study of Mo'juz, and I hope someone will make the collection of Mo'juz's works available for the English speaking readers in future. Since this work is almost a ground-breaking effort in introducing an Azeri poet who has written only in the Azeri language, it has all the short-comings of any pioneer effort. Moreover, Mo'juz has been taboo in Iran; and in the former Soviet Azerbaijan, he had been painted as an advocate of Communism.²⁸ Almost all the writers of Northern Azerbaijan under the Soviet Union have tried to present Mo'juz as an atheist "fighting fanaticism, religion and ignorance"²⁹ on the one hand, and eulogizer of Lenin on the other. Thus, retrieving the true personality of the poet from the blankness of Southern Azerbaijan and the Communistic bravado of the North would entail its inherent problems.

Notes to Introduction

1. See H. Javadi and K. Burrill, "Azeri Literature in Iran" *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. III, pp. 252-5.
2. See Sakina Berengian, *Azeri and Persian Literary Works in Twentieth Century Iranian Azerbaijan*, P. IX.
3. See Mr. M.A. Farzaneh's Introduction to *Dada Gorgut Kitabi*, PP. 3-16.
4. *Azerbaijan Poetry*, edited by Mirza Ibrahimov, P. 21.
5. See Berengian, P. 15. See also *Encyclopedia Iranica*, vol. III, H. Javadi and K. Burrill, "Azeri Literature in Iran" P. 251.
6. *Ibid* P. 12.
7. See *Bayatilar*, edited by Mohammad Ali Farzaneh. See also *Encyclopedia Iranica*, vol. III, H. Javadi and K. Burrill, "Azeri Literature in Iran" P. 252.
8. *Azerbaijan Poetry*, edited by Mirza Ibrahimov, P. 132.
9. *Encyclopedia Iranica*, vol. III, H. Javadi and K. Burrill, "Azeri Literature in Iran" P. 252.
10. *Azerbaijan Poetry*, edited by Mirza Ibrahimov, P. 140.
11. For further information on Russo-Iranian wars and Russian acquisition of Caucasian territories see *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828* by Muriel Atkin.
12. Berengian, P. 50.
13. *Ibid*, P. 19.
14. See Kasravi's *Tarikh-e Mashrute-ye Iran*, Vol. II. PP. 44-6.
15. *Encyclopedia Iranica*, vol. III, H. Javadi and K. Burrill, "Azeri Literature in Iran" P. 253.
16. Mohammad Taqi Zehtabi, *Zaban-e Azeri-ye Adabi-ye Mo'aser (The Contemporary Azeri Literary Language)* P. 87. See also Javadi, A. A. *Azerbaijan va Zaban-e An*, PP. 3-38
17. See Qarachorli's poem "Shahryara Maktub," which appears in *Kulliyat-e 'Ash'ar-e Torki-ye Shahryar*, P. 238.
18. See Javad Hey'at, *Azerbaijan Adabiyat Tarikhina Bir Bakhish*, Tehran: 1979.
19. See the poet's autobiographical hand-written note, Plate 1.
20. *Daneshmandan-e Azerbaijan (The Literati of Azerbaijan)* by Muhammad Ali Tarbiyat was published in 1314 (1925). Tarbiyat was a friend of Edward G. Browne and brother-in-law of Hasan Taqi-Zadeh the famous Azerbaijani author and politician. Browne's *The press and Poetry of Modern Persia* is based on Tarbiyat's collections on the subject.
21. See *Miza Ali Mo'juz Asarlari* edited by Memmedli, 1982 edition. According to Memmedli, Mirza Ibrahimov and Rustam Aliev, named earlier as Azeri poets and authors, were part of the Soviet regiment in Iran, and they helped the publication of the first version of the poet's divan in 1945.
22. See Memmedli, P. 17.
23. Berengian speaks on the popularity of Mo'juz and his popular base, and she writes: "Not only does he [Mo'juz] use Azerbaijani proverbs and expressions most effectively, but fragments of his poems have gained the status of popular quotations." P. 92.
24. See Akhundzadeh's letter to the Translator of his *Tamsilat* P. 9.
25. *Hophop-Nama*, P. 268.
26. See Hamed Algar's "Akhundzada" in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, P. 737.
27. In order to have an idea about the atmosphere governing the mentioned scholarship see

L'AZERBAIDJAN et... published by Association Culturelle Azerbaidjanaise, Strasbourg, France. The work has put together a number of essays by some Persian writers who pitch accusations against Azerbaijani intellectuals alleging them of separationism and calling them "agents of foreigners." The work also includes the Azeri response to the mentioned accusations. See also Hamid Notqi's "Muqaddima Yerina" (In leu of Introduction) to Hey'at's *Azerbaijan Tarikhina Bir Bakhish..* 92.

28. See L. Omarova P. 32.

29. *Ibid*, P. 42.

Chapter I **Biographical Sketch**

Mo'juz is an Iranian Azeri poet who has remained almost unknown to Persian speaking Iranians. Known for his strong sense of humor and social realism, Mo'juz enjoys widespread popularity among Azerbaijanis on both sides of the Araxes. Perhaps his choice of the Azeri language as the medium of his poetry is a major reason for his anonymity among non-Azeri Iranians. There are, however, other factors involved in keeping the poet's name out of the reach of the Persian speaking Iranians which also have direct bearing on the poet's choice of the Azeri language as a literary idiom: (1) Mo'juz's productive years coincided with a resurgence of Persian nationalism which upheld the Persian language as its prevailing expression. Upholding the Persian language at the expense of the regional languages and ethnic identities became a legitimate leverage to bolster the presumed Iranian nationalism in the hands of many Iranians . (2) The decades after Mo'juz's death saw the suppression of the Azeri language in the wake of the East/West polarization of world politics.¹ (3) The poets and authors of the Constitutional era usually moved to the central cities and became part of the newly established and thriving journalism industry. Mo'juz had returned to his native Shabustar after sixteen years in Istanbul where he underwent intense intellectual conversion. (4) The last but not the least important reason for the poet's anonymity are the themes and the issues dealt with in his poetry. He addressed topics which other authors would hardly mention. He was an ardent advocate of change, and he was not afraid to confront taboos.²

Furthermore, Mo'juz is very much relevant to the present as much as he was in his life time. The very reasons which barred Mo'juz from receiving due recognition, their ongoing conversions and reversals in today's socio-political arenas provide validity to a work such as this. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the invalidation of the Communist threat put an end to Manichean such as "East" versus "West" seconded by a growing interest in the newly born independent republics --the Republic of Azerbaijan being one. The downfall of the Pahlavi regime and the emergence of the Islamic Republic of Iran relaxed the suppression and tension which Azeri language and literature was subjected to. A relative freedom was granted for the publication of materials in Azeri under the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the study of Azerbaijani authors ceased to be considered taboo to some extent. During the early days of the revolution, Mo'juz was printed and reprinted by many unknown publishers yet the rare copies of his poetry were not easily accessible in the Persio-Arabic alphabet. A number of new works have been produced on Mo'juz recently.

Until now, dozens of works have been published on the poet --including the different collections of the poet's works. Most of the published works are in Azeri; very few of them are in Persian or Russian and one or two are in English. My undertaking to introduce the poet to a wider audience is nearly the first in its own kind.

In my approach to Mo'juz's life story, I will draw upon three categories of sources: (1) the works produced on Mo'juz (secondary sources) (2) Mo'juz's own letters to his friends as well as a handwritten brief autobiographical note (primary sources) (3) Mo'juz's poetry. I believe the autobiographical nature of Mo'juz's own works will compensate for the briefness of his handwritten notes and the scantiness and shortcomings of the works produced on the poet. However, the three mentioned sources will compliment each other. Moreover, Mo'juz is quite close to our time, and many of his friends were living until very recent years. One of his very close friends, M.R. Mo'addab, is still living. I do believe that a comparative study of the three mentioned categories of sources and their analysis will help us to know the poet and his works quite well. Furthermore, since social realism is the prevailing aspect of Mo'juz's poetry, it will be a valuable touch-stone in our evaluation and authentication of available biographical pieces and references.

Mo'juz's Life

Mirza Ali Mo'juz was born on February 26, 1874 in Shabustar village of Guney³ county in Southern Azerbaijan.⁴ His father, Haji Agha, was a merchant of declining fortune. However, the dwindling business of the father did not prevent Ali from traditional schooling and becoming renowned poet Mirza Ali Mo'juz of Shabustar. In the traditional *maktab* of a mulla called Mulla Ali, Mo'juz learned the Persian and Arabic languages and became familiar with Islamic texts. Mo'juz's works clearly demonstrate that he was fully acquainted with the Persian classics. Not very long after his father's death, in 1889, Mo'juz traveled through Tbilisi, Batum and the Black Sea to Istanbul (a common itinerary taken in those days). In Istanbul, the young Mo'juz joined his two brothers, Hasan and Huseyn, in their small business selling books and stationery. Although our knowledge about the poet's life in Istanbul is very sketchy, we know that like many Iranian migrant businessmen, Mo'juz resided in Valide Hani. The place comprised two hospices named Buyuk and Kucuk Valide Hani --Greater and Lesser Valide Hani.⁵ The rows of uniformly built lodgings, lined around the two court-yards, were similar to modern studios which served both as offices as well as residential units for the occupants.⁶ We have no knowledge of the poet's literary activity in Istanbul.⁷ However, it is quite clear that he had started writing poetry there, and his years of residence in that city had played a fundamental

role in shaping his personality and world views. After living in Istanbul for almost sixteen years, Mo'juz returned to Shabustar by the same route he had traveled when he was in his teens. Mo'juz was in his most productive years when he returned to Shabustar --his early thirties, in the summer of 1906. The poet was destined to live almost the second half of his life in Shabustar before he had to leave his native village for the last time. This period comprises nearly twenty seven years during which the poet fought a "proclaimed war" against injustice, lawlessness, illiteracy of masses, ignorance of the uneducated clerics, the corruption of ruling classes, and above all, the victimization of women and their deplorable sub-class status. These are the years during which "they [the clerics and their followers] threw parties of charities (*kheyrat*)"⁸ never inviting the poet, and "they had weddings" which he never attended. In the poet's own words, "*Ba kamal-e jasarat ta akhar zadam, ya'ni neveshtam ba zaban-e madarзад-e Torki* " --(with my utmost temerity, I fought; that is I wrote in the Turkish [Azeri] mother tongue...)"⁹ Mo'juz left his native birth place during the summer of 1933 for Shahrud in north eastern Iran and died there on September 3, 1934. The poet's travel to Shahrud was arranged according to an invitation from his sister and brother-in-law.

Publication of Mo'juz's Poetry and the Introductions of the Poet's Editors

In the summer of 1933, on his way to Shahrud, Mo'juz stopped in Tabriz and stayed a few days in the house of a friend, Muhammad Nakhjuvani. Before taking leave from M. Nakhjuvani, Mo'juz declared that he gave his hand-written poetry booklet to Mohammad Riza Mo'addab of Shabustar (a friend who is still living) in return for a 50-toman debt. A few days after the poet was gone, M. Nakhjuvani traveled to Shabustar, paid M.R. Moaddab's 50 tomans and obtained Mo'juz's poetry booklet. In 1945, eleven years after the poet's death, when an autonomous government was proclaimed in Southern Azerbaijan, and the Azeri idiom was recognized as the official language of the autonomous state, many Azeri works of earlier periods were unearthed and published for the first time.¹⁰ Ghulam Memmedli gives a detailed story of how he was able to discover Mo'juz's manuscripts, and how he prepared the first edition of the poet's works.¹¹ This version was selected out of the manuscript in M. Nakhjuvani's possession. Mirza Ibrahimov and Ghulam Memmedli, two Azeri scholars from Northern Azerbaijan, had worked on editing, choosing and picking out the poems. It is noteworthy to mention here that the autonomy of Iranian (Southern) Azerbaijan was declared under the occupation of Iran by the Allied forces in the wake of World War II. The Northern Part of Iran, including Southern

Azerbaijan was occupied by the USSR. On October 6, 1945, the Poets' Association of Tabriz arranged a tour to Shabustar to honor Mo'juz.¹² Two days after this occasion, M. R. Mo'addab traveled to Tabriz to request G. Memmedli not mention his name should they publish anything on Mo'juz since "it was a bad time, Mo'juz's enemies might take vengeance on me."¹³ This request of M.R. Mo'addab illustrates the enormity of the problems the poet had to encounter trying to effect changes and to educate people during his life time. In fact, Mo'juz was too early for his time. Mo'juz was unknown to many Azerbaijani poetry readers, and he remained unknown even after the discovery and publication of the first edition of his selected poetry. There is no "Mo'juz" in Mohammad Ali Tarbiyat's *Daneshmandan-e Azerbaijan* which includes almost every Azerbaijani author or poet of even slight significance.¹⁴ Mo'juz had been discovered by the fallen and outlawed National Government of Azerbaijan, and speaking about the outlawed government became a taboo after Azerbaijan fell to the army from Tehran.

The first edition of Mo'juz's poetry appeared in 1945.¹⁵ It was only 240 pages long. Memmedli gives the detailed story of how he came across of the "bundle" of Mo'juz's poetry in M. Nakhjuvan's possession, and how the first edition of the poet's works was published.¹⁶ In 1959, the first edition was supplemented by another 104 pages entitled "*Section Two of Mo'juz's Divan.*" The combination of the two collections was published in one volume called *Kuliyat-e Mirza Ali Mo'juz -e Shabustari (Complete Poetry of Mirza Ali Mo'juz of Shabustar)*. The book does not bear editor's or publisher's name since it was printed clandestinely. According to both Memmedli and Mr. Neqabi, the task and risk of editing and compiling were undertaken by Ali Nakhjuvani, and it was published by the Sa'adat Bookstore.¹⁷ The tense atmosphere and anti-Azerbaijani rhetoric which followed the ruthless crushing of Azerbaijan's autonomous movement deeply affected the production of literary works in Azeri since printing and publishing in the Azeri language came under strict scrutiny of so-called security operatives from Tehran. In M. T. Zehtabi's words "for half-a-century after the years 1945 and 1946, that is, the years of blossoming and expansion of the Azeri language, autocracy combined with oppression and suppression which had no precedence in the history of Iran pressed Azerbaijan hard."¹⁸ During the peak of the cold war, writing and publishing in Azeri in the Southern Azerbaijan were interpreted as sympathizing with Northern Azerbaijan which was governed by the Communists. Despite all the hardships, Sa'adat Bookstore's edition of Mo'juz has gone to print innumerable times, none of the editions carries any date of publication, place of publication or editor's name because of security reasons. A smaller volume of Mo'juz's

poetry entitled *Shabustarli Mirza Ali Mo'juz : Taza va Chap Olmamish Asarlari [Uchunji Jild]* (*Mirza Ali Mo'juz of Shabustar: New and Unpublished Works [Volume III]*) was published in 1979 after the revolution that toppled the monarchy in Iran.¹⁹ This version was edited by Mr. Yahya Sheyda and published by the Azerabadgan Publishing House. Another version of Mo'juz's poems, *Mirza Ali Mo'juz of Shabustar: Newly Discovered Poems*, was published by Behruz Publishing House.²⁰ There is no date of publication given to this volume. M. A. Niqabi of Shabustar, a native and resident of Mo'juz's birth place, had a great share in compiling and publishing this volume. Most of the poems compiled in this version can also be found in Sheyda's Volume III edition with some variations.

Mo'juz's poetry has also been published in Northern Azerbaijan without facing the problems which it had to encounter in the poet's birth place, Southern Azerbaijan. After the collapse of the autonomous government in the Iranian Azerbaijan, in 1946, the intellectuals and key members of the Democratic Party of Azerbaijan fled to the North to save their lives. The same people, who had edited and published Mo'juz in Tabriz for the first time, printed a selection of Mo'juz's poetry in 1948. The edition called *Mirza Ali Mo'juz; Sechilmish Asarlari [Mirza Ali Mo'juz Selected works]* was published by Azemashr Publishing in Baku. In 1949, a small volume of Mo'juz's poetry, *Mirza Ali Mo'juz: Sha'rlar*, was published in 20 pages by Ushag Ganj Nashr of Baku. The editor was G. Memmedli, and the selection was originally made for school children's reading. A third version was also published by the same Azemashr of Baku entitled *Mirza Ali Mo'juz; Sechilmish Asarlari [Mirza Ali Mo'juz Selected works]* in 1954. In 1955, a 64-page selected poems of Mo'juz was again published by Ushag Ganjlar Adabiyati Nashr of Baku. The most recent version of Mo'juz entitled *Mirzali Mo'juz Asarlari*, was published in 1982. The editor was the same time-honored Ghulam Memmedli who published Mo'juz in Tabriz for the first time in 1945. This edition was published by Yazichi Publishing in Baku. From the editor's point of view, this edition might be the complete works of Mo'juz. The earlier versions describe the collection as *Sechilmish Asarlari* meaning the selected works, but the 1982 version reads *Mirzali Mo'juz Asarlari* meaning "the works of Mirza Ali Mo'juz." In fact the editor of all the Baku versions was G. Memmedli who died in 1995 when at 100 years of age. A point of importance needs to be mentioned here, which can reflect in some measure the Azerbaijani people's rough course through history. Mo'juz wrote in the Persio-Arabic script. His works published in Southern Azerbaijan are all also printed in Persio-Arabic alphabet. But the works printed in the Northern Azerbaijan

are all in the Cyrillic alphabet. Mo'juz's works were being published and distributed clandestinely in his birth place, Southern Azerbaijan, at the same time his poetry had been turned into part of the Communist bravado in Northern Azerbaijan.

Mo'juz is the only poet from Southern Azerbaijan who received full recognition in the literary establishment and sociopolitical system of Northern Azerbaijan during Soviet rule. Because of the medium he had chosen, that is the Azeri language, and the content of his poetry, which commonly speaks about the plight of the oppressed, Mo'juz was given high recognition during the Communist era. Except for the brief one-year period of Autonomous Azerbaijan, Mo'juz had never received a formal and open recognition in his home --Southern Azerbaijan. He was taboo before the Islamic Revolution of Iran, and despite his immense popularity among the people of Azerbaijan, he will remain anathema under the present Islamic regime because of some of his derogatory sounding pieces. He is an advocate of change. He is the voice of the eternal oppressed and the poor, and he is the eternal anger of the oppressed against the oppressing power. That is why during the peak Leninist era, Mo'juz became the panacea for every pain and a solution for every problem -- a proper tool for Communist bravado. His picture and his line on Lenin, "let's hold Lenin's lap and be sheltered," were the decorum of the text books in the Northern Azerbaijan during the Stalinist era.²¹ Out of many Iranian Azeri poets, Mo'juz is the only poet affirming his unquestionable seat in Mirza Ibrahimov's anthology, *Azerbaijani Poetry*, printed by the Progress Publishers of Moscow.²² There are other poets from Southern Azerbaijan included in M. Ibrahimov's anthology, but they had fled Pahlavi Iran never to return. Mo'juz remained in Iran to the last day of his life. Although Mo'juz has some lines praising Lenin, he would never dream of being a Communist to my knowledge. The poet's admiration of Lenin is only due to Lenin's leadership in the revolution which toppled Czarist Russia and promised a better life for the people. Mo'juz visited the Caucasus only as a traveler on his way to and from Istanbul. He did not have a prolonged stay there.

Mo'juz marks the high point in social realism for Azeri literature, and he manifests a drastic departure from the classical tradition; a move which had already been initiated by other Azerbaijani poets and writers such as Mirza-Shafi Vazeh (d. 1852,) Qausim-Bek Zakir (d. 1857,) Mirza-Fathali Akhundzadeh (d. 1878,) and Said-Azim Shirvani (d. 1888).²³ Departure from classical tradition, which I will define as "modernism" in Azeri literature reaches its high point in the social realism reflected in the works of Jalil Mamed Qoli-Zade (d. 1932,) Mirza-Ali Akbar Saber (d. 1911,) and Mo'juz (d. 1934.) By

modernism in the poetry of Mo'juz and his mentioned precursors, I refer to two distinguishing differences from the poets of the classical tradition: firstly, a gradual departure from *aruz* rules, and secondly, a mirroring of political and social events.²⁴ Mo'juz is one of the few Iranian Azeri poets who chose to write in his mother tongue in order to make his poetry understandable to the illiterate Azeri masses, although he also wrote a few Persian poems as well. Besides other features of modernism which Mo'juz shares with his precursors and contemporaries in Northern Azerbaijan, his choice of the Azeri language as the medium of his poetry in the Persian dominated Southern Azerbaijan demonstrates a major departure from the classical tradition. Under the dominating influence of Persian language and literature for many Iranian Azeris through-out many ages, the Azeri language did not have the appeal of a functional medium for poetry. They had been taught to write and read in Persian and to limit the use of their Azeri mother tongue to only personal levels.²⁵

With the exception of one or two poems, Mo'juz was never published during his life time. I have seen only the poet's "Hamam Khaznasi" (Bath Reservoir) published in *Mulla Nasreddin* of Tabriz. The poem was published under a different title, "Hamamlarimiz" (Our Bath-Houses), in the fifth issue dated April 11, 1921 of the paper. In 1921 Mamed Qoli-Zade traveled to Iran and decided to settle in Tabriz. He started publishing his newspaper, *Mulla Nasreddin*, there.²⁶ Within a span of less than a year Mamed Qoli-Zadeh was able to publish only eight issues of the paper, *Mulla Nasreddin*. Invited to Baku, he was offered to take the position of Education Secretary in the newly established Republic of Azerbaijan in the Caucasus.²⁷ According to Ghulam Memmedli two poems of Mo'juz appeared in *Mulla Nasreddin*.

Two poems by Mirza Ali Mo'juz were printed in his life time in 1921 when *Mulla Nasreddin* was being published in Tabriz. One of them "Olsun Garak" carried no name, the other one, "Shabustar Hamamlari," [Shabustar Bathhouses] was published under the name of "A New Poet."²⁸

Memmedli mentions "Bath Reservoir" appearing in Mo'juz's collections of poetry as being published under the title "Shabustar Bath-Houses," whereas, in the copy of the paper in my disposal the poem appears as "Our Bathhouses." See the copy of the respective page from *Mulla Nasreddin*, April 11, 1921, included in Sardari-Niya's *Mulla Nasreddin in Tabriz*.

We do not have an accurate account of the exact volume and number of Mo'juz's poems. The two people who are working on Mo'juz presently, both claim to possess more manuscripts which have never been published.²⁹ According to Mo'juz scholars, there

might be many other hand-written pieces being kept in the houses of children and grandchildren of Mo'juz's friends. They might come to light some day.

There are a number of essays and a few small books which have been written on Mo'juz. The limits of this work do not allow to name or discuss them here. I will refer to them whenever the need arises. An important point which can be made about these works is that, in a number of instances, their authors make baseless and unscholarly remarks which can shatter a reader's faith about the whole work. This problem is partly related to the oral mentality of the Azeri authors on the one hand, and the paucity of our knowledge, the restrictions and bans which Mo'juz's works were subjected to on the other. Restrictions enforced on the publication of Mo'juz in Southern Azerbaijan and the severance of ties between Northern and Southern Azeris during the Cold War era rendered the oral mentality of Azeris to shroud the reality of the poet's life in a halo of myths and assumptions. The Caucasus was occupied by Russians during the early decades of the nineteenth century, after a series Persian defeats from Czarist Russia. Yet cultural ties between the Caucasus and Iran continued almost unbroken until the establishment of Communism in the early 1920s. Ever since until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, the people of the two Azerbaijanians (South and North) had been severed from each other. The severance of ties and lack of information became a source of nostalgia for reunion and caused them to develop myths and unreal pictures about each other. Therefore, the baseless and unscholarly remarks of the authors on Mo'juz can be understood considering the political situations. Thus, mention of the poet's "son working" as an exploited cheap laborer in Baku,³⁰ or the claims that Mo'juz "was living in Baku" during such and such times, and "he was in touch with the intellectual activists in labor movements," and "after thirty years of residing in foreign countries returned home"³¹ are not uncommon. Whereas, Mo'juz neither had any children, nor had he ever visited Baku, and he had stayed in Istanbul only sixteen years. Thus I would like to close our discussion of the poet based on the secondary sources here and proceed to the study of the poet's own works --his poetry and hand-written notes.

Mo'juz's Hand-Written Autobiographical Note

Since I will refer quite frequently to Mo'juz's hand-written autobiographical note, I would like to quote it in its entirety here before we begin studying the poet's occasional poems which manifest direct bearings on the poet's life. Some claim that the single-page note is not the poet's own hand-writing, but it was dictated by the poet and written by a friend. Although written in the Persian language, the note expresses the reasons why the

poet chose the Azeri language as the medium of his poetry. In this particular note, probably, the poet wants to address a non-Azeri audience. The poet apologetically wants to be excused for not writing in the Persian language because Persian is the language of the literate, but he wanted to speak for his illiterate people. He desired to convey his “message in a way that all women and men [of Azerbaijan] could understand” him. Besides the reasons Mo’juz mentions directly, he also, implicitly, alludes to his choice of the Azeri language as part of his campaign against keeping the Azeri language within the confinements of the oral plane. He criticized the old and outdated tradition which gave preferences to the Persian language and challenged the authority of the classical Persian poet. The note was apparently written a few months before the poet’s trip to Shahrud; it carries references to his childhood, to his Istanbul life and return to Shabustar where he spent his most productive years. The note covers almost 58 years of Mo’juz’s life, two years short of his whole life. These two years cover the poet’s trip to Shahrud and his stay there until his death on September 3, 1934. Here is the translation of the note in its entirety:

My pen-name and last name: Mo’juz

My name: Ali, son of Haji Agha who was a merchant in Shabustar and passed away when I was 16 years old.

I went to Istanbul; sixteen years I stayed there. I returned to Shabustar, I witnessed the deplorable situation of the homeland, I started wailing and chanting my mournful songs, *nowha-khani*. My lamentations did not appeal to the clerics; they proclaimed war [against me.] We were at loggerheads for 26 years. That is, they threw parties for charities, never inviting me. They had weddings, I never attended them. Yet with all my temerity, I fought; that is I wrote. That is, I wrote in my mother tongue, [Azeri] Turkish. Thank God, attaining freedom was my lot at last. Thus far, I have written nearly three thousand couplets, I have handed them over to friends. I haven’t collected them; some friends have. I am not well-versed in the sweet Persian language. I have written little in Persian. I also observed that the people of Azerbaijan, many of whom are illiterate, will not benefit from my poems in Persian. My purpose was to convey my message in a way that all women and men could understand. All my poems are full of humor that is why people love them. Otherwise, there is no merit in them deserving of such fame.³²

This brief hand-written note is the only document at hand which directly spells out some important facts about the poet’s life. Mo’juz scholars quite often quote the part of the note which deals with the poet’s choice of Azeri as the language of his poetry. Yet I believe that each small part of this brief autobiography has a lot to express when it is read alongside Mo’juz’s poetry which bears direct marks of the poet’s life. The note refers to the three earlier phases of the poet’s life: (1) sixteen years of childhood until his father’s

نکشیده است هن
 ندف با سخن
 یک پیکار شق
 بت خود به باد
 " " آه زار
 خندان " عالی بنار
 شود " با بدار
 " کلمه ارتداد

۱۳۰۹

شماره

بگوشه آن نام

تعمیرت علی در بیابان
 سحر ۱۳۰۸
 یک از بنار سینه بود
 نسیه نوره ساه بود
 دناش کرد زتم آتسول
 ن نوره ساه از بانها
 آتسول سینه از روضه
 تا به نوده شروع بود
 که دم زعفران صغ
 با از تان خراسان
 اعلان کردیم
 در ۲۰۰۰
 مین خیرات دادند
 من ز دعوت نکردند
 عراس نمودند مع خیرتیم
 آنا با جمع است
 تا آخر روز ندیم
 باز بان هر را در کس
 سحر و کلمه دیدار از کس
 نسیم کردیم

تعمیرت علی در بیابان
 نسیه نوره ساه بود
 دناش کرد زتم آتسول
 ن نوره ساه از بانها
 آتسول سینه از روضه
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 نسیم کردیم

Plate 1: Mo'juz's Autobiographical Note
Curtsy of M. A. Huseyni

death, (2) sixteen years of Istanbul life, (3) his return from Istanbul and life in Shabustar for twenty six years. We can also mention Mo'juz's one year plus Shahrud life away from his native Shabustar as the fourth phase which, in fact, is the closing chapter of the poet's sixty-year life. Our knowledge about the first and second phases is very sketchy; we do not have much to say about the first 32 years of the poet's life.

As we understand from the note, the poet was almost 32 years old on his return from Istanbul. Once he witnesses "the deplorable situation of the homeland," he resorts to "*nowha-khani*" (chanting of *nowhas*) and lamentations. It is very important to note the language and imagery of the poet here. When he witnesses *hal-e zar-e vatan* (deplorable situation of the homeland) he starts to *nowha-khani*. In fact, the poet draws a parallel between lamentation (*nowha-khani*) for the deplorable situation of the homeland and the traditional lamentations for the tragic episodes of the Karbala event.³³ Although Mo'juz's reference to his versification as *nowha-khani* and his poetry as *nowhs* in this context is purely metaphoric, it is charged with ingenuous ironic and satiric implications. Nevertheless, we will encounter numerous references to the Karbala event and the heresies as well as the traditions surrounding them in the poet's works. In fact, a close examination of Mo'juz's poetry is not possible without an adequate knowledge of the different episodes of the Karbala story and the values and cults established after the event. Lamenting the deplorable state of the motherland became a familiar theme during the Iranian Constitutional era, and every poet of the period lamented and mourned the motherland's death and decline.³⁴ Yet Mo'juz's mourning of the motherland's demise has a uniqueness of its own. The motherland is mourned in the Azeri language by Azerbaijani "women and men." It is a homeland which is centered in Shabustar and Azerbaijan. However, the poet's lamentations "did not appeal to the clergy, they proclaimed "war" against him. As a rule, the clerics encouraged wailing and lamentations of the Karbala tragedy, and chanting the elegies about the martyrdom of Imams was, in fact, part of their job, but Mo'juz's *nowha-khani* and his interference with the prerogatives of their profession roused their anger and made them proclaim "war". Mo'juz takes the challenge and continues the "proclaimed war" for 26 years. This 26 years period, the third phase in the life of the poet, is his most productive as well as tumultuous period. This is the time when the "uneducated" clerics and their misinformed followers threw charity parties "never inviting" the poet. "They had weddings" which the poet "never attended."

I do believe that Mo'juz missed an important point in his 26 years adamant challenge of the clergy and his belligerence. This issue will receive an elaborate

consideration when we analyze the relevant poems from the poet. In practice, Mo'juz manifested an awareness of the fact that a clergy was a person who was part of the society which the poet desired to change, yet he did not treat him as a product of the same society. Consequently, he showed no sympathy toward the clergy's problems and limitations. He blamed the clergy for all the mishaps and social maladies. He did not observe that a clergyman was also in need of a better education, training and travel in order to widen his outlook. He did not realize that awakening the people from their "slumber" was no different from opening the clergy's eyes to the new realities. Mo'juz disregarded the point that heresies such as Ashura self-mutilation and self-flagellation were not established by the clerics, but they were manifested over many centuries as emotional outlets in the frenzy of wailing and lamentation. At least, in my own knowledge and experience, no clergy has ever participated in self-mutilation, neither can we find anything in the religious books to recommend the act. Yet men of Mo'juz's caliber and category tended to blame the clergy for all the misfortunes of the people and the homeland. Jalil Mamed Qoli-Zade, the editor of the prestigious *Mulla Nasreddin* of Mo'juz's time, wrote in the sixth issue a short article entitled "Head-Mutilation,"

Definitely the readers of *Irshad* newspaper have read what was printed in the paper's No. 18, page 2, column 3. There it reads: "the customs of head-mutilation, self-flagellation by chain, the show of Qasim's bridal chamber all are great sins, and none of them are found in the Islamic books or religious rules. Any one who does such things will be considered as notorious sinner. These words are unanimously signed by their excellencies *qazi* of the town Mir Muhammad Karim Agha, Akhund Haji Mulla Ruhullah, Akhund Javad, Akhund Ali Akbar, Akhund Sheykh Mohammad Javad, Akhund Haji Qavam, Akhund Haji Mulla Agha, Akhund Mir Mohsun, Akhund mulla Abulqasim.³⁵

Although Mamed Qoli-Zade mentions the names of the religious personalities, and he reiterates that they have signed a *fatva* (religious decree) that none of the mentioned "customs" are found "in the Islamic books or religious rules" yet in a different part of his article, he attacks the religious authorities. He accuses the religious leaders for encouraging "the helpless Muslims" to behave so. Making a scapegoat of the clergy for all the social miseries became a fashion in the period, especially with Azeri authors and intellectuals. Mo'juz was part of the pattern in many respects.

As an advocate of change, Mo'juz had to remain "at loggerheads" with any person or any thing which stood for the old and obsolete. Interestingly enough, he chooses a new and unconventional tool for fighting --he resorts to writing. "Yet with all my temerity, I fought, that is I wrote," he proclaims. Writing as warfare has an ironic implication in an

oral community such as Mo'juz's Shabustar --very few people would read what the poet was to write. However, as an advocate of change, he wrote differently; he refused to follow the traditional main-stream --he chose to write in his "mother tongue." He discarded the prevailing trend of writing in the Persian language. He wanted to be understood without mediation of any alien medium or translator. He only needed some one within the community to read out his message to his people. He needed a bard or a story-teller out of his oral people to recite and sing his poems to them. As he explicitly states by writing in the Azeri language, Mo'juz defines his audience, and he chooses the Azerbaijani segment of Iranian society. Mo'juz's choice of Azeri language as the medium of his poetry will be discussed in Chapter V which deals with the poet's Azeri identity. However, I need to mention here that Mo'juz's apologetic statement about not being "well-versed in the sweet Persian language" should not be taken literally. His poetry proves the contrary. The very lines written in the Azeri language manifest that the poet was able to blend his Azeri idiom with Persian and Arabic dexterously whenever he desired. The poet has also written a number of *mullamm'as* in which he has blended the Azeri, Persian and Arabic languages.

Quoting the apologetic lines of Mo'juz concerning his lack of proficiency in the Persian language, Memmedli speaks of them as "the lines written with humbleness."³⁶ I read the statement as part of shyness which marks many Azeris of his category. You might read it as the meekness and demureness of the colonized trying to enunciate a native point-of-view. In fact, the note is partly a polite way for the poet to affirm his Azeri identity. Moreover, it is only a face-saving excuse for his swimming against the tide. He was trying something which was against established norms. Besides defining his audience quite clearly, Mo'juz draws a line between the responsibilities toward his people and allegiance or obedience to the conventional norms centering around the power pole and its language. The contrast between the briefness of the note in the Persian language and the poet's relatively voluminous work in the Azeri language clearly suggests the notion. Yet he is quite right when he says that he "observed that the people of Azerbaijan, many of whom are illiterate, will not benefit from my poems in Persian." This statement in itself implies that he could write in the Persian language if he desired, yet he assigned himself a different mission --the "purpose" of conveying his "message in a way that all women and men could understand" him. Although Mo'juz's thought and words were encountered with opposition from different poles, his poems spread among the masses fast. Perhaps the poet's wishes are fulfilled today since we can hardly find anyone in Guney county or other regions of Azerbaijan who has not heard or does not know at least a few lines of Mo'juz by

heart. I agree with Latifa Omarova's assertion about the rapid dissemination of Mo'juz's poems among the people and their influence upon them when she writes:

The manuscripts of his [Mo'juz's] poems were disseminated, memorized, recited and traveled from mouth to mouth. The poet had witnessed the influence of his poetry in the social environment and the people during his own life time, and he was right to claim that "Every place has been influenced by Mo'juz's poems/Think not that his fame is confined to Shabustar only."³⁷

The verse of Mo'juz quoted by L. Omarova is the concluding couplet of Mo'juz's poem entitled "*Harami Var*" (There are Pirates). Reading Omarova's words along with the verse quoted from Mo'juz and the poet's victory in his 26-year "war" and "attaining freedom" as mentioned in the autobiographical note, proves that the poet was quite successful in distributing his hand-written poems and influencing the people and the community. "Thus far, I have written nearly three thousand couplets, I have handed them over to friends. I haven't collected them; some friends have," the poet writes. It is interesting to notice how a community moves from orality toward a written stage. The poet of the community does not keep or collect his own poems. He is satisfied with preparing hand-written copies of them and distributing them among friends. Mo'juz spoke of his writing as his weapon in the "proclaimed war." Yet he is satisfied with the utility of his armament as far as his hand-written poems are read and recited by his fans and friends. By handing his poems to friends, the poet feels that the "purpose" of conveying his "message in the way that all women and men could understand" him had been served. Similar to his partial use of the writing armament --handing his poems over to friends-- Mo'juz's range of his goals is also limited. He aims his innovative ideas at the Azeri "women and men" of his own time; he is concerned with the here and now. He is not concerned with others.

The concluding sentences of the poet's autobiographical note refer to one of the major aspects of the modern Azeri poetry --humor and satire. "My poems are all full of humor, that is why people love them. Otherwise, there is no merit in them to deserve such fame," he says. I will talk about humor in Azeri literature in general, and Mo'juz in particular, in Chapter IV of this work. I would like to suggest that according to my study, Mo'juz is a high point in Azeri poetry with respect to its dominant features of humor and satire. In fact, Mo'juz does not make any claim for being a poet, he humbly says that the only "merit" he knows in his poetry is "humor." He believes that if his humor were taken away, he would cease to be a poet. The concluding lines of the note bear a strong witness that reading, reciting and listening to Mo'juz's poetry had become a pastime for his people. "Otherwise, there is no merit in them [poems] to deserve such fame," implies that the

poet's works had reached a considerable "fame."

Reading Mo'juz from His Poetry

Because I will refer to the poet's autobiographical note in the later stages of this work quite often, I would like to limit our discussion on the note to what we have said so far, and I will try to approach Mo'juz from his poetry. The poems selected in this respect have direct bearing on the poet's life. The first poem in the order is a poem entitled "Mo'juz's Journey from Istanbul to Tabriz" by Mo'juz's editor Mr. Yahya Sheyda.³⁸ The poem is entitled as "Mo'juz's Return from Istanbul to Shabustar" in Memmedli's 1984 edition of Mo'juz.³⁹ In this poem, Mo'juz maps out his Istanbul/Shabustar itinerary both to Istanbul when he was 16 years old, and from Istanbul when he was almost 32. The poem pertains the third phase of the poet's life. As mentioned earlier, we do not have much to say about the poet's first and second phase. The second poem of our discussion is entitled "A letter to Muhammad Ali" in the version of Behruaz Publishing which is also named "The Letter of Condolence" in Mr. Sheyda's version. The poem is written during the very last months of the poet's life, it is designed to be sent from Shahrud to Shabustar. The poem opens with condolences to a friend --M. A. Pur Ali-Muhammadi-- on the occasion of the his mother's death, it soon turns into a nostalgic remembrance of the Shabustar days. Although the poem, chronologically, belongs to the last phase of the poet's life, it harkens back to the days in Shabustar where he was in the company of his friends.

The third poem selected for discussion is called "A Letter from Shahrud." The poem is almost a rhymed autobiographical narrative which describes the poet's departure from his native Azerbaijan for the last time. We learn about the itinerary, the means of travel and the hosts who received the poet and his wife. This poem belongs to the fourth and last phase of the poet's life. Both the second and third poem --"The Letter of Condolence" and "A Letter from Shahrud" -- belong to the fourth phase of the poet's life, that is one year plus in Shahrud. My reason for selecting two long poems for Mo'juz's shortest phase of life (less than one and half years in Shahrud) and a single poem for his longest and most important phase of life (26 years in Shabustar) in this section is that we are going to deal more with the poetry produced during the third phase through out this work. In fact, when we speak of Mo'juz's poetry, we quite often mean the poetry written during the Shabustar years when he was fighting the "proclaimed war" to effect changes in his native land. Moreover, "The Letter of Condolence" is a nostalgic remembrance of the poet's third phase of life. Written few month before the poet's death, it mirrors Mo'juz

among his Shabustar friends.

“Mo’juz’s Return from Istanbul to Shabustar”

As we will see, the poem maps out the poet’s itinerary from Istanbul to Shabustar. It speaks about the difficulties of the journey and the problems that the poet had to encounter after a prolonged stay out of his native Shabustar. Although relatively a long poem, it is patterned after Azerbaijani *sayas* ⁴⁰(folk ballads) in its rhyme and flow, and it is designed to be a dialogue between the poet and a letter from a friend who is in Istanbul. After the four opening couplets addressed to “the son of Halima,” a hypothetical friend, the poet employs the friend’s letter as his mouth-piece and allows it to become the sole speaker in the poem. Addressing his friend, the poet says that he “was relieved from his sorrows” upon of getting his letter. After he asks the reason for the delay of the letter, it becomes the sole narrator in the poem mapping out the itinerary and expressing the problems one encounters during the journey till he or she gets home. Here is the poem in its entirety transliterated and translated for further analysis.

Ey pesar-e Halima
 Naman galdi alima;
 Okhudum chokh shad oldum,
 Ghussadan azad oldum.
 Dedim ey name-ye yar
 Harda galden bu gadar?
 Atmish gun yol galmisan
 Ghussadan injilmisan.
 Dedi mindim vapura
 Noghlug verdim on lira.
 Man galanda yazidi,
 Kharji rahem azidi.
 Qadam goydum Batuma
 La’nat galsin zatema.
 Satdim tumani doni,
 Yokh oldi ishin soni.
 Aldim besh on asginas,
 Dedim ya Hazrat Abbas.
 Savar oldum mashina,
 Galdim Tiflis bashina.
 Tumanchakh gordi mani,
 Gurjular doydi mani.
 Bir az durdum kuchada,
 Gashdim girdim machida.
 Al goturdum samaya,
 Chokh yalvardim khodaya.
 Sas galdi manim gulum:
 San olasan yokh pulum.
 Dedim mani oldur bas,
 Dedi oghlan sasun kas.

O azrayil ishidir,
 Yavash soyla eshidir.
 Ma'yus oldim taridan,
 Sozun kasdim yaridan.
 Qapusuni baghladim,
 Dabanlari yaghladim.
 Yol uzakh man nabalad,
 Ya Ali sandan madad.
 Pas uz goydum farara,
 Yetdim araz kanara.
 Gomruk ma'muri galdi,
 Dedim ishlar duzaldi.
 Dedi nayin var ami,
 Nishan verdim yakhami.
 Ordan galdim maranda,
 Tamash dir galanda.
 Saggalimi gikhdirdim,
 Akhutlari bighdirdim.
 Shabustara yeteshjak,
 Goydan yaghdı tupurjak.
 Inanmisiz sozuma?
 Tupurdilar uzuma!
 Uydum sheytan fe'lina,
 Daydim saggal qilina.
 Shabustarda hasili
 Iman qildan asili.
 Pashmak orda, bal orda,
 Yaz valiya gal orda.
 Aman galma buraya,
 Bashun gechar jidaya.
 Muhammad chalsin kaman,
 San de aman ay aman.
 Pishir qeyma pilovi,
 Chakma saggal khenovi.
 Soz yetishdi tamama,
 Dor ozun ver hamama.
 Hana yakh saggaliva,
 Hajamat goy daliva.
 Hanani yu rangi chak,
 mandilila angi chak.
 Saggalin olsa abi,
 Khakh sana demaz Babi.

.....

(Halima's son
 I received your letter.
 I read it, and it made me very happy,
 I was relieved of my sorrows.
 I said "O my friend's letter
 Why did you arrive so late?
 You have been traveling for sixty days,

You have been tormented by the long travel.”
 It replied “I got on the ferry,
 I paid my ten Lira fare. 10
 It was summer when I arrived,
 I was short of money.
 I arrived in Batum,
 God damn my vicious nature!
 I sold my pants and clothing,
 I ended up destitute.
 After I had come up with some money,
 I set out with the help-cry of Hazrat Abbas.
 I got onto the bus,
 I arrived in Tbilisi. 20
 Georgians saw my naked legs,
 They beat me up.
 I loitered in the street for a while,
 Then I ran and entered a mosque.
 And up to the sky
 I raised my hands in supplication.
 A voice I heard saying ‘O my slave!
 I swear on your dead body, I have no money.’
 I said then take my soul.
 ‘Shut up man,’ he replied, 30
 ‘It’s Azrael’s job,
 ‘Lest he might hear you.’
 I was disappointed with god’s words,
 Thus I cut him short.
 I shut his door,
 And took to my heels.
 The journey was long, and I was a stranger,
 O Ali I ask your help.
 Then I took my flight,
 And made it to the Araxes bank. 40
 The customs officer came,
 I got my salvation I said to myself.
 He said ‘What have you got guy?’
 I pointed at my shirt collar.
 I came to Marand from there.
 Watch my glorious home-coming!
 I shaved my beard,
 I roused the clergy’s wrath.
 Once I got to Shabustar,
 Spittle was poured down from the sky. 50
 Don’t you believe me?
 They spat at my face!
 Satan deluded me,
 And I touched my whisker bristles.
 To be exact and short, in Shabustar
 One’s faith dangles from a single bristle.
 Write to Vali to stay there,
 Every thing is there --*pashmak* and honey.

Beware! Don't even think of coming here,
 Your head will be put on spears." 60
 Tell Muhammad to play on his *kaman*,
 And you sing *aman ay aman*."
 Fix your Qeyma pilaf,
 Don't involve yourself with the pains of your whiskers.
 Once the story came to the end,
 Get up pay a visit to the bath-house.
 Apply henna to your beard,
 And bleed your back by cupping.
 Wash henna and apply hair color,
 Let your turban loose to your lower jaw. 70
 People will not call you a Babi
 If your beard appears bluish.
)

In the first two lines, Mo'juz addresses Halima's son, a friend in Istanbul, and says that he has received his letter. After expressing his happiness for getting the letter, the poet says that the letter relieved him of his "sorrows." Then Mo'juz switches to his dialogue with the letter. He asks the friend's letter why it has been "so late." The poet himself provides the answer by his feeling of sympathy toward the letter's "traveling for sixty days" and being "tormented by the long journey's sorrow." It is interesting to note that receiving the letter relieves the poet from his *ghussa* (sorrow) yet the poet's cause of deliverance from sorrows, itself, is the letter's being "tormented by the long journey's sorrow [*ghussa*]." *Ghussa* is an emotional pain or suffering, and its degree of painfulness will vary according to the people's degree of recognition from the problems, short-comings and difficulties. The two interlocutors both are stricken by the same *ghussa*, one from being at home, the other from preparing to go home. The poet suffers from *ghussa* because he is back in his birth place where he tries to effect changes after his long stay in Istanbul. The letter is being tormented by *ghussa* since it is about to get to the point and place of the poet's suffering.

From the very beginning of the poem, the reader is alerted to watch for the signs signifying the difficulties of the village life in Iranian Azerbaijan. After the four opening couplets, that is, starting with line nine, we get the long response of the letter narrated by the poet. Although the line starts with the poet's pronouncement of "it replied," we never lose sight of the omniscient poet passing through all the places and phases of the journey. In fact, we forget about the letter, we only see the poet traveling all the places and points mentioned in the letter. We never cease reflecting on the poet's dilemma between his staying in an alien land and returning home to put up with the difficulties which await him.

From line nine to line sixty five, the story belongs to the letter's account of the itinerary, difficulties of journey and the problems at home. It seems the remaining part of the poem, line sixty five to the end, is the poet's own nocturnal soliloquy. In line sixty five, Mo'juz says that "Once the story came to its end,/Get up pay a visit to the bath-house." It was a common practice for the public bath-houses to be open for men at dusk and dawn hours during the week days. At day time they were open for women. Thus it appears that the omniscient speaker of the lines affirms his presence by saying that once he has finished his words speaking through the letter of his friend, he needs to pay a visit to the bath-house. The night is coming to its close, and the dawn is approaching.

The poet speaks about the route which was usually taken by his compatriots while coming from Istanbul or Europe. We find this itinerary in many other authors of the time as well. Ebrahim Beg, Maraghe'i major character travels the same route for the most part, and he reflects almost on the same problems encountered by Mo'juz's letter. We learn that Mo'juz's trips to and from Istanbul took almost two months each way. Similar to the letter's journey, we know Mo'juz's return from Istanbul coincided with the late spring and early summer season. From the very moment the poet lands in the port of Batum in the Black Sea we are warned with different signs and premonitions that the whole idea of home coming is not a very pleasing one. The poet had spent his early youth and manhood in the rapidly changing environment of Istanbul, his return to a small primitive village such as Shabustar to live his mature life there could not be an easy task. The first sign in the chain of portents forecasting the miseries of Shabustar life is implied by the poet's sharing the sorrows about the homeland and his sympathy towards the troubles which the letter had to undergo during "the long travel" of "sixty days." The second portent comes with the letter's pronouncement that "I was short of money." The third strikes us with the poet's (letter's) cursing himself by saying: "I arrived in Batum,/God damn my vicious nature!" Since the poet "was short of money," he had to sell his "pants and clothing." The outcome was to end up "destitute." I believe Mo'juz's cursing his own "vicious nature" is quite significant here. The poet's ironic and ambivalent curse of his nature works both in negative and positive senses. It is to be taken both literally and directly on the one hand and ironically on the other --it is part of the trend which pushes Mo'juz and other Azeri and non-Azeri Iranian authors of the period toward what I call modernism --a state of being torn between the old and new values. The poet is torn between the values governing the modernized West and those of the traditional ones in the homeland.

Mo'juz's cry of help (*ya Hazrat Abbas*) needs further elaboration here since it

relates to its following lines, and it further manifests the poet's ambivalent attitude toward the traditions and religious beliefs ingrained in his "nature." Uttering the help-cry of *ya Hazrat Abbas*, Mo'juz sets out on his land journey after he disembarks at the Georgian port of Batum—he rides the bus from Batum to Tbilisi. Azerbaijanis use different help-cries in different occasions. For example one might hear *ya Ali madad* uttered as a cry of help quite often, but its signification and the occasion of its utterance vary widely with those of *ya Hazrat Abbas*. *Ya Hazrat Abbas* is uttered in a very desperate situation and a state of hopelessness. Abbas was the standard bearer of Imam Huseyn in the Karbala event, who was dismembered by the enemy on the day of Ashura. His death, virtually, preceded Imam Huseyn's death, and with his suffering of martyrdom all hopes of the House of Imam were shattered. In fact, a *ya Hazrat Abbas* cry is a cry of horror preceding a catastrophic strike. Mo'juz's utterance of *ya Hazrat Abbas* signifies his forecasting calamities.

Once the poet is in Tbilisi, Georgians beat him up since they find him with "naked legs." Mo'juz deliberately refers to his destitution with the nakedness of his legs. The poet tries to imply that destitution breeds immorality because exposing legs has sexual associations in a closed and traditional society. Desperate, naked and helpless, the poet tarries in "the street for a while." The only place in the city which can shelter him is the mosque. "Then I ran and entered in a mosque," Mo'juz says. Many mosques were and usually are open for the public during many hours of the day. Travelers usually wash, use restrooms and even sleep in the mosques during their journey. In Mo'juz's lines we have a picture of an ordinary modern man torn between two worlds --the world of inherited traditions and beliefs on the one hand, the realities of the new and changing world on the other. A simultaneous connection and disconnection both with the old and new values characterize, of course with varying degrees, Mo'juz and many of his contemporaries. Beaten and defeated in the material and physical world, he tries to take refuge in a traditional shelter and find his comfort in his ancestral haven. Yet it avails him nothing because he has undergone so many changes, and a wide rupture has severed him from his ancestors. Exposed to the advancement of the industrial world and the material growth of Istanbul, Mo'juz cannot find his solace in the mosque. Being judged by the traditional standards, he is there only to utter another profanity. "And up to the sky/I raised my hands in supplication," the poet says. As an ordinary sincere believer he raises his hands to the sky in the state of supplication, and god responds to him with the traditional patronizing terms --"O my slave." Yet the words following god's initial patronizing response do not

sound very promising. "I swear on your dead body, I have no money" the Almighty says. Mo'juz enters the mosque as if he approaches an automatic teller machine, he wants to get some cash out of the place. His ancestors went to the mosque with different aims and intentions. They were happy and content with any result that they got from their supplication; and they were convinced with any response that they received. He lacks their faith and conviction. "I swear on your dead body, I have no money" is a natural response to give to the one who enters wrong codes.

After he is denied what he wanted, the poet asks god to take his soul and perish him (line 29). God's response to the poet's "take my soul" request is both bantering and sarcastic. "Shut up man," god banters "It is Azrael's job,/Lest he might hear you." In fact, Mo'juz ridicules the people who expect god's benevolence work miracles for them without taking pains of working and due efforts. An advocate of learning, science and industry, Mo'juz's poetry is replete with lines such as "The Almighty God has no bakery shop/ to send you one[loaf of bread] when ever you say you are hungry," or "Had the God been a draper,/He would have supplied a pair of pants and a shirt....," or "Had the God had a grocery store,/He would have sent some sugar and tea..." for the poor.⁴¹ Yet in the poem of our discussion, there is a more ingenious banter in god's admonition to the poet to shut up "lest Azrael might hear" him. Azrael is the angel in charge of taking the people's souls at the time of their death. Mo'juz implies that if you ask for your object of desire from god you might not get it, conversely, you might get something you do not desire. In other words, the natural law will not alter to fulfill man's whims and desires. One cannot survive on probabilities because if one probability, getting money, proves to be closed and ineffective, the probability of perishing still is open and pending. The chance of death is stronger than having gain without taking the due pain because death is the natural end of life, but getting cash without working is a very dim probability. One should prepare and work toward his/her object of desire, otherwise, reliance on chances will prove to be catastrophic. That is why god orders the poet not to speak his request of death too loudly because it is not the poet's real wish, and he is not really sincere about that kind of request. If Azrael overhears his request for dying he might take it seriously. He will come and take the poet's soul. Thus the poet leaves mosque in despondency. "I was disappointed with god's words,/Thus I cut him short" he says. He shuts the door of the mosque as he gets ready to continue his itinerary. "I shut his door/And took to my heels" Mo'juz says. Again I do believe that the poet's shutting the door of god or mosque and taking to his heels all symbolize his severance from the old ways of life and traditional approaches to the matters

of religion. It is noteworthy to mention here that while entering the poet does not make any effort to open the door of the mosque, he enters freely. As a rule the door was open for him as to every one else, but he shuts the door behind himself when he gets disappointed and leaves the mosque. Shutting the door to god is not an auspicious sign, it is a bad omen forecasting ominous events.

“The journey was long, and I was a stranger,/O Ali I ask your help,” the poet exclaims. As discussed earlier, there are different help-cries uttered by the masses in Southern Azerbaijan. Once he sets out to continue the journey, the speaker cries out “*Ya Ali sandan madad* [O Ali I ask for your help].” The signification of this help-cry is quite different from that of “*ya Hazrat Abbas*” discussed earlier. Ali, the first Imam of Shi’ism, was a hero and titan in all respects, he was never beaten in war, and his sword guaranteed Islam’s success in its early days. Thus calling his name signifies and accompanies the caller’s victory usually. By calling Ali’s name, the speaker guarantees his safe arrival to his destination. “Then I took my flight/And made it to the Araxes bank,” he continues. The Araxes River was the natural border between Iran and former Czarist Russia. Iranian customs officials have been the target of criticism ever since the modern border check points have been established.⁴² Mo’juz’s pointing to his collar in response to the customs officer’s question “what have you got guy?” has numerous significations. It signifies that the poet has nothing beside the shirt he is wearing. It also signifies that there is no law governing the country and government operatives recognize no rules; no matter what the passenger declares, the customs officials will not believe him/her, they will accuse him for some uncommitted sin. They follow no rules or regulations, they are driven by their own whims. The customs officers will not loosen their hold on the collar of the speaker. Holding one’s collar in Iranian culture is a metaphor for accusing him/her. It also signifies that the problems and false accusations leveled against some one who offers new ways of doing things starts at the very border check point. When some one is caught by the collar, he/she will have little chance to be spared. However, after entering from the Julfa check point, Mo’juz proceeds toward Marand --some 20 miles from the poet’s native Shabustar.

Besides depicting the poet’s itinerary, “Mo’juz’s Return from Istanbul to Shabustar” also shows what the reaction of the clerics and their followers was to a man who was returning home after a long stay in a foreign land. The narrative reflects the poet’s feelings toward the journey and his home-coming as a whole. Lines 47-56 explain the catastrophe against which the reader has been warned and kept alert from the very beginning of the poem. “I shaved my beard,/I roused the clergy’s wrath” the poet says. It

is an irony that the poet suffers the most in his birth place of Shabustar –compared to the problems he comes across during his journey. After the long and troublesome sixty days of sea and land journey, the poet encounters the shower of “spittle” upon his arrival at his home. “Once I got to Shabustar,/Spittle poured down from the sky,” Mo’juz complains. “Don’t you believe me?/They spat at my face!” he further explains. The poet continues in a pathetic tone combined with sarcasm that “Satan deluded” him in touching his “whisker bristles.” Encountering the problems of shaving and appearance change the poet sums up his experience and satirically says: “To be exact and short, in Shabustar/One’s faith dangles from a single bristle.” Obviously, the poet had been changed both physically and intellectually. However, through his satire, Mo’juz tries to say that those changes not only did not alter his faith as a believer or a human being, but the people, who thought the contrary, did not understand what was a “faith.” At least, it could not be thought to be dangling from “a single bristle.” This poem depicts part of the difficulties and hardships which the poet had to encounter in order to effect changes in the old and obsolete ways of life.

In his brief hand-written autobiographical note, Mo’juz speaks about his efforts to change the existing conditions in terms of proclaiming “war” against them, which we discussed earlier in the chapter. Shaving the “bristles” from the face was a sufficient reason for the proclamation of the war in the Shabustar of those days. It is interesting to note that Mo’juz, by way of satire, says that “Satan deluded” him, and he “touched” his “whisker bristles.” The implication is that many people commit many grave sins, but their sins do not cause any social disgrace for them, and Satan is not a threat to that kind of people only because they do not touch their whisker. In fact, their whisker becomes a license to commit all kinds of heinous crimes without being eluded by Satan. Conversely, some one who shaves his own whiskers is considered to be an agent of Satan. Mo’juz, intentionally, employs the word “*qil*” not hair or beard. “*Qil*” in Azeri applies to the hairs grown in the lower parts of the body usually, and, in Mo’juz’s culture, it is highly recommended to remove the hairs of the lower parts. Mulla Muhammad Baqer Majlisi, the author of *Hilyatul-Muttaqin* and the icon of the Shi’a jurisprudence, has three headings on removing the hairs of lower parts in the index of his topics in *Hilyatul-Muttaqin* which read: “On the Virtues of Hair Removing P. 119,” “On Removing the Hairs of the Armpit P. 120,” “On the Times of Hair Remover Application P. 121.” Claiming that it has been quoted from the prophet, Majlisi writes: “any man who believes in the God and the Day of Judgment should not allow the hairs of his lower part unremoved for more than forty days.

And it is not permissible for a woman who believes in the God and the Day of Judgment to leave the hairs of her lower part unremoved for more than twenty days.”⁴³ Employing the word “*qil*” for whiskers, Mo’juz wants his people to notice that it is the same *qil* no matter which part of the body it grows. Then he wants them to notice that removing the same hair from one part of the body is recommended and rewarded, but its removal from another part will affect one’s faith, and it is condemned. The poet’s claim that “they spat at my face” can be taken quite literally because it was a very usual punishment in those days. Many a father would do the same if he found his son had shaved his beard; he would find it some kind of disgrace for himself and for the family. Throwing spittle at some one’s face is a sign of contempt in Iranian culture. A father who throws spittle at his son’s face finds himself defiled by a wrong doing or an immoral act of his son. He spits at the son’s face in an attempt to exorcise his suffered contempt. Thus Mo’juz had violated the sanctity of the centuries-old dress and appearance code. The “shower” of spittle was an attempt to guard and defend the sanctity of the community’s codes.

In this poem the letter becomes the poet’s stream-of-consciousness recounting all the stages of the trip and the problems he had to encounter after he came back home. In the concluding section, the stream-of-conscious (the letter) exhorts the poet to write a letter back to the friend – Vali, son of Halima residing in Istanbul– and tell him not even think of coming back home. “Write to Vali to stay there,/Every thing is there –*pashmak* and honey,” the exhortation relates. “Beware! Don’t even think of coming here,/Your head will be put to the spears,” it continues. Again putting head to the spear has a religious signification for a Shi’a believer. It signifies that you will suffer the utmost tyranny which can be effected and expected from a tyrant. It is believed that after the third Imam of Shi’a and the male members of his family (17 members of Bani Hashim clan) were martyred in the Karbala event, their heads were cut off from their bodies and were put to the spears. Thus Mo’juz implies that the uneducated clerics and their misinformed followers are no different from the tyrants whom the Shi’a believers curse because of their heinous atrocity of putting the heads of the Prophet’s grand children on the spears. Therefore, accommodating himself in the camp of the martyred immaculate Imam, Mo’juz places the uneducated clerics in the opposite camp –the camp of the murderers and pagans. The readers of the present work will find numerous references to the Karbala event.

Before we continue our discussion on the poem, I would like to mention few points on *nowha*, lamentation for the Karbala event and its particular relevance to the Azeri culture and life. In fact, a close examination of Mo’juz’s poetry without an adequate knowledge of

the different episodes of the Karbala event and the paradigms and cults established after the event would not be possible. The enormous amount of the religious poetry (*nowhas*) in Azeri, and the elaborate pageantry and ceremonies of Moharram (the month in which the Karbala event occurred in 680 A.D.) have left indelible marks in the mentality, language and self-expression of the Iranian Azerbaijanis. In the daily speech of an average Iranian Azerbaijani, one can find many references and allusions to the Karbala event, the life of Imams and the Prophet.

A number of social and political factors in the history of Azerbaijanis have made many Azeri poets to write big volumes of *nowhas* with which “they cry and make others cry their eyeballs out” in M.A. Rasulzada’s words.⁴⁴ The dominance of the Persian language as a written medium, its court validity and the richness of the Persian classical poetry had allowed a very limited scope for the use of the Azeri language as a literary vehicle. Moreover, the illiteracy of the Azerbaijani masses and their lack of understanding the Persian language made Azeri poets direct their talents toward writing *nowhas* in their native Azeri. In fact, most poets of the period --non-Azeris as well-- have written *nowhas* along with their secular and even their apparently sacrilegious poems. Mo’juz is not an exception, and he has left a number of *nowhas* for us. With the accession of Reza Shah to the throne and the systematic suppression of the Azeri language writing religious poems and *nowhas* took a new sway. Sakina Berengian’s remark on the issue is worth quoting here:

The suppression of Turkish [Azeri] for literary use resulted in a staggering amount of religious poetry produced in this language, since except for ordinary conversation at home the only function left for Turkic was for various religious purposes. According to many Azerbaijani men of letters, these religious poems helped the Azeri literary idiom to survive the Pahlavi period.⁴⁵

Thus, the high volume of religious poetry and elaborate passion plays and pageantry of Moharram played an elemental role in average Azerbaijani’s formulation of ideas and speech. Dictions and symbols derived from *nowhas* are quite common among Azeri Iranians. Saying *qatillariva la’nat ya Huseyn* (O Huseyn cursed be your murderers) after drinking a cold drink in a hot summer day is not an uncommon expression in Azerbaijan. A Tabrizi (banteringly though) would refer to his household as *kheymalar* (the tents) in association with the burned and looted tents of Imam Huseyn’s House, or any innocent looking abused child would be termed as *Muslimin balasi* [the sons of Muslim Ibni Aqil (Huseyn’s uncle)]. Besides the socio-linguistic factors involved in the links between Mo’juz’s poetry and *nowhas*, there is another reason which urges us to

understand religious traditions, cults and customs in order to enhance our appreciation of the poet. As mentioned earlier, Mo'juz opposed most of those cults and customs, and he "proclaimed war" against people and institutions which supported them. Without knowing those people and institutions our understanding of the poet would be quite inadequate. Shi'a Islam had not experienced any kind of reformation. Ironically enough, it was only after the Islamic revolution of 1979 that the modern clerics mastered the courage of banning the self-mutilation ritual of Ashura --tenth day of Moharram (the day of Imam Huseyn's martyrdom.) Only the authority of the Islamic government was able to convince many hard core fundamentalists to allow their female children to cross the threshold of their houses to attend modern schools --with observation of the dress code of course. Thus without a sound knowledge of the self-mutilation ritual and understanding women's sub-class status a reader's understanding of Mo'juz's poetry will suffer drastically. Again it is interesting to note that Mo'juz's *nowha-khani* was not welcome by the clerics; his lamentations "did not appeal to the clergy; they proclaimed war" against the poet. There is a paradox in Mo'juz's claim that clerics did not like his *nowha-khani* because part of the job of a sector of clerics (*rowzakhans*) was *nowha-khani* and retelling the story of Karbala and recounting the sufferings of the House of the Prophet.

Returning to our discussion of the poem, "*bashun gechar jidaya* [your head will be put to the spears]" implies that you will be victimized, mistreated and accused of the wrong doings that you have no knowledge about them yet its significations concerning the Karbala event are clear. Thus, as a good friend to son of Halima, the poet is advised to write a letter to him in Istanbul and warn him about the dangers and difficulties of home. It appears that lines 61- 64 are the rekindling of the poets' memories of his Istanbul life. He has been asked to tell his friend to stay back in Istanbul and sing his old familiar song, "*aman ay aman*" while Muhammad, another friend, plays on his *kamanche*. Then he continues to say "*Pishir qeyma pilovi,/Chakma saggal khenovi* (Fix your *qeyma pilaf*,/Don't involve yourself with the pains of your whiskers.)" As remarked earlier, from line 65 to the end of the poem seems to be the poet's soliloquy late at night. However, since shaving whisker bristles is one of the great headaches of returning home, the poet reflects on the issue further.

It appears to me that after the poet speaks about different problems of home coming through his mouthpiece of his friend's letter, he assigns himself to pay a visit to the bath-house. "Apply henna to your beard,/And bleed your back by cupping," he continues to say. In fact, coloring beard by henna and coffee or other substances and bleeding one's

back by cupping were some of the works performed in the bath-house. In numerous occasions, we find Mo'juz to be critical toward unhealthy practices and filthy conditions of the bath-houses. In fact, there is an irony in Mo'juz's remark about going to the bath-house and performing the old and unhealthy practices. The poet has already been "eluded" by Satan to shave his whiskers. He has no beard to apply henna thus he will not bleed his back by cupping. However, if he wants to return to the community fold, he needs to grow his beard and observe the traditional codes. Thus closing the discussion on the bread issue, Mo'juz says "People will not call you a Babi/If your beard appears bluish." The poet's satiric remark about the weird color of beard and its social significance also need a brief explanation here. After Nasiraddin Shah's assassination by Mirza Reza of Kerman, a Babi follower, Babis were being hunted and persecuted quite mercilessly. In Mo'juz's time, it would not be an amusement of little interest for the public to see one or two Babis hanged in the city once in a while. Thus the ruling class bolstered usually by the clerics, quite often, missed no chance in labeling the political dissidents or reform minded individuals as Babis in order to exterminate them. Therefore, growing beard and giving a right coloring to it would fend all kinds of accusations off a person irrespective of his/her real intentions and beliefs. Finally, the poet's treatment of the beard issue develops into the discussions on social maladies such as hypocrisy, deceit, ignorance and fanaticism which comprise the prevailing themes of Mo'juz's poetry.

We will further speak on the third phase of Mo'juz's life when we discuss his "The Letter of Condolence" and the major aspects and themes of Mo'juz's poetry in chapter two. I quoted "Mo'juz's Return from Istanbul to Shabustar" because the poem mapped out the poet's itinerary from Shabustar to Istanbul and his return journey. However, the poem provided us with sufficient clues about the major part of the poet's life, and it shed light to some of the points mentioned in his autobiographical note. It helped to see how the poet's "lamentations did not appeal to the clergy," and what Mo'juz meant by their "proclaimed war." Presently, we move to our study of the poet's life in Shahrud through analyzing parts of two different poems written during the last chapter of the poet's life.

"A Letter to Muhammad Ali" or "The Letter of Condolence"

"A Letter to Muhammad Ali," also named "The Letter of Condolence," was written during Mo'juz's stay of a little over a year in Shahrud. Similar to other poems written during the last phase of the poet's life in Shahrud, "The Letter of Condolence" depicts the picture of a resigned and disillusioned man counting down to close the last chapter of his life. It seems that the poet has reached a pathetic understanding that his desired change

cannot be carried out by a single person, but it is a collective and ongoing process carried out by collective factors and every concerned individual --the poet himself being part of the process. The poem is the inward echo of a lonely man displaced in the last days of his life despite being treated respectfully and dearly with his affluent hosts. It appears that the poet's hosts in Shahrud were people of distinction because he usually refers to them with their titles and etiquettes typical to Qajar period of Iran. Perhaps for the same reason, thinking of himself as a humble villager, the poet does not seem to be quite at home in their company. Although the poem chronologically belongs to the last phase of Mo'juz's life, it is the recollection of the memories of the poet's third phase of life --his 26 years Shabustar. The poet nostalgically speaks of his birth place, the company of his friends in Shabustar and naming his friends one-by-one, he recalls his old good days of Shabustar. In fact, by nostalgic reference to the familiar places and faces, reconstructing and revitalizing their memory, the poet exhibits their vacuum in his Shahrud life. Reading Mo'juz's Shahrud poems one cannot help to think of the poet's Shahrud days as the anti-climax of his Shabustar life.

While in native village Shabustar, the younger Mo'juz was earnestly forward-looking, hopeful, and he relentlessly carried out fighting the "proclaimed war" both by his writing and being active in social events such as opening the first girls' school in Shabustar.⁴⁶ The poet distributed his hand-written poems among the friends or recited them in the circles and gatherings of his oral people. Traveling from "mouth-to-mouth the poems were memorized" and disseminated among the people.⁴⁷ We know the names of ten to fifteen people who had virtually become disciples of Mo'juz. In a dateless letter to Mirza Majid Parsi, a friend of the poet who resided in Urmia, he speaks of his friends as "*manim tabe'larim*" --my followers.⁴⁸ They were forerunners of social activities. They regularly attended poetry readings and engaged in friendly talks in Agha Kahrizi pool side "under the shady willows and poplar trees."⁴⁹ At times, they came together on the platform and roof top of Farajullah's Flour Mill. While living his very last days away from his native Shabustar, the poet nostalgically recalls the ring of the friends and the places they used to get together in a number of his poems. The poet's "A Letter to Mohammad Ali," --"The Letter of Condolence"-- provides the names of some of his friends and recalls the familiar places. He mentions the roof top of Farajullah's Flour Mill which was run by one the poet's friends known as Kor Qasem --Blind Qasem.

The Poem starts with a discussion on quite a serious issue --a condolence on the occasion of the death of his friend's mother. It continues to deal with serious matters such

as transiency of life and shortness of the happy moments. Yet in Mo'juz's own terms the poem is "full of humor." It is rather a long poem, and I would like to quote some of its passages since the limits of our discussion here will not allow to quote the poem in its entirety and explain it in details. The names of people and places mentioned in the poem and references to different stories and events become signs and symbols that depict the poet's life environment, his relations to his friends, his hopes, fears and desires. Here, we have the transliteration of some of the lines followed by their literal translation.

Eshitdim ki veda etmish jahani
 O nazli madarun ey yar-e jani.
 Faraginda gozun geryan olubdur;
 Khalano khaharun nalan olubdur.
 Faqat mala'un Tukaz khandan olubdur,
 Sokhub chunki mazara gainanani.
 Ajal galdi gabakhdan gakhdi angal,
 Galin soylar nahani gal kefim gal.
 Oleydi gainanam kash on il awwal,
 Galub injitmiyeydi man janvani.
 Agar khamush edeydi yel chiraghen,
 Man-e zara tokardi gashgabaghin.
 Ajal girdi amudila ayaghin,
 Gora bilmaz dakhi bu khanumani.
 Bir az ashen duzi olseydi besyar,
 Yarardi bashimi chomcheyla kafdar.
 Sana qurban olum ey marg-e khunkhar,
 Ki azad eyladdun man binavani.
 Deduz bidini gondarsakh o yana,
 Olar batmani nanin bir girana,
 O gunki man goshuldum karvana,
 Giran etdi khuda bughdani nani.
 Man olseydim agar bidin o iman,
 Khoda eylardi gand-o chayi arzan.
 Zamini zalzala etmazdi viran,
 Va yanmazdi o gannadi tukani.

.....
 Mani Qasimnan etdi dur hijran,
 Husen kurdun naghily galdi nogsan.
 Donar bashem, olar halem parishan,
 Salanda yada bami asiani.
 Guzarem dushsa birda o diyara,
 Dayirman damina chikhsam dubara,
 Shabi mahtab-o abr-e para para
 Desan verram gulakh ta sub azani.
 Manim yarim Agha Mirza Ali dur,
 Ali Bey ham gozal ham soymali dur.
 Aziza, Surah mahi munjali dur,
 Najiya duzludur misli shahani.
 Nachun Mahmud Bahrami olub lal?

Niya tokmur dahaninan yera bal?
 Nachun etdmir mani bir hal-o ahval?
 Zimistanda donub yokhsa zabani?
 Niya yazmir mana Teymur nama?
 Ali Bey muntazirizmdur salama?
 Diyir Mammata-Taqi azan eqama?
 Va ya yokhdur namazila miyani?
 Deyillar pak tinat bir javandur,
 Hamisha talibi amn-o amandur,
 Khiyalan Mo'juzila hamzabandur,
 Khoda hifz eylasun Masur Khani.⁵⁰

(I heard your affectionate mother departed this world,
 O my bosom friend!
 You mourn her demise;
 your aunt and your sister are still grieving, I am told.
 Only the naughty Tukaz [your wife] is excited
 pushing the mother-in-law into her grave.
 "Be happy! be jolly!" the bride chants.
 "Death came and took my griefs away," she says.
 "I wish she had gone ten years earlier,
 "and she shouldn't have spoiled my youthful years.
 "If the wind blew out her lamp,
 "she would get angry with me," she complains.
 "Death severed her feet with its sword,
 "She will never be able to come back home.
 "If the soup were a little bit saltier,
 "the bitch would crack my head with the ladle.
 "I love you O blood-thirsty death!
 "You set this helpless creature free," she sings.
 You thought you would get bread for free
 If you sent the pagan [Mo'juz] away,
 but the price of wheat and bread has soared
 since the day I set out with the caravan.
 Had I been a pagan or unfaithful,
 God would have brought the prices of sugar and tea down;
 quake wouldn't have demolished the earth,
 the pastry shop wouldn't have burned down.

.....
 The separation distanced me from Qasem,
 the Huseyn Kurd Story remained unfinished.
 My heart bleeds, my head spins
 whenever I recall the Flour Mill roof top.
 Should I visit that realm once more,
 should I go up to the Flour Mill roof top,
 I'll listen to you till the break of the dawn
 under the moonlit night with the patches of clouds.
 Agha Mirzali is my best friend;
 Ali Beyg is both nice and lovable.
 Aziza and Sura both are my beloved full moons;
 Najiya is as beautiful as *shahani*.

Why has Mahmud Bahrami locked his tongue?
 Why doesn't he shower me with his speeches any more?
 Why doesn't he ask how am I doing?
 Has the winter frozen his tongue?
 Why doesn't Teymur write to me?
 Is Ali Bey waiting to hear from me?
 Is Mammāt-Taqi saying his *azan* and *eqameh*?
 Or is he not on good terms with his prayers?
 I am told that he is a nice youth;
 he is a lover of peace and calmness.
 May God bless Mansur Khan,
 he is a disciple of Mo'juz.)

The poem starts with the expression of compassionate words concerning the fact that the poet has learned about the demise of the "affectionate mother" of his friend. Mo'juz pictures every one in the family to be grieving the loss. In the midst of the grieving family members, the poet cannot help seeing someone who is very happy in the core of the her heart. He draws our attention to his friend's wife, who might be wearing a black outfit due to the occasion, and while others are wailing and mourning the dead, she is chanting: "Be happy! Be jolly" because the problem maker in the family, her mother-in-law, is gone. After the poet draws our attention to the only person among the mourners who pretends to be mourning the deceased, though she is quite happy with what has happened, he makes her the focus of reader's attention and explicates the reasons of her happiness.⁵¹ Mo'juz ingeniously refers to some of the problems, which were and are, common in many families. He lets us read the mind of a typical daughter-in-law and allows us to understand her feelings toward a mother-in-law with whom she used to live in the same house. "The bitch would crack" the head of the bride "with the ladle" should the soup be little too salty. entering the thoughts of a typical young woman, Mo'juz conveys the sense of happiness and freedom that a daughter-in-law would feel after living with a nagging mother-in-law for many years upon her death. After referring to some typical difficulties that she used to have with the deceased woman, she exclaims her relief with a paradoxical apostrophe: "I love you o blood-thirsty death! You set this helpless creature free." The expression of relief through the help of the "*marg-e khunkhar*" (blood-thirsty death) indicates the hellish environment in which the young woman had to live on the one hand, and it also signifies the mother-in-law's devilish behavior which makes *marg-e khunkhar* "a savior." It is a typical aspect of Mo'juz to target marginal and seemingly trivial episodes and to work them to the core of life and to expose their unnoticed importance. The poet often explores the inter-relatedness of different components of human life, which would otherwise be

unnoticeable.

In fact, Mo'juz improvises the opening condolence lines to expose the inward feelings of his friend's wife, which also becomes a bridge bringing the poet back to memories of Shabustar and contrasting them with his existing condition in the strange clime away from his native home. The poem ultimately becomes an elegy of the poet's forlornness in his advanced age. Talking to an old friend triggers the panoramic reappearance of past memories. Thus by addressing the people of his native place, the poet recreates their personalities, characters and the stories about them. Further, reading the minds of his vilifiers and gossipers, he says that you were thinking that you would "get the bread for free" if you sent a "pagan" like me to exile. Then with his trade mark humor, he says that they have a reverse effect out of their efforts to get rid of the "pagan." The price of commodities are soaring every day; to aggravate the situation, there has been an earthquake, and the confectionery store of Mashdi Ismayel caught fire and burned to ashes.⁵² "Had I been a pagan or unfaithful,/God would have brought the prices of sugar and tea down," and "Quake wouldn't have demolished the earth,/the pastry shop wouldn't have burned down," the poet says. Reading Mo'juz one quickly learns that the poet was especially fond of tea. In fact, tea addiction among Iranian villagers was and is widespread, and I believe that Mo'juz was no exception. That is why, according to Mo'juz, lowering the price of sugar and tea would be considered god's primary token of compassion toward the people of Shabustar after the poet's departure. The humor and satire of these lines are blended with the pathetic recollection of the days when he was in his native village among his friends.

Mo'juz declares that he was destined to be separated from Qasem --Blind Qasem who ran the Flour Mill. As a result of this separation, the poet had to leave his narration of the Huseyn Kurd story to his friends unfinished. The incomplete narration of the Azeri folk tale, Huseyn Kurd story, may also represent the unfulfilled desires of the poet and his people --the lost battle in the "proclaimed war" for change. By severing his roots from the native land, the poet could witness his own virtual death. Thereby, he mourns his own demise along with the death of his friend's mother. He says: "my heart bleeds, my head spins whenever I recall the Flour Mill roof top." It seems Mo'juz visualizes a typical old scene in which he could see his friends sitting around him listening to the narration of folk stories performed by the poet or one of the friends. Absent from that scene and the circle of friends, he thinks of his exiled condition as a death. In one of his most admirable lines, he makes a pledge that if he ever gets a chance to visit that Flour Mill roof top again, he will

make the best use of the occasion. "I'll listen to you till the break of the dawn in the moonlit night with patches of clouds," he says. It is interesting to note that there are three women mentioned --Aziza, Sura and Najya-- in the poem. They were among the first batch of the students who attended the first girls' school established in the village in 1931 through the efforts of Mo'juz and his friends. In fact, all the names mentioned in the poem are real people. Their detailed identification here will have no relevance to our discussion although it may yield some support to authenticate the biographical validity of the poem. The three women mentioned in the lines are still alive, and we know who and where they are at present.

The condolence in the poem is addressed to Muhammd Ali Pur-Ali-Muhammadi who was a good friend of Mo'juz, and who actively participated in copying and distributing the poet's works. It appears that the visualization of old familiar faces ignites the poet's love toward them and revives their memories, and it results in the poet's mentioning the names one by one and asking breathless questions about them: "Why Mahmud Bahrami has locked his tongue? Why doesn't he shower me with his speeches any more?/ Why doesn't he ask how am I doing?/ Has the winter frozen his tongue?" he asks impatiently. This breathless asking of questions about the old friends drives the poem fast to its concluding anti-climatic lines. The poet finds consolation in the concluding four lines by saying that his younger friend Masur Khan is "a nice youth" and "a disciple of Mo'juz." After he finds many of the friends behaving contrary to expectation, the poet finds solace by imagining that there will be someone among younger generation who might think as the poet does and continue the poet's cause.

Mo'juz in Shahrud

As stated earlier, besides "The Letter of Condolence," we will deal with Mo'juz's "A Letter from Shahrud" in this section in order to understand more about the last phase of the poet's life. After being virtually excommunicated by the religious circles and after fighting the "proclaimed war" for 26 years, Mo'juz leaves his birth place and sets out toward Shahrud --a city in the northeast of Iran. It seems the poet had been planning the trip some time before his actual departure on the invitation of his brother-in-law. In a poem entitled "Qiyamata Galir Az" (Little Left to the Resurrection Day) there is an allusion to his forthcoming migration:

Qiyamata galir az ey guruh-e qalb qasi'
 Durun ayaga, gedun eyliyun akhundi vasi.

 Vatan gafas kimidur etmiyun oni ta'mir,

Diyar-e Tusa edun azm sinderun gafasi.⁵³

(There isn't much time left before Judgement Day, O hardhearted people!
Hurry up and assign the clergy as your executor.

.....
Motherland is like a cage, do not repair the cage,
Set out toward Tus, break the cage.)

The poet starts with his usual jest and humor, addressing the “hardhearted people” to hurry up and install the clergy as their executors because the day of judgment is fast approaching. Then with his ingenuous imagery, he describes the motherland as a cage. The more the cage is repaired, the more the repairer is entrapped. Then the poet says break the cage and “set out toward Tus.” Although not clearly defined, the Northeastern region of Iran was recognized as Tus –Shahrud being considered a part of the region. Obviously, Mo’juz speaks of Shabustar and Azerbaijan as the “motherland,” and Tus as the land which is other than his home. Thus breaking away from his “cage,” the poet travels to Shahrud to join his brother-in-law whom he names Modir-un-Nazara in his long autobiographical poem entitled “A Letter from Shahrud.”

In the summer of 1933, Mo’juz left his birthplace behind and set out to Shahrud via Tabriz and Tehran –the route which is still used today. The poet speaks about his trip from Tabriz to Shahrud via Tehran, and he also gives some accounts of the places he goes to and the people he meets. This long autobiographical poem reveals the poet’s mixed feelings toward his home where he has had no ease and peace and his wandering in alien climes where he feels out-of-place in the latest days of his life. In fact, the poet barely survived a few months more than a year away from his native Shabustar. He arrived in Shahrud in mid-summer of 1933 and he died on September 3, 1934. The poem opens with the poet’s complaints about the uncomfortable bus trip between Tabriz and Tehran. In fact, the uneasy journey is the beginning of the end of the poet’s life story; it is a bad omen foreshadowing the poet’s looming death. Everything looks gloomy, and every space feels too “girth” making the poet uncomfortable. The limits of the present work will not permit me to quote the poem in its entirety, yet I would like quote the relevant passages in order to give some idea about the poet’s travel and his reflections about it.

Hava tar, yer dar, bimar-o zar
Szilderdi ney tak layalo nahar.
Sharafatsizam gar buleydim otur,
Olar boyla, olmazdim hargiz savar.
“Tohi pay gashtan beh az kafsh-e tang,”
Na khosh soylamish sa’adi-ye namdar.
Na bilsin ki birahmimish khalqimiz,

O kas ki safar etdmiyub ikhtyar.⁵⁴

(The weather was gloomy, the seat too girth, frail and fragile[I was] whining and wailing day and night like a *ney*, the bus was.
Call me a culprit should I ride
once more after I learned what a bus was.
How nice the celebrated Sa'adi had said,
"to walk bare-footed is better than wearing tight shoes."
How could a man who has not been on a trip
know that our people are so selfish.)

The poet was leaving behind his friends, his home and all familiar and meaningful signs. In his advanced age, he was heading to a place of unfamiliar signs and significations. Every foreign corner was pressing hard upon him --making him to see every thing gloomily and every place too tight. The noise from the engine sounded like the groaning and "whining" of the poet's own body. In fact, the gloominess of the weather and girthness of the seat find their expressions in the poet's unhappy mood and frail body. Yet the poet's state of mind and physical infirmity find their reflections in the continuous whining of the bus which was "wailing day and night." The poet says that he never knew the journey by bus could be so uncomfortable. He would never "ride" the bus any more. The transmission of depressing operatives from a larger universe (weather, climate and environment) to man (the poet) and finally the man-made tool (bus) to create an unbearable orchestration of sound and sight in the human world works quite effectively in the opening lines of the poem. Most probably, Mo'juz might have had many difficult times during his earlier travels, but he had not felt this tortured and troubled. He was younger during his earlier travels and not disillusioned with his compatriots' inadequacy in acquiring science and technology and their lack of efficiency in operating the new tools devised by the Others --the West. However, Mo'juz cannot continue complaining without interjecting some humor into his narrative. The poet quotes a line from a famous Persian classical poet, Sa'di, saying that "to walk bare-footed is better than wearing tight shoes." Thus he implies that putting up with the difficulties of traveling on foot is preferable to the newly introduced means of travel such as bus which is not functioning according to its designed rules. Mo'juz's complaint about the bus, an invention of the admired West, is an anomaly and a very important point to note. The poet has always been full of admiration and praise for the sciences and technology of European nations. He always reprimanded his compatriots for their indolence and ignorance to what was happening in the West. During his earlier zealous years when he adamantly was fighting the "proclaimed war" in order to alter the mentality, social and individual habits of his countrymen, he wrote:

Uch ay yoli gedar uch gunda pahlavan mashin,
 Bu gun yer uzda dadash hokmran buklar oldi.
 Bukhar-e jahl sanin gozlarin edip a'ama,
 Haqiqati gora bilmaz o goz ki tar oldi.
 Diyin o Mojuza bihuda etdmasin faryad,
 Dohul sadasin eshitmaz gulakh ki kar oldi.⁵⁵

(The titan automobile covers three months' travel distance within three days.
 O brother! Today, steam power is ruling the world.
 The mist of ignorance has blinded your eyes,
 Blind eyes will never be able to see the truth.
 Tell Mo'juz not to strain his throat,
 Deaf ears will never be able to hear the drum.)

These are the concluding lines of a poem entitled "The Day It Became," in which the poet contrasts the components of the old world with those of new one. In it, he attacks the supporters of the old order. It is noteworthy to compare the tone, structure and the content of these lines with the opening lines of "The Letter from Shahrud." Although the lines of "The Letter" are much shorter, they are dreary and marked by long vowels of one syllable, words such as *tar* (gloomy), *dar* (tight) and *zar* (frail) or two syllable words such as *hava* (air) and *bimar* (sick). The lines of "The Day," although longer, are fast moving and quick. "The titan automobile" travels the three months trip within three days. The poet takes to promoting "steam power" quite aggressively. Steam which makes the engines run in the West becomes an encumbrance for the people in the East. It becomes a hurdle of mist to block the sight of his countrymen from seeing the "truth" --and becomes a metaphor for their ignorance. Before the poem ends, the poet finds his countrymen both blind and deaf. Thus, he asks some unidentified entity, perhaps his own conscience, to tell Mo'juz that nobody will hear him so he should not "strain his throat." The poet of these lines of aggressive posture and position becomes the resigned Mo'juz who hears his own groans in the noise of the engine of the bus which he is riding in the very last chapter of his life. He doesn't find the bus he is riding to be the same "titan" which he had seen in Istanbul. There is also some kind of disillusionment with the fact that automobile is a "titan" when it is driven by some one who has invented it. It is a "titan" in the totality of the Western life. Planted in the Iranian ecology and driven by Iranian drivers, an automobile is no more a titan. Its seats are narrow and every thing about it looks gloomy. At some point in time, the poet asks Mashadi Zulfigar, the driver, to stop the bus because Tukaz (the poet's wife) was too worn out to continue, but he never pays any attention. That is why Mo'juz says that "*na bilsin ki birahmimish khalqimiz, / O kas ki safar etdmiyup ikhtyar.*" "How could a man, who has not been on trip, know that /our people are so

selfish,” he says. Here Mo’juz has a very different view point with respect to the people and the environment.

After he arrives in Tehran, the poet and his wife take a horse-cab to a relative’s house. They stay two days and two nights (*do leylo nahar*) in Tehran. After having a “free” and “refreshing ice cream,” Mo’juz continues his trip to Shahrud with his wife. On their arrival to Shahrud the poet is greeted by his brother-in-law, Modir-un-Nazara. The poet has a beautiful depiction of the scene in which the two sisters –his wife and his sister-in-law– see each other. As mentioned in the poem, the poet rests the night and enjoys the breakfast, and the host gives a tour of the city for the guests. Contrasting the tree-lined streets of Shahrud with his native Shabustar, he admires “the excellent avenue” in which “white poplars, willows and plane trees are lined up right and left,” yet he feels himself out of place, forlorn and unhappy.

Sahar chayi chun tokdi finjana giz,
 Havaya so’aud etdi bir khosh bukhlar.
 Gharaz chayi ishdikh, danishdikh, dedikh,
 Gedip shahri gazdik sighthar-o kibar.
 Khiyabanida az yamin-o yasar
 Chakip saf sifidar-o bid-o chinar.
 Yalandir desam var aghaj
 O a’ali khiyabanida dah-hezar.
 Aghajlar dibindan akhir nahrlar,
 Hami saf, shaffaf ayinavar. (lines 37-46)⁵⁶

.....
 Hava saf, su saf, angur saf,
 Vali khlaq kam khanda-vo tund-bar.
 Sarin gandilar Inglislar kimi,
 Tamam ahli Shahrud khord-o kebar.
 Yaqin ed dagil ahli Shahrudidan,
 Gular uzli bir shakhsa olsan duchar.
 Bu shahr ahli ham ahl-e teryak dur,
 Edar akhar Irani bu taromar. (lines 57-64)⁵⁷

(The morning, as the maid poured the tea in the cup,
 a pleasing steam spiraled in the air.
 We drank the tea, we talked and chatted,
 then we strolled in the city, child and adult.
 In the avenue from right to left
 poplars, willows and plane trees are lined up.
 It would be an exaggeration if I claim
 that there are ten thousand trees in that gorgeous avenue.
 Brooks are flowing beneath the trees,
 all is glittering, shiny and mirror-like.

.....
 The air is clean, the water is clear, the grapes are clear,
 but the people are morose and have little laughter.

they are cold-blooded like the British
 all the people of Shahrud, children and adults.
 Be certain that he is not from Shahrud,
 should you come across someone who smiles at you.
 The people of this city also are opium addicts;
 this addiction will ruin Iran at last.

A reader of Mo'juz will barely miss the poet's many references to tea and tea drinking habits. Quite often, one will find the poet lauding tea drinking and blaming opium smoking, which used to be an endemic problem for many Iranians at that time. Tea drinking perhaps was the only luxury in an Azerbaijani villager's life, and Mo'juz repeatedly alludes to its comfort-giving role in his own life. He almost depicts himself as a hard core tea-addict. Narrating the different episodes of his journey to Shahrud and his sojourn with different relatives, drinking tea is illustrated as an occasion of special importance and a key factor in putting the life on its right path. We will see many examples of this when we analyze further passages of Mo'juz's poetry. In lines 37-38 of "The Letter from Shahrud," the poet gives a sensual image of the steam spiraling in the air as the maid pours the tea in the cup at breakfast. It seems without that cup of tea the other episodes in the day would not have happened. That cup of tea seems to be prerequisite for talking, going out, appreciating the scenery and the trees lined up along the streets. "A pleasing steam spiraled in the air," Mo'juz depicts "as the maid poured the tea in the cup." After the poet and his company take their tea, they go out and stroll in the city "child and adult." It seems that drinking tea is a key element to help the poet to see and distinguish child from adult "poplars, willows and plane-trees."

Although the poet depicts an admiring environment, it does not appear that he enjoys the scene. He describes the picture as if to compare what they lack in his native village of Shabustar. Although the poet speaks about the hospitality of the his wife's relatives and friends, and although he admires the clean and beautiful environment of the new place, it appears that he doesn't feel at home. The poet finds Shahrud a very developed and larger place compared to his native Shabustar. He sounds enthralled by the lines of the trees in the streets of the city and clear water running along the brooks, yet he is more concerned with what his people in Shabustar are missing. The first thing we find Mo'juz mention about Shahrud is the parallel he draws between the natural environments of Shahrud and Shabustar. Guney county in Azerbaijan (the poet's birth place) is famous for the variety of delicious grapes. In fact being a warmer district compared the other places in the region, the produce of the Guney people reach the market earlier than other farmers.

Guney in Azeri means sunny; the region is situated toward the east side of the Misho mountain. That is why the first things Mo'juz notices are trees, water and especially "grapes." The poet starts drawing parallels between the merits and natural richness of his native place and Shahrud. In Shahrud he discovers a new variety of grape which is "delicate, delicious and beautiful," and wishes if he could send some "seventy bales" of it to his people in Shabustar. Being overwhelmed with the plenitude, he further says that if you wish to have grapes "please come to Shahrud."

In Mo'juz's "The Letter from Shahrud," the reader will find the poet come in contact with two groups of sign and signifiers. One group pictures the poet in relation to the people who receive and host him and his wife. Mo'juz tries to make all the signs associated with his hosts understandable and sensible; he tries to make connections between the new people and their ecology with his familiar signifiers. He tries to say that the people who hosted the poet and his wife are not originally from Shahrud. By some way or the other they are associated with the poet's home –Azerbaijan and the Azeri language. The second group of signs belong to the ecology and the senseless natural environment with which the poet has difficulty to associate or participate in exact significations. When Mo'juz speaks about Hamid-ud-Dowla, a relative of Modir-un-Nazara, his own brother in law, who hosted the poet in Tehran for "two days and two nights," he writes:

Yedik orda bir janfaza bastani
Hamid Dowla vo bande-ye moftkhar.
Galib shahr-e Tabrizda muddati
Valiahd yaninda bu ikhtyar.
Bilir ham ozi Turki ham orati
Na yakhshi valakin sozun anladar. (lines 23-28)

(There, we had a refreshing ice cream
Hamid Dowla and I, the pilferer.
He has resided in Tabriz for a long time
serving the crown Prince, this gentleman.
Both himself and his wife know Turkish, [Azeri]
Not very good, but enough to make themselves understood.)

Thus Hamid ud-Dowla's residence in Tabriz, and the gentleman's service of the crown prince (who traditionally was stationed in Tabriz, the central city of Azerbaijan) work catalysts to make the signs in their contacts sensible. The poet would not stipulate on *janfaza bastani* (refreshing ice cream) if the signs and signifiers in the relation were not fully sensible. In lines 125-136, while introducing Heshmat who owned a precious library at home with "twenty precious manuscripts," Mo'juz remarks that "he had learned the

Turkish language well/and he had accompanied the Qajar king in his trip to Europe.” Thus the category of the people with whom the poet is associated are depicted as not belonging to Shahrud on the one hand, and also having some links with Azerbaijan and the Azeri language on the other, besides their friendship or kinship. Otherwise, all the people out of this category and anything fully attached to Shahrud appeared to be short of meaning and lacking their total significations. That is why any perceived natural beauty of the city remains detached from the poet without effecting any emotional thrill or change in the mood. As an evidence to this case let us see how the depicted beauty of nature in line 57 is thwarted by the unfamiliar faces of the Shahrud people and their moroseness in line 58. “The air is clean, the water is clear, the grapes are clear,/but the people are morose and have little laughter,” we are told. It is interesting to note how the outward contradiction of the two half-verses of the same couplet join internally together in repelling the poet away from themselves and resulting in the break down of significations. Thus the poet continues to say that if we find some one who makes any sense for us and smiles at us, to be sure, he/she does not belong to the ecology of dumb signifiers. “Be sure he is not from Shahrud./Should you come across some one who smiles at you,” Mo’juz avers. To illustrate the break down of signifiers, the poet brings in his far remote Others as evidence. The people of Shahrud are as alien to the poet as the British, they have no sign to share with the poet. “They are cold-blooded like the British/all the people of Shahrud, children and adults,” Mo’juz thinks. The poet has also reference to the people’s addiction to opium smoking which he finds every where he goes and every house he is invited.

In the concluding part of “A Letter from Shahrud,” we learn that the poet was not feeling well. A doctor visits him at home, and he finds out that he has pneumonia.⁵⁸ The doctor advises him to “drink milk and keep the house warm.” Before getting to his illness and letting us know about the final days of the last phase of his life, Mo’juz complains about the grim side of life and briefness of the happy moments in the poem. Considering the limits of this work, I would like to quote only the very last part of the poem which sounds like his epitaph or his last words, spoken on the death bed.

Gharaz galdi doktor bu gun manzila
 Va haqqulqadam aldi panj-o hezar.
 Dedi mubtalasan be zaturriya,
 Bekhor shir-o ham manzilat garm dar.
 Amal eyliyun goydurun ham kupa
 Dedi getdi mazandaranli barar.
 Modiri qiyas etdmiyun sayira
 O bir shakhsi mumtaz dur por ayar.
 Yatar har geja bir iki uch gonakh

Modirin sarayinda ne'malgarar.
 Man har gun ichip chayi seyr eyliram,
 Gulistani Shahrudi misli hezar.
 Vali eyliyupdur zamana mani,
 Alilo, za'aifo, nahifo, nazar.
 Na var manda shoq-e sharabo robab,
 Na eshq-e labo khalo zolf-e nigar.
 Faqat galmisham man jahana yazam,
 Bu sozlarda mandan gala yadigar.
 Na biz annadukh hekmat-e khelqati,
 Na Turko na Tazi na Ruso Tatar. (lines 172-91)⁵⁹

(Finally, the doctor came home today,
 and he got five Rls for his visit.
 He said "you have pneumonia
 drink milk and keep the house warm.
 Follow my orders and continue cupping,"
 said the Mazandarani guy.
 Do not compare Modir to the others,
 he is a person of full distinction.
 Two or three guests in his house
 sleep with all comforts and plenitude.
 Every day I drink my tea and stroll
 the rose-garden of Shahrud like a nightingale,
 but the passage of time has made me
 frail, weak, gaunt and meager.
 Neither any interest to wine nor lyre is left in me,
 nor the love of the lip, mole and locks of the lady-love.
 I came to this world only to write,
 and leave these words to survive me.
 Neither we understood the purpose of the creation,
 nor the Turk, the Arab, the Russian nor the Tartar.)

Expressing his displeasure and discomfort because of his declining health, Mo'juz; informs us about a doctor's visit of him in his host's house. He speaks of pneumonia about the doctor's diagnosis. "You have got pneumonia," the doctor tells him, and he advises him to "drink milk and keep the house warm." In his anthology of *Azerbaijani Poetry*, Mirza Ibrahimov speaks of tuberculosis as Mo'juz's cause of death.⁶⁰ I have not been able to substantiate Ibrahimov's remark, and it is not clear what source he has relied upon. However, the poet's own lines about the doctor effect a mixed reaction in his readers. We do not know whether the poet's visitor was a real doctor or a quack because he gives contradicting orders. He orders his patient to drink milk and keep himself warm which sounds a pretty standard procedure, at the same time he prescribes "cupping" which sounds more a quackery device than a physician's prescription. Moreover, the poet's remark about him as a "Mazandarani guy" is not far from chagrin. By specific

identification of the doctor as Mazandarani, Mo'juz, practically, identifies himself as Azerbaijani and articulates the otherness of the "Mazandarani guy." The poet manifests a mixed notion about the doctor, his personality and his recommendations. With the tacit identification of the doctor's otherness, Mo'juz shakes his and his audience's trust in him. Quite appropriately at this point, the poet switches to extol his host Modir[un-Nazara] and says "do not compare Modir to the others." Modir-un-Nazara's close ties with the poet and his generous accommodation of him has turned his otherness to a familiar self.

After admiring the liberality and generosity of his host, line 182 to the end of the poem we notice the resigned voice of a departing man speaking his farewell words. Unlike in the earlier stages of the poet's life the lines do not suggest to effect any change, and they lack the hope and enthusiasm to rebuild the community. They are only written to express a passive situation. Perhaps they suggest that not only the poet's ardent avocation of change availed him nothing, but also it adversely affected him taking its toll on his declining state and health. Although shrouded with a pathetic strain, the characteristic humor and parody of Mo'juz are glowing through the lines. He drinks his tea every day and like a "nightingale," he roams the "rose-garden" of the strange land. "Every day I drink my tea and stroll/the rose-garden of Shahrud like a nightingale," the poet says, but the world, *zamana*, has effected its adverse change in the poet's health, physical appearance and mood. Frail and weak, he has lost his "interest to wine and lyre, *showq-e sharab-o robab*." No love of mole and locks is left with the poet -- "*na e'shq-e lab-o khal-o zolf-e nigar*." The poet's losing "love of the lip, mole and locks of the lady-love" is very functional here. The lines show Mo'juz's innate sense for parody which under no condition abandons him. Lip and a mole at its upper or lower corner of it and the locks of the lady-love are overused cliches in the classical Persian, Turkish and Azeri poetry. In fact the passage is a parody of the classical poetry of the region -- Persian, Turkish and Azeri. He drinks tea to parody the wine, a "frail, weak, gaunt and meager" man becomes "a nightingale" roaming the "rose -garden of Shahrud." Unlike the poets of classical tradition he discards "the lip, mole and the locks of the lady-love."

The poet's parody of the conventional images of the classical poetry will be discussed in chapter two when we talk the aspects of modernity in Mo'juz's poetry in details. Ironically in a very resigned posture, Mo'juz expresses that he could do nothing in effecting a change or helping human race to move forward an inch further. "Neither we understood the purpose of the creation/nor the Turk, the Arab, the Russian and the Tartar." he acknowledges. Like many others, the poet has come, lived and gone without effecting

any significant change in the more crucial problems of the human race. His duty was to come to this world, write and leave behind his work irrespective of the fact if they will do any good for the people. "I came to this world *only* [my italic] to write/and leave these words to survive me," Mo'juz writes. Disillusioned by his mission and the world as a whole, the poet resigns his vehement advocacy of change, and tries only to immortalize himself by leaving behind his poetry irrespective of its prospective function – "*faqat galmisham man jahana yazam/bu sozlarda mandan gala yadgar.*" His time is over, he was here only to write and leave behind his written work. Ironically, although the poet could not effect much change as he had desired, but the time and the world, *zamaneh*, was by far mightier in changing the poet and making him "frail, weak, gaunt and meager."

Furthermore, besides Mo'juz's parody of the classics and the ironic intent of the lines, there is a grain of seriousness in them as well. The poet's resignation of "the lip, mole and the locks of the lady-love" means the end of his poetry career in reality. Although as a poet, he tried to go against the classical conventions, and he did not speak about the lip and mole or the locks yet like many of his contemporaries he was a classic in some respects, and poetry meant lip, mole and lock for many poetry readers and the public. Most poets of the Iranian Constitutional era, including Mo'juz, employed, very loosely though, the same millennium old rules of *aruz* and forms of poetry such as *ghazal* and *qasida* to convey their new ideas of sociopolitical make. In fact, one will not find a definite point of mutation from old to new or from classic to modern. Change is always an ongoing process, "the old and the new cohabit the cultural spaces of which the poetic text is an example and a simulacrum."⁶¹ Thus Mo'juz's satire of the lip, mole and lock of the beloved convey a double meaning: invalidation of the old referents on the one hand and the search to fill the vacancy of the invalidated precepts on the other.⁶² With his resignation of "the lip, mole and the locks of the lady-love," Mo'juz resigns his career as a poet. He inscribes his epitaph, waiting for departure.

After living almost fourteen months in Shahrud, Mo'juz died in the house of his generous host on September 3, 1934 --most probably from the pneumonia about which he speaks in his "The Letter from Shahrud." The poet was buried in Kohneh Mazar of Shahrud. In 1967, when Shahrud municipality turned the cemetery into a children's park, a number of the poet's friends and fans traveled to Shahrud; they collected his remains and tomb-stone and brought them to Shabustar clandestinely. Their daring act could well produce them a big problem since to serve or honor a poet like Mo'juz was against the oppressive policies of the Iranian government in those days. The remains were placed in a

temporary grave in an orchard outside Shabustar expecting to relocate them in a later time. After the passage of nearly three decades, the remains and the original tomb stone are still in the same orchard, it seems that the time has not yet come to place the remains of the poet in a marked tomb.⁶³ So far Mo'juz's has remained as a man of many epitaphs having no tomb-stone.

I would like to close this chapter with a reference to a poem of Mo'juz in which he speaks of himself as being sixty years old. The poem addressed to Azrael (the death angel) is composed in Shabustar almost two years before the poet's death. Since the poem is purely autobiographical, I would not close the chapter on the poet's life without quoting some lines from it. It seems the poem is written less than a year before his travel to Shahrud. At the time of composition of the poem which is called "*Ey Azrayil, O Azrael,*" the poet was sixty years old according to Hijri lunar calendar. Computed according to solar Hijri calendar or Christian calendar, he was almost 58 years old. Again because of the limited scope of this work, I will only quote the first verse and the concluding two couplets of the poem. The poem banteringly addresses the angel of death, Azrael, and invites him to come and take the poet's soul away because all the desires of the poet are fulfilled. Thus addressing Azrael, Mo'juz says:

Arizu eyladihim sheylara oldim nayil,
Indi rahat veraram jan, gal ey Azrayil.

.....
Mo'juzun omri sharifi olub atmishdan chox,
Yuz min ilda yashasa aqibati yokhdur yokh.
Yemisham yetdi lavini, piloghi garnim tokh,
Indi rahat veraram jan, gal ey Azrayil.⁶⁴

(I attained things I had aspired for,
now, I can submit my soul comfortably. Please do come o Azrael.

.....
Mo'juz's honorable age has reached over sixty,
should he live hundred thousand years, the end is death, the end is death.
I have had *yetdi lavin, pilaf*, and I am full,
now, I can submit my soul comfortably. Please do come o Azrael.)

After his invitation from Azrael to come and carry out his mission --that is to take the poet's soul-- and by itemizing his fullfilled aspirations, Mo'juz provides the reason why he gladly will submit his soul. "The municipality has put an end" to the people's roof drainage to the alleys which "for thirty years" poured to the poet's head. "vagrant dogs" have been removed from the streets by poisoning. Girls' school has been established, and "our daughters are writing letters everywhere." After speaking about the fulfillment of his

aspirations, the poet seems to be content with his life span with a sense that the period of sixty years is a fairly average life. Thus he thinks that he has already passed his sixty, and it is time to depart. However, "the end is death, the end is death" even if one lives "one hundred thousand years," Mo'juz avers. Thus the poet thinks that the right time for death is when "*yetdi lavin*" has been consumed along with *pilaf* and the physical hunger is also fully satisfied. I quoted the pertaining lines here only to make it clear that the poet's reference to his sixty years of age, when he was still in Shabustar, is calculated according to the Hijri lunar calendar. The opening of the girls' school in Shabustar, mentioned in the poem, was in 1309 of solar Hijri, 1931 A.D. Mo'juz died on September 3, 1934 after living sixty years, six months and twenty-five days.⁶⁵ As mentioned earlier our knowledge from the first and second phases of Mo'juz's life (16 years of childhood period in Shabustar and 16 years of his youth in Istanbul) is very scant. When we talk about Mo'juz, our discussion usually pertains to the third phase of his life (the 26 years in Shabustar after his return from Istanbul). The poet's third phase of life was his most productive as well as most tumultuous when he was engaged in the "proclaimed war" for change and innovation. In the brief fourth phase of his life, we find Mo'juz with a tamed and tempered tone recollecting the memories of the past and, quite often, ruminating nostalgically over his third and longest phase of his life. Our further study of Mo'juz will entail more detailed analysis of poet's works produced mostly during the third phase of his life.

Notes to Chapter I

1. See M. T. Zehtabi, *Zaban-e Azeri-ye Adabi-ye Mo'aser*, P. 87. See also Abbas-Ali Javadi, *Azerbaijan va Zaban-e An*, PP. 3-38.
2. More than a decade after Mo'juz's death when the poet's collection of poetry was being arranged during the rule of autonomous government of Azerbaijan, Mo'juz's friends were reluctant to divulge their friendship with the poet. They were afraid that they could be targeted by extreme fundamentalists' "avenge." See Memmedli, *Mirza Ali Mo'juz*, P. 16.
3. Guney in the Azeri language means "sunny." The place is situated on the sunny side of Misho mountain. The people of Guney are mostly farmers, and their fruits and produce usually reach the market very early in the season.
4. We find conflicting dates about Mo'juz's birth. Memmedli speaks of March 29, 1873, P. 5. The birth and death dates of the poet appearing in this work are based on Mr. Muhammad Ali Niqabi of Shabustar's recent study of Mo'juz. Mr. Niqabi has kindly sent me his hand written copy of Mo'juz's Identification as well as his Death Document issued by the Iranian Statistics Bureau.
5. According to Mr. Rahim Salmasi the building units in Boyuk Valde Hani were mostly used as living units. Each unit had its own kitchen and a rest-room. Kucuk Valide Hani was used as storage for merchandize and business offices. Mr. Salmasi's family business had two units in Boyuk Valde Hani in possession, and he lived there from 1920 to 1957.
6. *Istanbul Ansiklopedisi vol. 7* PP. 362-3 gives the history of Vadile Hani sarai and has a floor plan of the place. For what ever reason, it never speaks about the Iranians' residence over there.
7. During the peak of Iranian Immigrants' political, social and journalistic activities in Istanbul, Mo'juz was back in Iran. Iranian immigrants in Istanbul were very active during Lesser Despotism (1908-1909). See Fariba Zarinebaf-Shar's "Diaspora IV in Ottoman Turkey" in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* Vol. VII.
8. The one-page hand-written autobiographical note of Mo'juz.
9. *Ibid.*
10. For detailed story of Mo'juz's discovery, see Memmedli's *Mirza Ali Mo'juz* PP. 13-8. In fact Memmedli was a key person in discovering Mo'juz and publishing the first version of his selected poems.
11. Thus through the efforts of Memmedli a selection of Mo'juz's works, *The Selected Poems*, was published by the Tabriz branch of Iranian-Soviet Society for Cultural Relations. When *Shafaq*, the Society's monthly literary journal, reported its yearly activities in its 5th issue of Dec. 1945, the publication of Mo'juz's works was mentioned as item number 2 in the list of 11 literary undertakings. See also Berengian PP. 143-4.
12. See Memmedli P. 16. See also Mr. M. A. Neqbi of Shabustar's essay "Shabustarli Mirza Ali Mo'juz." P. 12. See also Berengian P. 91.
13. See Memmedli P. 16. See also Mr. M. A. Neqbi of Shabustar's essay "Shabustarli Mirza Ali Mo'juz." *Ark Daily*.
14. Muhammad Ali Tarbiyat, a famous Azerbaijani man of letters and politician, was a friend of E. G. Browne. Browne's *Press and Poetry of Modern Persia* is "partly based on the manuscript work" of Tarbiyat. Tarbiyat's *Daneshmandan-e Azerbaijan* was published in 1935.
15. See Memmedli's introduction to *Mirza Ali Mo'juz Asarlari* PP. 5-17. As mentioned in footnote 10, through the efforts of Memmedli a selection of Mo'juz's works, *The Selected Poems*, was published by the Tabriz branch of Iranian-Soviet Society for Cultural Relations. When *Shafaq*, the Society's monthly literary journal, reported its yearly activities in its 5th issue of Dec. 1945, the publication of Mo'juz's works was mentioned as item number 2 in the list of 11 literary undertakings.

16. *Ibid.*
17. M. A. Neqbi of Shabustar's essay "Shabustarli Mirza Ali Mo'juz."
18. Muhammad Taqi Zehtabi, *Zaban-e Azeri-ye Adabi-ye Mo'aser*, P. 87.
19. Mr. Sheyda names it as "Volume III" because two volumes, although bound in the same cover, had already been published as mentioned earlier and were known to the people.
20. M. A. Neqbi of Shabustar's essay "Shabustarli Mirza Ali Mo'juz." In one of his letters to me, Mr. Niqabi has discussed in full details the story of the publication of the poems and the source he had received the manuscripts. See also Memmedli, P. 18.
21. See P. Omarova, *M. A. Mo'juz*, P. 10. See also Memmedli PP. 7-9.
22. Mirza Ibrahimov, *Azerbaijani Poetry*. PP. 242-52.
23. See Mirza Ibrahimov's two volume *Azerbaijani Poetry and Azerbaijani Prose*. Also see *XIX asr Azerbaijan She'rinda Satir*, Baki, 1975.
24. See H. Javadi and K. Kurrill in *Encyclopaedia Iranica (Volume III) Azeri Literature in Iran X*, P. 251. See also Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak's *Recasting Persian Poetry*, P. 3. Dr. Karimi-Hakkak speaks in full details on modernism and change from the classical norms, the issues which are quite relevant to our discussion pertaining modernity in Azeri poetry.
25. Mo'juz's compatriots from Iranian Azerbaijan such as Maraghe'i (d. 1910) and Talibuf (d. 1909) wrote only in the Persian language although they lived and died outside Iran. Maraghe'i, the author of *Siyahat-Nameh-ye Ebrahim Beg*, settled in Istanbul after residing many years in Yalta. Talibuf, the author of many prose works in the Persian language had settled in Daghestan of Russia. Ironically, both Maraghe'i and Talibuf are among many Turkic-speaking Iranian authors who introduced literary innovations to the Persian speaking world. Maraghe'i introduced novel writing to the Persian literature in its modern sense.
26. See Samad Sardari-Niya's *Mulla Nasreddin in Tabriz*, PP. 149-56.
27. *Ibid*, P. 251-2.
28. Memmedli P. 10.
29. Mr. M.A. Huseyni of Tabriz, residing in Germany presently, has the major part of the poet's manuscripts. Late M. Nakhjuvani manuscripts are in possession of Mr. M.A. Huseyni now, and he is in the process of compiling the poet's *divan* --collection of poetry. In one of his letters to me, Mr. Huseyni has expressed the there are many poems of Mo'juz in his collection which have not been published so far. Mr. M.A. Niqabi of Shabustar also has many poems of Mo'juz that they have not appeared in print. He too is planning to publish the poems in his possession.
30. See L. Omarova, *M. A. Mo'juz*, P. 16.
31. See Yunus Parsa-Bunab, *Mohit-e Siyasi va Zendegi Mirza Ali Mo'juz-e Shabustari*, PP. 5-6.
32. See Plate No. 1. The copy of the poet's hand-written autobiography is provided by my friend Mr. M. A. Huseyni.
33. Imam Huseyn (626-680) the grand-son of the prophet and the third Imam, is one of the most important saints of Shi'a Islam. Opposing the Caliphate of Yazid, the second Umayyad Caliph, he did not submit himself to Yazid's oath of allegiance. He set out from Medina toward Kufa where he had been promised support by some of his followers. Yazid's governor in Kufa, 'Ubeydu'llah ibn Ziyad confronted him with a large army. Imam Huseyn suffered martyrdom along with his 71 helpers in a place called Karbala plain on the 10th day of Muharram (10 October 680). The occasion is commemorated in Shi'a Islam with wailing and mourning and elaborate passion plays.
34. Lamenting the deplorable situation of the homeland is a common theme of the Persian and Azeri poets of the period. See Ashrafuddin Gilani's "Bikas vatan, gharib vatan, binava vatan," P. 57.

35. Mamed Qoli-Zade, *Sechimish Asarlari*, P. 518.
36. Memmedli, P. 6. 518.
37. Omarova, PP. 14-5.
38. See Sheyda's edition of *Shabustarli Mo'juz: Taza va Chap Olmamesh Asarlari*, P. 88.
39. Memmedli, P. 307. Sheyda calls it "Mo'juz's Journey from Istanbul to Tabriz" since for him Tabriz is the home, whereas, Memmedli thinks of the poet's birth place where he really returned.
40. *Bayatis* are usually folk poems composed with very short lines based on syllabic meter. They are often sung in the accompaniment of musical instrument. According to M. A. Farzaneh, the word Bayati has connections with a turkic tribe Bayat. For further information see M. A. Farzaneh's introduction to his *Bayatilar*. A longer form of *bayati* is called *saya* which is usually a narrative folk story. It is very similar to a pattern of poetry known as ballad in English literature. Mo'juz's poem can also be called a *saya* because of its length.
41. The lines are from a poem called "The Will." See *Kulliyat-e Mirza Ali Mo'juz-e Shabustari*, P. 224.
42. See Maraghe'i's *Siyahat-Nnameh-ye*, P. 26.
43. Mulla Muhammad Baqer Majlisi's *Hilyatul-Muttaqin*, P. 120.
44. See Mohammad Amin Rasulzada's "Iran Turklari" in *Turk Yurdu* P. 672.
45. See Berengian P. 112.
46. The poet actively participated in social works. Girls' school in Shabustar was established in 1931. Mo'juz has a picture taken in the celebration of the occasion in the company of some 18 friends. See P. 220 of Sheyda's edition of the poet, *Shabustarli Mirza Ali Mo'juz: Taza va Chap Olmamish Asarlari*.
47. L. Omarova, P. 14.
48. The letter is included in both Memmedli's edition of Mo'juz and in the volume called *Mirza Ali Mo'juz-e Shabustari: Taza Tapilan She'rlar*, see P. 133. Since Mo'juz's prose letters to his friends provide us less information than his poetry, we do not study them in details.
49. Niqabi. P. 6. Mr. Niqabi has listed eleven names of the poet's friends from Shabustar.
50. *Mirza Ali Mo'juz of Shabustar: Newly Discovered Poems (Mirza Ali Mo'juz-e Shabustari: Taza tapilan She'rlar*, P. 145. This poem is included in Mr. Sheyda's edition with a little variation and fewer lines, P. 217. For whatever reason, it was not published in Memmedli's edition of 1945.
51. Traditionally, in Azerbaijan as well as other regions of Iran, a *galin* (dride), used come to live with the family of a bridegroom. In fact, she used to become an addition to the family of the bridegroom. The relation between a bride and mother-in-law was not a pleasing one as a rule. Many a bride used to get her divorce only because she could not put up with her in-laws in general, and with mother-in-law in particular. That is why the death of a mother-in-law could mean the beginning of a happy life for a bride in many occasions.
52. See *Mirza Ali Mo'juz of Shabustar: Newly Discovered Poems (Mirza Ali Mo'juz-e Shabustari: Taza tapilan She'rlar*, P. 146.
53. See *Mirza Ali Mo'juz-e Shabustari: Taza Tapilan She'rlar* PP. 101-2..
54. See *Kulliyat-e Mirza Ali Mo'juz-e Shabustari*, P. 236.
55. *Ibid*, P. 181. The concluding line from a poem called "O Gun ki Oldi."
56. *Ibid*, P. 227.

57. *Ibid*, P. 228.

58. Ibrahimov mentions the cause of the poet's death as being tuberculosis. "Mo'juz died in Iran of tuberculosis," he writes. See his *Azerbaijani Poetry* P. 242.

59. *Ibid*, P. 232.

60. Mirza Ibrahimov, *Azerbaijani Poetry*, P. 242.

61. See Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak's *Recasting Persian Poetry*, P. 7. Dr. Karimi-Hakkak gives detailed explanations about classicism and modernity throughout his work which is quite relevant to our discussion of Mo'juz here.

62. For the detailed and varied examples of the cohabitation of the old and new and a thorough understanding of the issue see Karimi-Hakkak's *Recasting Modern Persian poetry: Scenarios, of Poetic Modernity in Iran*.

63. My information is based Mr. M. A. Niqabi search and his personal involvement in the issue. I am thankful for all the information that he has provided me unsparingly.

64. *Mirza Ali Mo'juz of Shabustar: Newly Discovered Poems (Mirza Ali Mo'juz-e Shabustari: Taza tapilan She'rlar*, PP. 129-30. In Mr. Sheyda's edition the poem appears in PP. 38-40.

65. See Mr. Niqabi "Mirza Ali Mo'juz". Mr. Niqabi essay appeared in *Ark Daily* of Tabriz beginning with the paper's issue 52, Wednesday June 24, 1992 through July 25, 1992.

Chapter II

Major Trends of Mo'juz's Poetry: It's Modernist Aspects

In the previous chapter, while discussing Mo'juz's life, I made brief references to the modernist aspects of his poetry. In general, every innovative poet sets a milestone in the process of literary change: --the cancellation of worn-out paradigms and the invalidation of conventional modes and norms on the one hand, and the introduction of new codes and significations, and validation of unconventional modes of thinking and value systems on the other. Each poet's share in the process of change varies drastically. The forward movement in the process entails every author's leaning back on the old systems, codes and significations. With varying degrees, there is a co-mingling of old and new in every poet and author. Like many other innovative Azeri poets such as Raf'at, Sahir and Biriya, Mo'juz was very radical in his progressiveness. This issue will be discussed in full detail when we study Mo'juz in the context of the Iranian Constitutional movement. The depth of Mo'juz's poetic innovation will also be duly discussed in the next chapter when I examine selections from the poet and compare them with the works from other Iranian poets of the era. This chapter will explore the characteristics of Mo'juz which I term "poetic modernity."

Before I begin to discuss on modernism in Mo'juz, I would like to mention a point or two on the traits characteristic to the Azeri language, and their impact on Azeri poetry in comparison and contrast to Persian language and literature. Since the influence of Persian language and literature on the Azeri language and literature is extensive, and many Azeri poets have written in both languages, examining the differences will prove instructive. Despite many similarities in their evolution, the two literatures are different in many respects. A major difference is the folk orientation of Azeri literature, marked by simplicity, candor, vitality and vigor. Addressing the difference between the forms of the two literatures, Berengian draws a distinction between them with respect to their content as well.

The folk orientation of Azeri literature is not confined to form, but is reflected also in its freedom, vigor, and simplicity, which might be characterized as a positive attitude towards people and life. Azeri literature thus differs from Persian literature, which is predominantly court-oriented.¹

However, they both borrowed from the literatures of "Others," especially from Europeans. Due to the geographical location of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis' access to the

Russian and Turkish languages, Azeri authors constituted a bridge to import modern values and paradigms from the West. Azeri loyalty to the classics both linguistically and culturally was less binding compared to that of the Persian poets. Furthermore, it was easier for Azeris self-consciously to sever their ties with the classics. Relying heavily on the oral qualities and “candor”² of popular traditions, Azeri poetry enjoys stress rhymings such as alliteration, assonance and many onomatopoeic features. Azeri is too “strange, hard and unmaleable language that adopts so poorly to *a’ruz* molds.”³ As a result, like in other Turkic languages, native Azeri poetry was built on stress, strophic organization and grammatical rhyming.⁴ By breaking away from Perso-Arabic rules of prosody, Azeri poetry returned to its native rhyming schemes while borrowing from new codes and systems. A modern Azeri poet like Sharyar or Qarachorli attempts to force live pictures, sound and meaning into the frame of ordinary words. Each tries to build “a monument to spontaneity,” each creates a poem that coincides with an animated picture, sound and “passion of utterance.”⁵ This has been achieved by a number of Azeri poets such as Sahir, Biriya and Qarachorli in part, but it finds its full meaning in Shahryar’s poem entitled “My Sahand.”⁶ Thus Azeri poetry had to wait for a second generation after the Constitutional Revolution in order to produce a modern poem of high standard in form and content. Our claim that Mo’juz was a modern poet rests mainly on the poet’s self-conscious departures from the classics with respect to the theme. Although quite loosely, Mo’juz maintained the classical forms and patterns of poetry. He would dispense with *aruz* rules should they become hurdles in the poet’s expression of his ideas. In Berengian’s words putting the message across was more important to Mo’juz than correct observance of rhyme.⁷ Compared to many of his contemporaries, Mo’juz was very aggressive in his rebellion against the classics and very radical in his treatment of new themes. His main objective was to effect change and carry out the “proclaimed war” as forcefully as possible.

Mo’juz’s Treatment of the Classics

Mo’juz is very radical in his approach to the older values governing his community. He parodies even the older ways of enjoying life and appreciating arts and poetry. The poet makes a mockery of conventional devices of classical Persian poetry and shuns people’s conventional responses to them. In his mockery of classical *ghazals*, Mo’juz usually opens his poem in a solemn conventional tone, but he deflates the situation with his characteristic humor and introduction of every day absurdities. By doing so, the poet implies that with the lack of the basic necessities of life, those solemn postures can be nothing but pretensions. By giving credit to the conventional techniques of poetry, the poet

makes the fact tacitly known that there is no room for the art or poetry in the world of “beasts.” There is no human soul in the body or the “iron”⁸ skull of a self-mutilator.

In a poem entitled “Ghazal,” a parody of a Persian classical ghazal, the poet warns the nightingale about the fast approaching fall and the death of flower. In the opening six lines, a very conventional lyric theme is introduced --the shortness of spring, the transiency of the happy season and the briefness of the flower’s life. Once a traditionally oriented reader’s emotional response is mobilized, the poet deflates the situation with his references to the absurdities as well as the urgencies of real life, thereby leaving the reader embarrassed with his/her own naive and unrehearsed response. He destabilizes the culture, society, and elitism represented by the *ghazal* of the court. Here is the poem in its original version and its English translation.

Hamisha galmaz ey bubul gizil gul bu latafatda,
 Solar bir gun gulustan, gharg olarsan bahr-e mehnatda.
 Asar bad-e setam negah, khazan eylar gulustanin,
 Sikhar bir gun falak janin, sani goymaz o halatda.
 A bulbul misli parvana dolanma ku-ye janana,
 Dusharsan dardi janana, yanarsan nari firqatda.
 Chun oldi a’ shiq Iranli gul-e rokhsar-e samvara,
 Utuzdi var yokhin yeksar gumarkhane mohabbatda.
 Yeterdi eshq chun chaya, chita, mahuta, tirmaya,
 Alinnan uchdi sarmaya, dakhi ish galmadi katda.
 Elaki gordi ish yashdi, musibat haddidan ashdi,
 Dabanlarin chakip gashdi, diyar-e jahl ghafolatda.
 Mushajjar chadera ortar, yal-e makhmar giyar baji,
 Byabangard olar haji, gazar sahray-e ghurbatda.
 Gar iyna vermiya kafir, galar oryan Musalmanlar,
 Yatin ey jahil insanlar, durun ruz-e qiyamatda.⁹

O nightingale the delicate rose will not last long,
 the rose-garden will wither soon, and you’ll be drowned in a sea of sorrows.
 The tyrant wind will blow and blast your garden apart,
 you’ll be hard pressed, and your jolly time will expire.
 O nightingale do not roam the alleys of the beloved’s abode like a moth,
 you’ll be afflicted by the beloved’s scorn and will get burned in the fire of
 separation.

Since the Iranians fell in love with the rosy cheeks of the samovar,
 they lost their belongings all in the gamble of love.
 Since they developed love of tea, chintz, felt, and cashmere,
 their capital deserted them, no business was left in the villages.
 Once there was no business, the catastrophe exceeded any limits,
 they tied their boots, and fled the country leaving behind the land of ignorance in its
 deep slumber.

The sisters wear their checkered *chador* and velvet coats,
 the hajis roam the deserts in alien climes.
 If the pagan doesn’t provide needle, Moslems will be left naked.

Slumber on you ignorant beings, you'll get up only on the Judgment Day.

In the opening three verses --six lines--, the poet tactfully uses familiar classical signifiers and conjures all their significations for any person familiar with the culture and literatures of the region --the Persian literature being the dominant one. Traditionally, a Persian poet celebrates the advent of spring, the rose and rose-garden and nightingale's (*bulbul*) fascination with them. It is a standard procedure for a classical poet to bear with the severity of winter, cherishing the expectations and prospects of the season of roses and nightingale's ecstatic signing in the rose-garden. The arrival of roses is almost the revival of the poet's muse. A good example of such a motif is "Feel not Grief" ("*gham makhor*") of Hafiz, the celebrated Persian poet. "Feel not Grief" or some times called "The Lost Joseph" is as well-known among the peoples influenced by the Persian language and literature as Hafiz himself. I would like to quote the opening three verses --six lines-- of Hafiz as well and compare and contrast them with Mo'juz's poem.

Yusof-e gomgashte baz ayad be Kan'an gham makhor,
 Kolbe-ye ahzan shavad ruzi gulistan gham makhor.
 Ey del-e ghamdide halat beh shavad del bad makon,
 Vin sar-e shuride baz ayad be saman gham makhor.
 Gar bahar-e omr bashad baz bar takht chaman,
 Chatr-e gol dar sar keshi ey morgh-e khoshkhan gham makhor.¹⁰

To Kan'an comes the lost Joseph, feel not grief,
 the battered shanty of sorrows becomes a rose-garden, feel not grief.
 O grief-stricken heart ! Thy state will turn to better, be happy,
 this afflicted mind will return to an orderly state, feel not grief.
 Should the life endure to see the advent of spring, in the throne of the rose-garden,
 thou, the bird of melodies, will unfurl the canopy of the roses, feel not grief.

Hafiz's lines, although melancholy in tone, resonate good tidings and promises of better days to come. The familiar Koranic story of Joseph and his reunion with his afflicted father signifies the end of hardship. "To Kan'an comes the lost Joseph, feel not grief,/the battered shanty of sorrows becomes a rose-garden, feel not grief," the poet says. Then addressing the "grief-stricken heart," Hafiz states that "this afflicted mind will return to an orderly state." Finally, celebrating the return of the spring, the poet conveys the good tidings to the nightingale, "the bird of melodies," that "in the throne of rose-garden," it "will unfurl the canopy of the roses" singing its ecstatic songs. Hafiz's treatment of the commonly recognized signifiers is a very familiar and conventional one which invites a conventional response from its audience respectively. Mo'juz uses almost the same familiar signifiers, but manipulates the motif and reverses the situation to serve different

purposes. Let us examine Mo'juz's six opening lines as we did with the ones from Hafiz. Hafiz conveys the good news of the arrival of spring and the advent of better days. On the contrary, Mo'juz, addressing the same bird, conveys his warnings about withering of rose. "O nightingale the delicate rose will not last long,/The rose-garden will wither soon, and you'll be drowned in the sea of sorrows." While Hafiz promises that the battered shanty will be repaired, and the affliction will go away, Mo'juz says that the nightingale will be drowned in the sea of "sorrows" and afflictions. "The tyrant wind will blow and will blast your garden at once,/you'll be pressed hard, and your jolly time will expire." Reading Mo'juz's lines, one will not fail to see an angry and afflicted poet lurking behind his lines. Being victimized by social tyranny and "hard pressed" by the harsh realities of life, Mo'juz says that "the tyrant wind" will blast the rose garden, and the nightingale will be "hard pressed" its "jolly time will expire." Then Mo'juz ingeniously introduces another signifier well-known in Persian and Turkic literatures: --the moth. He warns the nightingale that it will be burned to ashes like a moth. "O nightingale do not roam the alleys of the beloved's abode like a moth,/you'll be afflicted by the beloved's scorn and will get burned in the fire of separation." As a modern man, who had lived a good part of his life in the cosmopolitan Istanbul and who had witnessed rapid social and environmental changes, the poet saw the challenges of modern life, and he recognized the need of keeping up with the changes. Mo'juz saw the old signifiers as being dumb and invalid. That is why in his "Ghazal," almost sadistically, he speaks about the lurking dire days. Depicting his terrifying picture of days to come, death of nightingale and moth, and the rose-garden being blasted by the tyrant wind, Mo'juz virtually pictures his own blasted life, the hardships in which he saw his people and his homeland. The motif of calling upon nightingale to take lessons from moth's fascination with candle is also a familiar one, but Mo'juz's warning to the nightingale to avoid the doom of moth is a modern approach. Sa'di, another celebrated poet, calls upon nightingale to learn its devotion to the beloved from the moth --an admirable trait and a virtue. Thus he says:

Ey morgh-e sahar eshq ze parvaneh beyamuz
kan sukhte ra jan shod-o avaz nayamad.¹¹

(O morning bird [nightingale] learn your devotion to the beloved from the moth,
who was burnt to ashes and let out no groans.)

Sa'di's exhortation to nightingale in learning the good lesson of devotion from the moth is a direct and serious one. The poet says that a real lover gets torched and burned without letting out any moaning. On the contrary, Mo'juz reverses the old idea. He warns

the nightingale to keep away from those obsolete approaches to life; and he makes a mockery of both the nightingale and moth; he admonishes the nightingale to be rational and keep away from the burning fire.

However, by the death of nightingale, the moth's burning into ashes and the rose-garden being blown away by the wind, Mo'juz serves a second purpose. He tries to imply that those mentioned classical symbols, signifiers and myths, have served their purpose in time, and they are no more valid in this modern age which has its pressing urgencies. Mo'juz pushes the old values, symbols and myths to destruction by making them face the realities and necessities of modern life and lets them to collapse before the very eyes of his audience. In order to make sure that his purpose has been served quite well, the poet deflates the serious tone of the six opening lines of his "Ghazal" by an unexpected reference to a seemingly trivial issue of the daily life. "Since the Iranians fell in love with the rosy cheeks of the samovar,/they lost their belongings all in the gamble of love," the poet injects with humor. Falling in love with "rosy cheeks" of a beloved and losing the whole life in the pursuit of love are common clich'es in the classical literature, but a reference to the rosy cheeks of a samovar mocks the old signifier. As we have seen earlier, Mo'juz quite frequently refers to the prevalent tea addiction among Iranian villagers, and its significance in the lives and productivity of them. Tea was newly introduced to the Iranian life at the time of Mo'juz. Usually the utensils for its preparation such as the samovar and cups were imported from abroad, especially from Russia. The tea and sugar were also imported materials. At the time of war and other adverse situations, people could not have easy access to them. Being addicts, they used to suffer when they could not obtain tea or sugar by any means.¹² Thus the poet says that ever since the Iranians fell in love with the rosy cheeks of the samovar "they lost their belongings all in the gamble of love." Mo'juz condemns Iran's turning into a society of consumers without producing anything. Besides his reference to the addiction to imported tea, sugar, samovar, saucers and cups, the poet mentions other imported materials such as chintz, felt and cashmere. Then he adds that Iranians' love of such imported goods made "their capital" to desert them, and "no business was left in the villages." As a result, the men-folk left the homeland in search of work and livelihood. "Once there was no business, the catastrophe exceeded the limits,/they tied their boots, and fled the country leaving behind the land of ignorance in its deep slumber," the poet says. To serve his third purpose at this point, Mo'juz forces the classical symbols and signifiers to face the challenges of the modern life and its urgencies. Enumerating the problems of the daily life and the reality of their

bitterness, the poet keeps reinforcing them against what is associated with classicism. As a result, the classical myths begin to sound absurd and meaningless. In the last couplet of his "Ghazal" Mo'juz sums up the whole purpose of his poem as his last message. "If the pagan doesn't give needle, the Moslems will be left naked./Slumber on you ignorant beings, you'll get up only on the Judgment Day" Sticking with the old values and paradigms is, in fact, continuing to slumber in Mo'juz's view.

Mo'juz Versus Tradition

One of the important modernistic aspects of Mo'juz is his rebellion against superstition and irrational tradition through the upholding of women's issues. Discussing on the women's issues serves as a tool for Mo'juz to rebel against tyranny of the past dogmas in order to subvert the irrational traditions. No poet of the Iranian Constitutional Era has looked into the problems of women and gender issues so deeply and closely as Mo'juz. In fact Mo'juz takes up women's issues in order to challenge obsolete paradigms and traditions. He engages the discussion on women to manifest how in a masculine society, oppressive superstitions and heresies are originated by a handful of men. Then the poet demonstrates how these falsities are promoted and perpetuated by prejudiced and ignorant men who elevate the originators of these heresies as guides and social leaders. Mo'juz considered himself one with the women he advocated. Mo'juz assumes a woman's point of view when he speaks for the women's cause, whereas, his contemporaries usually speak on behalf of women as men would do. They believe in the emancipation of women defined and ratified by men --like many slave drivers of the early America who advocated the slaves' emancipation. This is an issue which I will discuss in the third chapter through a comparative analysis of different poets. The other poets of the period were not able to isolate themselves from the fact that they were men and different from the class they wanted to represent. They maintain the states of overlords and are patronizing. Their advocacy of women's causes was part of their own entertainment. They did not represent women, but they represented themselves. They wanted to give certain rights and freedoms to women as long as they were sanctioned by men; furthermore, they wanted these rights to be given according to the will and whim of the patrons --the men. Mo'juz not only asserts his modernity by addressing modern issues, but he also directly criticizes icons of Persian and Turkish literatures such as Rumi and the authors of didactic treatises such as Khvaja Nasiru'd-din Tusi and many others because of their disrespect of women and their indifference to women's education. In his poem called "The Men," Mo'juz attacks the



—Ај араб, аллах сәһә әһәт еләһи, сү һәһә мәнһи һәм һәһә
 иһрәм, кәл сүһү да һәһүр ил һәһәм.

Plate 2: Depiction of Women's Life
 Mulla Nasreddin No. 3 April 21, 1906

views and patriarchal outlook of Iranian society. He attacks Rumi, the venerable *sufi* and master of Persian mystic poetry, for his vilification of all women because "his wife had proved to be unfaithful." In the concluding lines of the poem, Mo'juz refers to the faithfulness and the range of women's tolerance during the prolonged absences of men -- contrasting her with a husband who has a woman "at his side every night." Since the poem is one of the short pieces of Mo'juz, I would like to quote it in its entirety:

Bivafa chikmish zan-e Mullay-e Rum,
 Jomley-e oratlara eylar hujum.
 Malla soylarki mohaqqaq barmala'
 "Sag vafa darad nadarad zan vafa."
 Bir Zulaikha e'shq dalinja gedip,
 Sure-ye Yusof oni rosvay edip.
 Min nafar Yusof sana verram nishan,
 E'shq sahrasinda vermish bash-o jan.
 Altı yuz evli kishi ghurhatda dur,
 Ahli beyti atashi fiqatda dur,
 Sabr edar on il farag-e showhara,
 Ajnabi sokhmaz otag-e showhara.
 Har geja amma *vafali* showhari
 Eysho nush eylar yaniada bir geri.¹³

(Since Rumi's wife may have proved to be unfaithful,
 he assailed all women.

Mulla [Rumi] brazenly asserts:

"A dog is more faithful than a woman."¹⁴

A Zulaikha had fallen in love once upon a time,
 the Joseph Surah [of the Koran] still defiles her.

I can show you thousands of Josephs
 who have lost their body and soul in the desert of love.

Six hundred married men are in the alien land,
 in the fire of separation their wives are burning.

Ten years she [the wife] will patiently wait in the absence of the husband.

She will never force a stranger in that husband's bed.

But that *faithful* husband every night

Indulges in debauchery, a woman at his side.

Mo'juz stands up against the prevalent trend of admiring Rumi by criticizing a man who is considered to be the great sage, mystic and author of the bulky works in the Islamic world. With doubt and reservation, the poet says that "Since Rumi's wife may have proved to be unfaithful," he spares no one in his defiling the woman folk. "He [Rumi] assailed all women," and he "brazenly" asserted that "a dog is more faithful than a woman," ("*sag vafa darad nadarad zan vafa.*") Mo'juz criticizes male dominated stances and the region's negative stereotyping of women. Later, with his logical and rational

reasoning, the poet swims against the current of prevailing thoughts. He argues that once upon a time a mythical Zulaikha had fallen in love with Joseph, the Holy Koran is still defiling her. After he makes a reference to the familiar Koranic story which has made deep roots in the classical literature of the region, the poet offers a new reading of the old story. He says that the story pitches accusations against Zulaikha from the very beginning. "I can show you thousands of Josephs/who have lost their body and soul in the desert of love," the poet argues. Demythologizing the myth, the poet turns it upside down and tries to measure it by the standards of real life. He argues that there are more Josephs to fall in love with Zulaikhas than the other way round. Later on, Mo'juz proceeds to present concrete examples and statistical figures from real life, arguing that Iranian married men do commit adultery and spare nothing in their disloyalty against their wives, defiling the codes of a married life. Mo'juz's figure of "six hundred married men" may be just a random number or an approximate figure of the Iranian married men who were around in Istanbul.¹⁵ "Six hundred married men are in the alien land," and "In the fire of separation their wives are burning," the poet says. With honesty and courage, the poet displays the life of the husband and wife in separation. He gives a typical and familiar picture which can be true of any society irrespective of its religious or cultural setting. "Ten years she [the wife] will patiently wait in the absence of the husband./She will never force a stranger in the bed of the husband," the poet says courageously. Whereas the same wife's "*faithful*" husband every night/indulges in debauchery, a woman at his side."

Mo'juz is very selective in his wording of the lines. He speaks of the wife who "will never push a stranger in the bed" which belongs to the husband. The line implies that many men do force strangers to bed which belongs to their wives. I have italicized the translation of the word "*vafali*" meaning "faithful" because it has been put inside quotation marks in the printed version of the poem. There is some intended irony here. The word should not to be taken literally. For many Iranian migrants as well as those who traveled as pilgrims to Syria and Iraq, adultery --in its lawful (*sigha*) and unlawful forms-- used to be a change, a treat and an entertainment. Even today, many Iranian men under Islamic governmental rule who are constrained in their lechery and debauchery, indulge in heavy drinking after they cross the border check point to Turkey while traveling out of Iran, and their trip to the brothels in Istanbul knows no limit. In the quoted poem, "The Men," Mo'juz tries to show how the mythical story of Joseph and Zulaikha, its various treatments during many centuries by the classical authors and the story's significations can prove to be invalid in their encounter with the realities of modern life and its intricate problems. If there

is only one mythical Zulaikha who wanted to seduce Joseph, Mo'juz can identify "six hundred" real Josephs who not only try to seduce Zulaikhas, but force them into the bed which belongs to their wives. He also tries to imply that the paradigms and epistemology according to which the people and their acts are measured in his country are faulty, and they are based on male dominated prejudgments. Everything in such a community is designed by men and for men.

As mentioned in the case of Rumi, Mo'juz often blames famous Iranian authors and pedagogists for their canonizing irreligious, un-Islamic thoughts and heresies, leading the posterity astray. In a very long poem called "Let the Girls Read,"¹⁶ Mo'juz deals almost with all the problems of his country --focusing on girls' education specially. As mentioned earlier, Mo'juz's poetry shows that the poet considered every social problem part of a whole system. That is why once he starts to speak on one social issue, the other issues find their natural flow into the discussion. Each single poem of Mo'juz is usually a picture of his society in its totality --the women's issue being the dominant one. In his "Let the Girls Read," Mo'juz blames Khvaja Nasiru'd-din Tusi, the famous Shi'a philosopher and pedagogist, for his spreading and canonization incorrect ideas and approaches toward education, especially about women. After urging his compatriots to establish schools for girls, build hospitals and help their community, he praises a number of clerics who lent their support to the education of girls. The poet scolds the people for not obeying the clerics in their new stand of supporting women's education. He advises his people to use the opportunity and establish schools for girls. He continues to say that they have no excuse for delay, "let your daughter read like your sons." "Now you see the clergy is not faulty,/ you people do not have the enthusiasm," he adds. Later, Mo'juz admonishes his people not to follow Khvaja Nasiru'd-din Tusi's baseless assertions about the education of women.

.....
 Olma misl-e hakim Khvaja Nasir,
 Etdma nisvana zulmi kabir.
 O deyer giz garak gala jahil,
 Tabkh eda evda koftay-e gabil.
 Garche bir filsufimish Tusi,
 Kheyli sahib vogufumish Tusi,
 O gaman eylamish ki bad akhlaq,
 Orati eylar okhuyub yazmag.
 Heyf, sad heyf Khvajenin tanzil
 Eylamish sha'nini bu fikri alil.
 Yazdi chun Khvaja bu khorafati,
 Surdi meydana mallalar ati,

Aldi har giz ala qalam qad-zan,
 Etdi takfir sheykh oni foran.
 Istadi bir giz okhya Rusi,
 Dedilar getdi din-o namusi.
 Yikhdi Iranlinin evini bu soz,
 Vatan owladi galdi okuz.
 Okhudi Mushafi Ibadullah,
 Bilmadi ki nalar deyer allah.
 Gozadi allarin qunuta Nigar,
 "Va qina rabbana azabannar,"
 Yemali nar zann edip nari'
 Nar otdur nabilsin o qari. (Lines 101-124)

.....

(Don't be like hakim Khvaja Nasir.
 Don't commit tyrannical acts against women.
 He says your daughter should remain ignorant,
 stay at home and concern herself with cooking.
 Although Tusi was a philosopher,
 a man of many sciences,
 he thought that writing and reading
 would make the women immoral.
 Alas, a hundred times alas that such a sickly thought
 would bring contempt to Khvaja's name.
 Ever since Khvaja wrote down such superstitious words,
 the clerics took them as the word of God.
 Any girl who took pen or pen-cutter in her hand,
 the sheykh excommunicated her at once.
 A girl wanted to read Russian,
 they said that her faith and morality were gone.
 This word ruined the house of all the Iranians,
 the children of the homeland became like bulls.
 Ibadullah recited the Koran,
 not knowing what the word of God was.
 Raised her hands up in her prayer Nigar [my love]
 Chanting *wa qina rabbana azabannar*"(god protect me from the fire of hell.")
 She assumed *nar* was the edible pomegranate,
 How could she have known *nar* means fire.
)

It is interesting that Mo'juz advises his people to disobey a man whose thoughts on education have been quoted for hundreds of years by many other authors as the guidelines in the Iranians pedagogy books. In fact Tusi's *Akhaq-i Nasiri* has served as one of the caonical works in Shi'a Islam in respect with education as well as social administartion. Jan rypka speaks of him as "an extremely unusal moralist."¹⁷ In his chapter on the "Managing and Administration of Family and Children," Tusi expressly says that the girls "should be barred from reading and writing, they should be taght the arts suitable for



Э. С. Ибраһимов

Р. С. Әбдішев

12 жашында мұсылман қызы 12 жашында жәһуди қызы
Plate 3: Contrasting a 12-year Moslem Girl with a 12-year Jewish Girl
Mulla Nasreddin No. 16 April 21, 1907

women."¹⁸ Mo'juz courageously rises up against an authority such as Tusi and warns the people that if they follow him, they will "commit tyrannical acts against women." Because Tusi "says your daughter should remain ignorant," stay at home, do the cooking and be one of the men's possessions. Then the poet says that although Tusi was considered a philosopher and "a man of many sciences," his very "thought that reading and writing/would make the women immoral" disqualifies him from being obeyed by the other people. "Alas, a hundred times alas that such a sickly thought/would bring contempt to Tusi's name," the poet says. Later, Mo'juz refers to the canonization and establishment of a superstition in the community by pointing to the baseless recommendations of Tusi concerning the education of women. The poet puts the blame of women's illiteracy and their ignorance on Tusi because, according to Mo'juz, he was one of the earliest authorities who believed that women's education would make them immoral. Moreover, since Tusi and people like him were known as great philosophers and men of erudition, their dissemination of lies and superstitions not only would not be challenged, but they would be taken "as words of God" by the future generations. Thus, even centuries after Tusi's death, any girl who held a pen or pen-cutter in her hand would be excommunicated by a pious sheykh. "A girl who wanted to read Russian/they [would say that] her faith and morality were gone," the poet complains. Later on, Mo'juz says that Tusi's words on the education of women and their reflections in the literature and culture and epistemology of Iranians all caused in the degeneration of the people and their becoming illiterate and ignorant. "This word ruined the house of all the Iranians,/the children of the homeland became the bulls," the poet claims. Addressing issues of high importance concerning the genesis of superstitions in relation to woman's education, Mo'juz temporarily abandons his usual humor and sounds direct and unequivocal. However, in his approach to the effects of those superstitions, he assumes his usual humor after he leaves behind his direct dealing with Tusi.

In reference to his people's lack of understanding of Koran they recite, and their ignorance of the meaning of the daily prayers they perform, Mo'juz says: "Ibadullah recited the Koran,/not knowing what the word of God was." I do believe that the poet deliberately selected a man's name such as Ibadullah out of the many names. Ibadullah is a very common name among Azeri villagers, yet the poet has another point to make with the literal meaning of the name. An Arabic word, *ibadullah* means "the servants of the God." Mo'juz makes his audience observe the irony of the name and recital of the holy book and the word of God. The servant of God does not understand the master's words. The poet

tries to depict the contradiction between the intention and the action of an illiterate believer. In fact, causing the people to remain illiterate in some way is making them primitive pagans of pre-Islamic Jahilliyya era. Ironically, Ibadullah has been barred from talking to his God because of the illiteracy promoted by the people who claim to be God's vicegerents on earth; they are in charge of establishing relations between *ibadullah* (servants of God) and the God. In the proceeding lines the poet points at another example of such action performed daily by the people. This time, he chooses a woman's name, Nigar, which also signifies "my lady love" and used by many classical poets and moderns as well. Mo'juz says that *nigar* (my love) raised her hands up in her prayer and chanted the Arabic verse of *va qina rabbana azabannar* (O God protect me from the fire of hell.) Again, the poet plays with the meaning of the word *nar* which means "fire" in Arabic. The same word in Azeri means "pomegranate." In a sympathetic as well as humorous tone, Mo'juz comments that the poor woman assumes *nar* is "the edible pomegranate." "How could she know *nar* means fire," the poet adds. Mo'juz's pun on a name such as Nigar signifies yet another point. By his choice of the name, he also wants to say that the *nigar* of the traditional poets being lavishly flattered for her beauty with all its loaded significations does not understand what she speaks. She takes fire for pomegranate. Through this kind of demonstration, Mo'juz quite often calls his audience to rethink about the rituals they do out of habit --not knowing the significance of their deeds.

Mo'juz's Concern with Gender Issues

Mo'juz is the only poet of the Iranian Constitutional Era who dealt with the victimization of women as the foremost problem in Iranian society. He was able to draw a parallel between his own people's minority status and the status of women as sub-class citizens. Yet the tyranny oppressing the women living in rural areas of Azerbaijan such as Arvanag and Anzab¹⁹ was far from the experience of a Tehrani woman. Mo'juz depicts different layers of tyranny and deals with them with a sense of urgency. He stressed that women's education must take priority over that of men. There is an unmistakable implication in his poetry that male domination in the society has proved to be a failure and has resulted in victimization and the abuse of women. Thus, the poet repeatedly insists on changing the existing political and social orders by asserting that an uneducated mother will never be able to rear civilized children. "If the illiteracy of Tukaz [a common female name in Azeri villages] is not overcome, /her son will never be inclined toward civilization,"²⁰ he says. Tukaz represents a typical Azeri woman who appears through out his *divan* (collection of poetry) standing the tide of social injustice. Beneath the surface of Mo'juz's

banters and jibes in his references to the naivete and gullibility of women folk, there is sympathy and a recognition of the roots of the problem. Perhaps the poet's advocacy of the women's cause is the most dominant theme in his poetry; he tries hard to prove that the prevailing laws and customs governing marriage are unfair and inhuman because they treat women like cheap commodities. He attacks under-age girls' marriages to older men arranged by their parents.²¹ In a poem entitled "Will Become," the poet depicts a graphic picture of women's deplorable lives in his country and criticizes men's prerogative right of divorce. In his typical blend of jest, irony and seriousness, he depicts the miserable condition of women and expresses his desire for the reversal of the existing situation. I would like to cite the poem in its entirety and show how the poet achieves his objective through blending banter, irony and apparently trivial issues with those serious and important ones.

Gorasan ey khoda bu khalq na vaqt
 Mayil-e kafshi dik daban olajakh?
 Falchiya! tasa bakh gorakh na zaman
 Bajilar ruznamakhan olajakh?
 Ta be key div-e jahl-o istibdad
 Rahbar-e firqey-e zanan olajakh.
 Falchinin tir-e makrina jahil
 Bajilar ta be key nishan olajakh?
 Na waqt giz okhur yazar allah,
 Yarab Iranda bu hachan olajakh?
 Ta be key va'izin khorafati
 Mane'a-e rezq-e in-o an olajakh.
 Ta be key bir tika chorakdan otur
 Qiz asir-e filan filan olajakh?
 Ta be key binava kasib qizinin
 Irz-o namusi rayegan olajakh?
 Ta be key bu zavalli makhluqa
 Bimurruvatdar hokmran olojakh?
 Ta be key bir safih-e namardin
 Zulmi altinda baghri gan olajakh?
 Elaki nari shahvati sondi
 Mahzari qaziya ravan olajakh,
 "Boshadim qaziya talaqini ver,"
 Dabayen qalbi shadman olajakh.
 Ta be key bu achilmamish gullar
 Pardeh-ye ghunchada nahan olajakh?
 Ta bekey bu yazikhlarin jigari
 Dard sillila natavan olajakh?
 Elmo sana't navaqtajan bizdan
 Morghi anqa kimi nahan olajakh?
 Jahli taqdis edan akhuddaremez
 Na zaman khalqa mehraban olajakh?
 Gorasan bu mukhaddarati ajam

Na zaman shohre-ye jahan olajakh?
 Olajakh bir guniki madrasalar
 Achelib qizlar emtahan olajakh?²²

(O god when will these people show
 their inclination toward high heeled shoes?
 O fortune-teller! Look into your bowl, and let us know when
 the sisters will become newspaper readers.
 How long will the demon of ignorance and despotism
 be the guide of the women folk?
 Until when will the naive sisters be the target
 of the fortune-teller's sorcery?
 O God! When will the girls read and write?
 O God! When will such a thing happen in Iran?
 Until when will the superstitions of the preacher
 disrupt the People's pursuit of sustenance?
 Until when, for the sake of a piece of bread,
 will a girl remain the captive of a culprit?
 Until when will the prestige and chastity
 of the poor's daughter remain a free commodity?
 Until when will the merciless despots
 govern these wretched masses?
 Until when will a girl's heart bleed
 under an abusive oppressor's tortures?
 Who, after the fire of his lust is extinguished,
 to the presence of the *qazi* will proceed and say
 "I divorced her *qazi*, you issue the verdict,"
 the culprit will be happy in his heart.
 Until when will these suppressed flowers
 remain hidden in their buds?
 Until when will the lungs of these helpless ones
 be consumed by the pains of tuberculosis?
 Until when will the science and industry
 be inaccessible to us like the phoenix.
 When will the servants of sacred ignorance
 become kinder to the masses?
 When will these symbols of oriental chastity
 acquire their world fame?
 Will the day arrive that the schools will open
 and our girls will sit for the exams?)

Characteristically, Mo'juz opens this poem by referring to an apparently trivial issue, working his way to the very core of life and demonstrating its importance in relation with other issues in human life. Although with a good deal of jest, the poet wants to know how long his people will continue their belligerence toward women's high-heeled shoes. In Mo'juz's time, high-heeled shoes signified Western culture, wearing them was considered to be immoral and aping the infidels. Addressing his question to God, the poet wants to get the right answer from the very source where all rules of conduct, religion and

morality originate. Such a question implies that all the irrational pietists and prejudiced fundamentalists are wrong in their opposition to one kind of heel over another. Thus he mocks at the idea of tying one's religion or morality to such trivialities. However, although a trivial issue in itself, it is a matter of high importance for the poet when he considers the issue as part of the social restructuring and changing of values and paradigms. The high heels of women's shoes signify the beginning of the end of the old order, it means a change in women's life and social structure. They signify the change in the dress code, they mean disturbing the *status quo* which may involve many other changes in women's life such as their education and emancipation. They signify the collapse of the old order. It is not by chance that in the lines right after his question to God, Mo'juz asks the fortune-teller to look into her/his bowl and let him know when "Will the sisters become newspaper readers?" Thus high heels signify the literacy of women in Mo'juz's value system.

It is an irony that Mo'juz asks the fortune-teller to find out the good news of all the changes that he would like to see them happening in his homeland. The poet, quite often, complains about the gullible women falling prey to fortune-tellers. In Mo'juz's terms, fortune telling stands for charlatanism, and it persists solely because of people's gullibility and ignorance. That is why the poet, ironically, seeks the advice of the fortune-teller. Yet, on the other hand, he wants to know until when the same sisters will remain "the target" of the fortune-teller's sorcery. Before I continue with further examination of the poem, I would like to briefly discuss about fortune-tellers.²³ I also want to quote some other lines from Mo'juz which may explain how prevalent was the women's consulting of fortune-tellers, and I will illustrate how the poet approaches the issue. In some of his other poems, Mo'juz speaks of male fortune-tellers who also were known as *naf-nevis* or *gubah-yazan* (navel-scribes). It appears that in Vaygan, a village near the poet's birth place of Shabustar, was a navel scribe in Mo'juz's life time.²⁴ The women, who could not have children for reasons unknown in those days, used to go to the navel-scribes and had their navels inscribed. As a result, they bore children. According to Mo'juz the very existence of a navel-scribe was the result of women's illiteracy. Mo'juz taunts the men who do not want their wives or daughters to appear in public wearing high heels, but they allow them to uncover their bellies in a private room to get their navels inscribed by a licentious navel scribe. In one of his poems entitled "Insha'allah," speaking about many changes which the poet desires to see happening in his country, he says:

Gar olar e'lm-o fazl unasa anis,
Yikhilar khammani naf-nevis.
Dakhi getmaz Tukazzibani khabis,

Janibi Vayigana inshallah.²⁵

(If knowledge and learning become women's companion,
the house of the navel-scribe will be ruined.
The vicious Tukazziban will never go
toward Vaygan, God willing.)

Mo'juz's poetry is replete with the affirmations that all the social miseries are the product of women's illiteracy for which the male folk are to blame. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, "Tukazziban" or "Tukaz" is a common women's name in rural areas of Azerbaijan. Instead of mentioning the real name of his own wife or those of his friends', Mo'juz refers to them as "Tukaz." Mo'juz usually does not blame women for their ignorance since he sees it as the effect of many causes. He usually blames men for the ignorance of the women folk because they were the decision-makers, and male domination was unquestionable. Yet, it appears that in the quoted lines, he does not spare even women for the heinous act of uncovering their navel in a private room to be written by a charlatan navel-scribe. By speaking of Tukaz as "vicious Tukazziban" (*Tukazzibani khabis*), the poet pours out his anger at such gullible women. Yet the poet addresses men mainly when he says that "the house of navel-scribe will be ruined" if women become literate --allowing women to learn how to read and write was conditioned by men's authority and power. Men's prejudice and ignorance prevented women from schooling and obtaining knowledge. Moreover, a navel-scribe used to be a man as well. According to my reading of Mo'juz, the poet pours out his wrath against women when he speaks on issues such as the navel-scribe. It appears that the navel-scribe's act violates the codes of decency and defiles the poet's pride as a man. In a different poem called "O Tarafda-Bu Tarafda" (On That Side-On This Side), comparing the life in the two sides of the Araxes River, the poet attacks the women who become the pray of the navel-scribes. Although he does not forfeit his usual humor, the poet pours out his anger by saying:

Biliram nadur khiyali hazaratin ey mohibban,
Diyisiz ki khidmat eylar biza Kabla Malla Qurban,
Yazilinsa nafi nisvan chokhalar nufusi Iran,
Vatana olar olarin khadamati binahayat.

Fagat ey haji dadashlar chun edar nazara falchi
Kalami latifi nafa, kirikhar bichara falchi,
Qalami vurar davata, chikhadar dubara falchi,
Tarafeyna var bu karin zahamati binahayat.

Ola gar savadi yaran mashadi Tukazzibanin,
Gabaghinda orat achmaz gobayin filan aghanin,

O Tukazzibani mujrim gobayin yazanda Qanun,
Edar hifz abruy-e hazarati binahayat.²⁶

(I know what these reverend preachers mean, o my friends,
You say that Kabla Mulla Qurban does a service to us,
Should he write on the women's navels, the population of Iran will grow,
they do limitless services to the homeland.

O you *haji* brethren once the fortune-teller beholds
the white delicate cabage of the navel, the poor guy will be lost,
He will plunge the pen into the ink-pot time and again,
It will cause troubles for the two sides limitlessly.

O friends! Should Mashadi Tukazziban be literate,
as a woman, she would never open her navel in front of such and such a man.
When the tradition renders that sinful Tukazziban get her navel written,
still, she would preserve the reverend preachers' honor.)

Prior to the quoted stanzas, Mo'juz imagines himself sitting in a mosque listening to the admonitions of a preacher. It is expressed in the poem that the preacher warns the people against allowing the girls to learn read and write. "The ladies who learn how to read and write will write letters to their lovers," the preacher warns his audience. "Any-one who puts a pen into his daughter's hand, will be remorseful for his deed on Judgment Day," he continues. At this juncture, Mo'juz depicts himself getting up in protest and addressing the people with chagrin and cynicism, he wants to know why the preacher does not admonish the navel-scribe "to press the plume of his pen slowly/since it hurts the women exceedingly." Then he sarcastically continues that he knows what the preacher means by his admonishments, he means to say "that Kabla Mulla Qurban [a navel-scribe presumably] does a service to us" because if "the women's navel" is inscribed "the population of Iran will grow," and they will do "limitless services to the homeland." Then quite suggestively the poet depicts the navel-scribe's encounter with the "white delicate navel" which makes "the poor guy" lose his control. "He will plunge the pen into the ink-pot time and again," the poet says. The Pen and ink-pot symbols and the poet's suggestive treatment of the scene leave no point undisclosed about the sexual encounter and insemination of the supposedly infertile woman. Mocking at the blindfold pietism of his "*haji* brethren," the poet says "once the fortune-teller beholds/the white delicate cabage of the navel, the poor guy will be lost."²⁷ Then the poet adds that "He [navel-scribe] will plunge the pen to the ink-pot time and again," which will "cause troubles for the two sides limitlessly." By "troubles for the two sides," the poet refers to the gossips and social disgrace which commonly hovered around the idea of getting one's navel written and

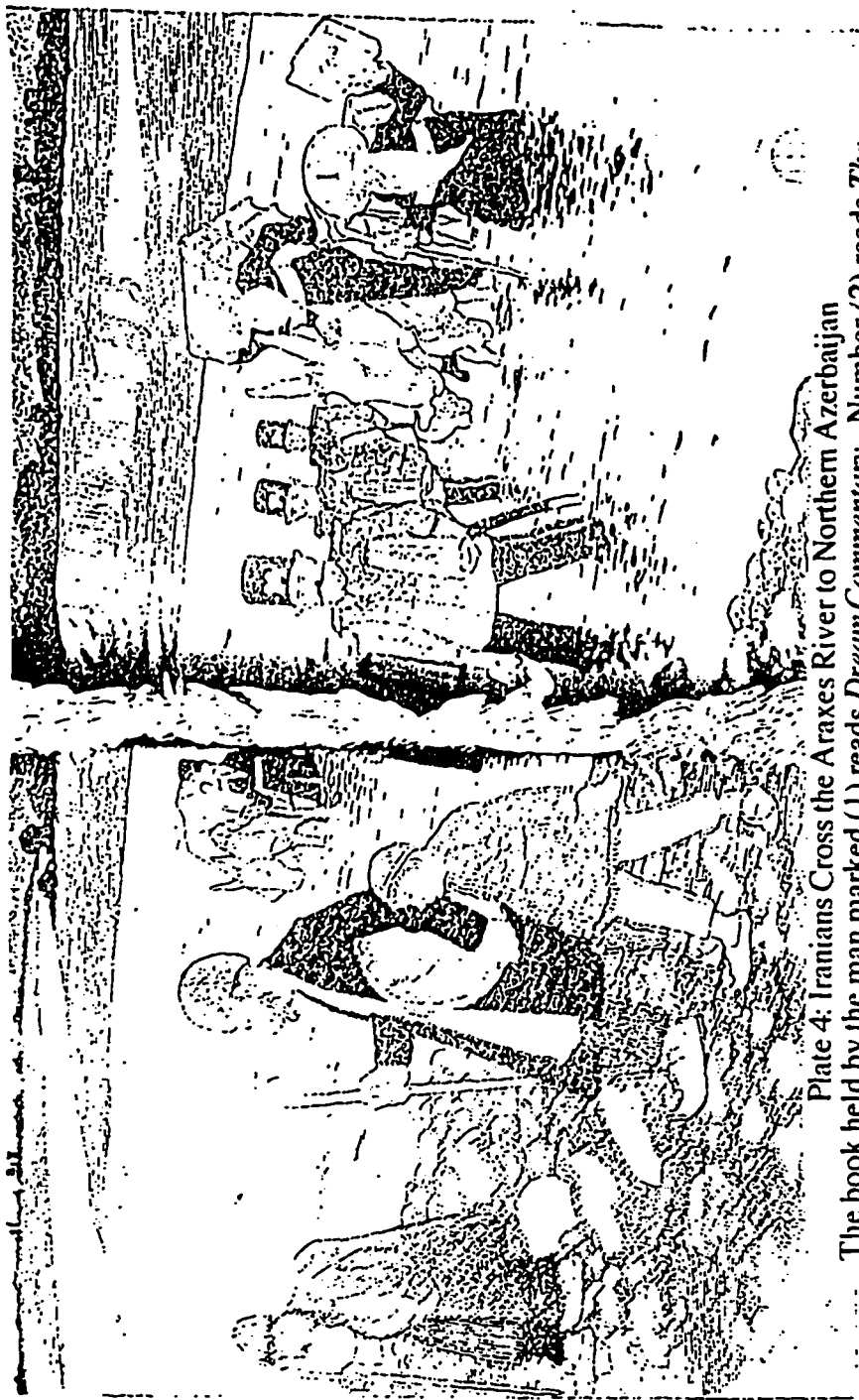


Plate 4: Iranians Cross the Araxes River to Northern Azerbaijan
The book held by the man marked (1) reads *Dream Commentary*. Number (2) reads *The Book of Charms*.
Mulla Nasreddin No. 5 May 5, 1906

having children through the act. The navel-scribe was not immune from becoming the target of jealousy and grudge of the husband whose wife was inseminated in this way.²⁸

In the lines quoted from Mo'juz's "O Tarafda-Bu Tarafda," the poet establishes a tie between the preacher's admonishments and the mockery "services" of the navel-scribes for the "homeland."²⁹ The poet's complaint about the preachers pertains the fact that they kept preaching the same old words. They propagated the same old values. They knew that fortune-tellers were charlatans, and the navel-scribe issue was a shame to the community, yet they did nothing to prevent the illiterate women from becoming the prey of the charlatans. In fact, they served charlatanism by keeping women illiterate. In the quoted lines, Mo'juz says that even if the last resort for having a child becomes getting a woman's navel inscribed by the so-called navel-scribe, a literate woman would handle the situation in a wiser and more descent manner. She would manage to preserve the honor of the men and *hazarat* (the honorable preachers.) As the most desired and effective remedy to solve the problems like fortune-telling and the navel-scribe, the poet advocates the necessity of women's literacy. "O friends! Should Mashadi Tukazziban be literate,/as a woman, she would never open her navel in front of such and such a man," he says. However, should the circumstances render navel scribing necessary, a literate Tukazziban, although "sinful," will handle the situation more wisely. "When the tradition renders sinful Tukazziban get her navel inscribed,/still, she would preserve the reverend preachers' honor," the poet states. The quoted lines comprise only few examples in which we find Mo'juz illustrating his stand in dealing with the people's prevailing belief in fortune-tellers. I would like to return to my initial examination of the poem, "Will Become."

There is a strain of seriousness in Mo'juz's ironic question, asking the fortune-teller to look into his/her "bowl" in order to find out when "will the sisters become newspaper readers." Through his question the poet implies that a fortune-teller is an authority of his/her own rights, and his/her word has been established as part of the popular lore. In the absence of any scientific data, forecasting or rational planning, the word of a fortune-teller is an authentic source to learn about the future. Any scientific approach or rational judgment is doomed to rejection since it has no established base in the community. Thus the fortune-teller's word was needed in order to know "How long will the demon of ignorance and despotism/be the guide of the women folk." In fact any superstitious act or person is a part of "the demon of ignorance" in Mo'juz's semantics. "Ignorance and despotism" are the two words recurring time and again in Mo'juz. The poet believes that ignorance perseveres because of superstitious people's acts and ideas; by despotism Mo'juz

refers to the government and its power enforcement apparatus. Thus by asking the fortune-teller "How long the demon of ignorance and despotism/will be the guide of the women folk," Mo'juz refers to the fortune-teller him/herself as "the demon of ignorance." It is not by chance that in the succeeding lines, he asks "Until when will the naive sisters be the target/of the fortune-teller's sorcery?"

As we have already witnessed, Mo'juz saw only one way out of all the social problems: --educating his people in general and the women in particular. That is why in lines 9 and 10, the poet reaches the point where he asks his axial question: "O God! When will the girls read and write?/O God! When such a thing will happen in Iran?" According to Mo'juz, the arrival of such a day --girls' reading and writing-- is the end of heresies and superstitions. That is why in lines 11 and 12, we find the poet asking "Until when will the superstitions of the preacher/disrupt the people's pursuit of sustenance?" Mo'juz saw superstitious acts and thoughts antithetical to the literacy of men and women --the cause and effects of one and another at the same time. Once he hails the day in which the girls will read and write, the countering side of the binary will naturally aim at the poet's reference to "the superstitions of the preacher." Mo'juz attacks the preacher because he preaches defunct values, represents an obsolete order and advocates paradigms which the poet recognizes as hurdles on the way to change. After speaking on the social ramifications of women's illiteracy, Mo'juz moves to discuss an illiterate woman's plight as a wife, a daughter and member of the family. Deprived from any social role or function, an illiterate girl could only wait for the day when a man would knock on her father's door and take her as his wife --if she were lucky enough. Ironically, although such an occasion was supposed to be an auspicious day, yet it could only be the opening of another catastrophic chapter in the life of many women. A woman's suffering from the tortures of an abusive husband was an endemic problem of the Iranian society. According to Mo'juz, a woman used to tolerate the unbelievable tortures in her matrimonial life only because she was in need of sustenance. "Until when for the sake of a piece of bread/will a girl remain the captive of a culprit?" the poet asks. In our further study of Mo'juz's treatment of gender and women's issues, we will notice that the poet deals with the victimization of women and their sub-class status more than any other social problem. Yet in his treatment of women's plights, and the depiction of the tyranny they were doomed to succumb to, the poet exposes different layers of the injustice and tyranny to which different classes of women from different regions of his homeland were subjected. Besides depicting the problems of women in general, Mo'juz shrewdly digs into the core of different categories of people's

lives. He maintains that the problems of an urban woman are quite different from those of an Azeri villager woman. He shows that an abusive husband in the rural regions tortures his wife differently from that of an urban husband. He shows that the endemic problems are confounded by poverty and lack of amenities. Thus he tries to depict the hellish picture of an illiterate woman's life confounded by poverty. He makes his reader to note that a poor man's daughter is a cheap "commodity." "Until when will the prestige and chastity /of the poor's daughter remain a free commodity?" he questions.

The poet's reference to the manifold tyranny to which the women in the poor families were subjected finds its direct ties with "the merciless despots" ruling the country. Mo'juz does not see poverty as an issue isolated from many other problems engulfing his homeland. He usually deals with ignorance, superstition, lack of sanity, poverty and despotism as reciprocal causes and effects, and speaking about one item of the whole package naturally leads to the poet's reference of the other. The poet does not see the tyranny of a "culprit" husband any different than the despotic rule of his country. According to Mo'juz, the despotic ruler is the culprit husband and *vice versa*. Thus "the merciless despots" ruling the "wretched masses," of lines 17 and 18 by no means are different from the abusive oppressors of lines 19 and 20 under whose tortures "will a girl's heart bleed." "Until when will a girl's heart bleed/under an abusive oppressor's tortures?" the poet asks.

Establishing associations between the despotic rule of the country and the despotic rule in the family, Mo'juz also points at some of the canonical laws which lent support to the despots leaving the oppressed totally helpless as a result. Moreover, the despotic rulers have not failed in using the leverage of religious leaders. Mo'juz depicts the picture of a woman in utmost helplessness when he alludes that the verdict of *qazi* will go against her. After the fire of his lust is extinguished, the guilty husband will proceed "to the presence of *qazi*" and will say "I divorce her *qazi*, you issue the verdict." Thus "the culprit will be happy in his heart," the poet says. In his many other poems, the poet elaborately speaks about the miseries which followed the divorce in his country where a woman could do nothing beyond taking care of her husband and children. In this particular instance, the poet abruptly clips the issue and does not go on to further detail. Perhaps by his brief statement that the husband goes to the *qazi* and says "I divorce her *qazi*, you issue the verdict," the poet wants to demonstrate how the whole system worked against the helpless, and how the issue appeared simple to the husband. After he had used a woman, usually a virgin, he simply could dispose of her without difficulty. The husband's remark to the *qazi*

shows that every aspect of the divorce issue was pretty clear both for the concerned parties as well as the authorities in the community. It appears that the dastardly husband's move was quite a standard procedure. He beats and tortures, and the *qazi* issues his divorce verdict, and he is "happy in his heart" after all.

After depicting the prevailing unfair marital rules and the end of a woman's matrimonial life, the poet refers to women's life in relation to the social codes by asking "Until when will these suppressed flowers/remain hidden in their buds?" Although the flower image is a very familiar one in both Azeri and Persian literatures, but the "suppressed flowers" remaining "hidden in their buds" is a modern treatment of the old image. The image of green outer part of a bud wrapping around its colorful petals is a signification of women's veil and their multi-layer coverings. In lines 27 and 28, Mo'juz refers to one of the prevailing health problems in his Iran. Tuberculosis took a heavy toll on the lives of both men and women in those days. Mo'juz sees issues of health and lack of sanity as the effects of people's illiteracy, and he tends to treat the prevalent contagious diseases such as tuberculosis, chicken pox and whooping cough as the products of people's illiteracy. The poet also tries to depict the government and community leaders' indifference toward the people in dealing with these diseases. "Until when the lungs of these helpless ones/will be consumed by the pains of tuberculosis?" the poet asks. After his reference to the deadly diseases, the poet expresses his yearning for familiarizing his people with science and industry. As mentioned earlier, the poet saw no way out of those miseries other than familiarity with science and industry and dissemination of knowledge among his people. "Until when will the science and industry/be inaccessible to us like the phoenix?" the poet says. Once more, in dealing with the realities of the daily life, the poet conjures a very old and familiar signifier such as the phoenix. By his reference to '*Anqa*,³⁰ the phoenix, Mo'juz aims at two targets. Firstly, he tries to earn some degree of credibility and authenticity by holding to a classical symbol recognized in the traditions of the literatures of the region. His audience would not attribute authenticity to his words if he did not appeal to their values and tastes. A signifier such as the phoenix would connect his people to their past and associate them with large body of the classical lore. Without establishing such associations with the anterior, the poet could see no place for himself. He needs the mythical bird in order to conjure all its recognized significations. Secondly, the poet implies that all the past icons should be broken one-by-one. In fact, science and industry are not quite as inaccessible as one might think. Many peoples have tried and succeeded in attaining them. In his many other poems, Mo'juz tries to provide his audience

with concrete examples from life in the European countries, and he urges his people to follow the examples of the Europeans. Usually by his depiction of the German achievements or the upheavals and changes of Istanbul, the poet stipulates that there should be nothing inaccessible left to the modern man –the phoenix is pretty much accessible if a nation tries to get it.

After the implication that the phoenix can be made accessible, and it can be brought down from its mythical mountain, the poet appeals to "the servants of sacred ignorance" to be "kinder to the masses." In order to access "the phoenix" of science and industry, the poet needs to pave the way by appealing to "the servants of sacred ignorance" to change their attitudes and be kinder to the people. "When will the servants of sacred ignorance/become kinder to the masses?" the poet asks. As mentioned earlier, Mo'juz continually insists upon the people in the garb of religious leaders and preachers to guide the masses and speak on the issues which were relevant to their lives. He urges them to articulate loudly and clearly that superstitions such as believing in fortune-tellers or disgusting acts such as self-mutilation in Moharram are not parts of religious traditions.³¹ Mo'juz considered such abstinence of the religious leaders in speaking out against superstitions as cruelty and unkindness toward the masses. The final four lines of the poem are, in fact, the fulfillment of the poet's desires should all the hurdles on the way of women's freedom and literacy are removed. "When these symbols of oriental chastity /will acquire their world fame?" the poet asks in lines 33 and 34, referring to the women of his homeland. There is an implication in the lines that "the symbols of oriental chastity" or the women of his country have not been given a chance to prove their chastity, and they have not been tested. Wrapped in her *hijab* (traditional covering) and confined in her house, a woman's chastity or lack chastity cannot be proven. Moreover, no matter how chaste and virtuous a woman may be, if she is not allowed to become a social being, no one will observe and appreciate her chastity and virtues. The concluding two lines come as a reward rather than questions to be answered. The form and tone of the questions are quite different from the preceding ones. They sound as if the poet longs for the arrival of the desired day. The poet does not use question words such as when (*na zaman*) or until when (*ta be key*), he says "Will the day arrive when the schools will open/and our girls sit for the exams?" Repetition of the semantic element pertaining to the future time in the language of origin *olajag* (will it happen) is an indication about the certainty of what is going to happen, and the poet's wishes to come true.

"Will Become" is a typical poem of Mo'juz since the poet's major recurrent themes

--women's illiteracy, and their victimization, the tyranny of rulers and those in the garb of clergy and people's ignorance of science and technology-- are wrapped together in one package. As mentioned earlier, Mo'juz considers all social issues as being intertwined. No single relationship can be isolated from the totality of the system. No social problem can stand alone. One problem is conducive to another and one issue is the product of another. That is why we can find almost no poem in the poet's *divan* which addresses only a single social problem. When he starts speaking about one issue, the other issues are naturally conjured. By the same token, the poet could envision his Utopian world with a single change which would disturb the established balance and reconstruct the old relationships into a new system.

Mo'juz As a Man Who Can See the Female Side of the Issues

Discussing on the social problems and issues concerning women, perhaps Mo'juz is the only Iranian poet of the era who can see them as seen from the women's point of view as well. When he speaks about the difficulties of traveling in the cold and inclement weather, he does not see the difficulties only from men's point of view who goes on trip leaving his family behind. Mo'juz also gives women their chance to speak the difficulties while being left alone. In a relatively long poem named *Ashiq-e Parishan*,³² (Distressed Lover,) the reader finds the poet late in the night writing poems. Tukaz, his wife, is awakened and gets angry with the husband who disturbs her sleep.

Yazanda bu ghazali nisfi leyl geshmishdi,
Yavash yavash isheghi tar olurdi lampanin.
Khanim ayildi bu asnada gordi man yaziram,
Dedi du yat kishi tozli gala galamdanin. (Lines 27-30)

(While writing this poem, it was past midnight,
little by little the oil of the lamp ran low.
The wife was awakened and saw me writing,
she said "may your pen-case remain dusty, get up and go to bed.")

The limits of my work do not allow me to quote the entire poem. From the beginning to line 27, the poem is a lyric which also intends to mock some of the symbols and diction of the classical poetry. In fact the poem's opening lines run against the main body of the poem. The poet, who is writing a lyric in admiration of the beloved's *durr-e dandan* "the pearls of teeth," *ka'be-ye zanakhdan* "the mekka of the chin," *zolf-e mar-e syah*, "the locks of black snake," ironically finds his angry wife protesting his being up so late and disturbing her sleep. This triggers an argument between the two in which all the family problems are dragged in, and the poem moves from a single domestic scene to a

discussion of general social problem. In the course of their argument, both parties have references to the social injustices, and they talk on them over and over –each one accusing the other. The wife’s implicit wish concerning the poet’s death, “may your pen-case remain dusty,” is followed by her remarks about women’s victimization and miseries in the society. During their argument Tukaz has a reference to the problem of men’s travel to foreign lands and leaving their wives alone to face the difficulties of life at home without having any one to help them. The issue serves as a prelude to be followed by other social injustices the women in the poet’s time and place were subjected to. Complaining that they had never seen each other before marriage, she says:

Bizi satir siza bir kalla gand ichun malla,
O gand ishlana ya rab yasinda mallanin.
Mani sana verani haq gorum zalil etdsin,
Kabin kasanda dili lal oleydi aghanin. (Lines 43-46)

(The clergy sells us [women] to you [men] for the sake of a sugar lump,
o god! May that sugar be consumed in the funeral of the clergy.
May the perdition fall onto one who gave me to you.
May his tongue be dumb while reciting the marriage vows.)

By “sugar lump,” Mo’juz refers to the sugar made in cones, they usually weighed around 3 Kilograms which physically and symbolically played a special role in the marriage traditions of the Iranians. Most often a sugar cone or two used to be part of the gift or the payment which was given to the clergy for his ceremonial recital of marriage terms. The poet’s wife, unhappy with what has proved to be her matrimonial life, wishes that sugar cones to be used in the “funeral” proceedings of the clergy, and his tongue be “dumb” while his recitation of the ceremonial marriage terms. These words of the wife makes the poet angry. Thus with an apologetic tone saying that she made him lose his temper, the poet takes on to defend himself.

Bu talkh soz mani part etdi bilmadim na diyam,
dedim vafasina la’nat tamam-e nisvanin.
Behishti adana ey kash hazrati Adam
Oleydi kor yuzun gormiyeydi Havvanin.
Jahanda bulmadi orat nadur ushag nadur
Khosha sa’adatina hazrati Masihanin. (Lines 49-52)

(These bitter words of hers made me flare up, I lost my control over my words.
“Damned be you unfaithful women,” I said.
I wish Adam got blind in the Garden of Eden
before he could even see the face of Eve.
A blissful life was that of Jesus
who never got to know what a wife could mean or what was a child.)

Cursing the unfaithfulness of women and blaming man's suffering in this world on Adam are common clichés in Azeri and Persian literatures. Yet Mo'juz works very ingeniously in wishing Adam blind "before he could even see" Eve's face. Unlike other poets who blame man's fall totally on either Adam or Eve, Mo'juz opens a third possibility --an ambivalent sharing of the sin. According to Mo'juz, Eve was guilty of eating the forbidden fruit and offering it to Adam, and Adam was guilty of looking at the very face of Eve in the first place. Later on, Mo'juz juxtaposes the two biblical male figures, Adam and Jesus. The poet's establishment of an antithetical relation between Adam and Jesus is also interesting because one lived a very long life and planted the human race in the world, and the other one lived a very brief life and "never got to know what a wife could be." There is also an irony of making the difficult and short life of Jesus desirable or "blissful." However, during their argument, the husband recounts how much he spends on the sustenance and clothing items of the wife which makes her more furious, and she comes back to the main theme of the poem by putting her finger on her husband's leaving her alone. She further complains:

Shabustar ahlina kafir da olmasin arvat,
Na kheyri var biza bu ismi bi mussamanin.
On il gedar, on gun galar vilayatda,
Na beyla vaslin oleydi na eyla hijranin. (Lines 59-62)

May even a pagan not be a wife to a man from Shabustar!
What is the use of this name which has no meaning.
He goes off for ten years, only stays at home for ten days,
I never desired this union, I never wanted that separation.

By allowing the wife to tell her side of the story in connection with the men's traveling in search of "a piece of bread," Mo'juz exposes all the dimensions of the problem --while always being sympathetic toward women. "Distressed Lover" in its totality is a mockery of the classical lyric which was discussed earlier in this chapter by choosing a shorter poem from the poet. The imaginative and lyrical aspects of the early part of "Distressed Lover" clashes with the remaining part of the poem which deals with the real problems and difficulties of life. The imaginary and false relationship between the lover and the beloved in the early 26 lines is contrasted mockingly with the reality of the couple's lives in the remaining 62 lines in which they speak nothing about the beloved's *durr-e dandan*, the pearls of teeth, *ka'be-ye zanakhdan*, the mekka of chin or *zolf-e mar-e syah*, the locks of black snake. They only complain about the miseries and social injustices to which both parties are subjected to.

Mo'juz's concern with women's problems is so dominant that it would not be an exaggeration to name him "the poet of women's causes." Mo'juz is almost inexhaustible in his treatment of women's issues. I will close my discussion on the poet's approach to women's issue by my comments on his very humane and emotional poem called *Maktublashma*,³³ "Correspondence." Like many other poets of the Constitutional era, Mo'juz always manifests his responsibility to social issues through his ingenious ironies, lampoons and parodies, yet there are occasional outpourings of feeling and lyrical emotion through out his poetry. In his "Correspondence," the poet reveals unfulfilled dreams he had for his country and his thwarted desires for holding a beloved's hand and walking in a park or boulevard. My reason for analyzing the poem at this point is to demonstrate how the poet is tactful and fair in his treatment of women when they are placed against their counterparts --men.

Shabustardan Istanbula

Ahundi chorak qimati yokhdur nigaranlukh,
 Qat chay alaram gunda faqat birja qiranlukh.
 Chit burda bahadur galan olsa besh on arshin
 Gondar mana ham gizlara shallukh va tumanlukh.
 Galsan guneystana amoghli gechinarsan,
 Bakhsan sozuma al ala verrukh da gazannukh
 Galsan vatana on tumana bir inak alsan,
 Bir tola gayitdersan agar birda samanlukh,
 Manda sagharam ham peyinin yappa gayerram,
 Altin silaram, sanda otar eyla chobanlukh.

Istanbuldan Shabustara

Bu amr mohaqqaqsi ki biz millati Iran,
 Khortana va ham ghuli biyabana inannukh.
 Afsus ki nisvani vatan gormadi bir gun,
 Irani min uch yuz sana jahl etdi garanlukh.
 Ta amgizi var gozda ishikh tanda tavana,
 Har zahmata, har mehnata gurbatda dayannukh.
 Yatdim man, uzan sanda hala vaqta galir chokh,
 Subhi madaniyyat achilan damda oyannukh.
 Vaqta ki tulu'a eyladi khurshidi taraqqi,
 Onda ki ishikhlandi bizimda abadanlukh,
 Manda galaram yanuva ya'ani o zaman ki,
 Na sanda taravat gali, na manda javanlukh.
 Man saggali san zulfi hanayila boyarsan,
 Verrukh o zaman al-ala bulvari dolannukh.
 Mo'juz utanir gikhmiri saggali diyillar,
 Na, bizda haya olsa jahalatan otanlukh.

From Shabustar to Istanbul

Bread is a sigh a loaf, don't worry about us,
 each day I buy sugar and tea for only one *rial*;

but chintz is expensive here, send us five or ten arshins,
 to make the girls and me pajamas, if some one happens to come here.
 Cousin! If you come to Guneystan, you'll manage to put up with,
 if you listen to me, we'll earn our livelihood helping each other.
 A cow we'll buy for ten tomans if you come back home,
 we'll have a stable built and a shed for straw by its side.
 I'll milk the cow, and I'll make cow-dung cakes [for our fuel]
 I'll clean the stable, and you take the cow to pasture as a shepherd.

From Istanbul to Shabustar

It is a proven fact that we Iranians,
 believe in ghosts and goblins and giants of the deserts.
 Alas, the women of the homeland could not see a happy day,
 since Iran was darkened by thirteen hundred years of ignorance.
 Cousin, until sight is not banished from my eyes, and my body is able,
 I will stand all the toils and troubles in this foreign land.
 The dawn is still far away, I slept, you go to sleep too,
 when the dawn of civilization breaks in our land, we'll both wake up.
 When the sun of advancement rises,
 and our development is illuminated,
 I will come to you, it will be the time,
 when neither beauty will be with you, nor youth with me.
 With henna I'll color my beard, and you'll color your locks,
 hand in hand along the boulevard we'll stroll.
 They say Mo'juz is ashamed of shaving his beard,
 no, if there is anything to be ashamed of, it is our ignorance.

The poem comprises two rhymed letters; one being sent from Shabustar to Istanbul by a female cousin, the other is a response sent from Istanbul back to Shabustar by a male one. Giving credit to a Shi'a belief that the marriage between two cousins is permitted and preferred, Mo'juz picks up his prototype couple as two cousins married to each other.³⁴ The female cousin in the poem tries to convince the male one (her husband) to come back home. She starts her argument with some good at the same time ambivalent news that bread is pretty inexpensive, and there nothing to worry about. The poet says that the price of bread is "your sigh," (*ahundi*) which both means it is inexpensive and expensive at the same time. Speaking of the price of something as a sigh means that it is almost free; with letting a sigh out you will get what you want. It becomes expensive when a commodity is acquired at the expense of physical and emotional torture of some one. A sigh is usually let out because of frustration and emotional distress. Thus *ahundi* may mean that you will get your desired commodity at the price of your physical and emotional torture. Then the female cousin writes about the second important commodity in Iranian village life --sugar and tea. She says that she buys them on a daily basis for only to the amount of one *rial* a day. This also implies that life is not quite easy since sugar and tea are not commodities to

be bought on daily terms. They usually are bought weekly, or monthly if not on a half-yearly or yearly basis. It is obvious that the female cousin cannot afford to buy the commodity which is usually stored up in normal conditions. However, her request for chintz and her acknowledgement that it is expensive in Shabustar is indicative of the fact that every thing is difficult where she is. As a responsible wife in the Iranian culture, by her earlier assurances, she only tries to keep the morale of her husband high in the foreign land.

After describing about life in Shabustar, the female cousin writes in her kind rustic tone: "Cousin! if you come to Güneyistan, you'll manage to put up with,/if you listen to me, we'll earn our livelihood helping each other. /A cow we'll buy for ten tomans if you come back home,/we'll have a stable built and a shed for straw by its side./ I'll milk the cow, and I'll make cow-dung cakes [for our fuel]/ I'll clean the stable, and you take the cow to pasture as a shepherd." Depicting a pastoral life typical of the Azeri countryside, the poet itemizes the routine chores of a rustic couple. The female cousin tries to convince her husband to come home so that they can live their simple and meagre life against all the odds. She has no expectations from life beyond a cow, a stable and a shed to store the fodder of their cow. The poet depicts her in her primitive innocence, typical of an Azeri villager woman. She is quite satisfied with what she says. Even in dividing the household chores, she accepts a more difficult share than she assigns to her husband. She tries to make her husband to come back and live with her. In the response sent from Istanbul, the poet chooses the male cousin as his mouth piece to speak about the problems at home and the extreme tyranny that the women are subjected to. Being literate and having been exposed to the world outside Shabustar, the male cousin's expectations of life would vary widely from those of his wife. In his response to his wife, he neither addresses the issue of the basic commodities, nor does he speak about the plans for buying a cow. He opens his letter dealing with social problems and closes his letter with a picture of themselves (the two cousins) holding each other's hand but aged and withered by the tyranny of the problems.

The first issue the male cousin picks up is Iranians' belief in superstitions --their dream life as opposed to the reality of the modern world. "It is a proven fact that we Iranians,/believe in ghosts and goblins and giants of the deserts," he complains. The second idea which comes forth is women's victimization in the Iranian society. With a sense of loss the male cousin (the poet) Says: "Alas, the women of the homeland could not see a happy day." In fact, the poet devises the opening line by expressing that the Iranians

live a dream and unreal life in order to show a contrast between such a life and the reality of women's plight in such an environment. The sense of loss conveyed in the line suggests that the poet's life in Istanbul and his awareness of women's life outside Iran made him think about the plight of the women in homeland. He may have suffered emotionally when he contrasted the miserable life of an Azeri villager woman (his mother, sister or wife) with that of a well to do woman in Istanbul. The opening lines of the male cousin's letter, his complaint about the miseries of Iranian life and the concluding graphic picture of an old man with henna colored beard holding the hand of his aged female cousin can be taken as a strong evidence. In line four the male cousin has a reference to "thirteen hundred years of ignorance" which he says has "darkened" Iran. By this statement, the poet means the Arab conquest of Iran in 640s and its gradual Islamization during the following centuries. I personally do believe that statements such as these by many other Iranian thinkers of the period are simply rash judgments.³⁵ I will come to this issue in Chapter III when I address on the issue of "women's unveiling" dealt with by the poets of the Constitutional era. Many poets of the period have associated the darkness of ignorance with the black veils or *hijab* of post-Islamic Iran. They have wrongly thought that the women's covering, *hijab*, in the contemporary form was introduced by Islam. Whereas, to my own knowledge, *hijab*, in the form which existed at the time of Mo'juz, was one of the degenerative influences of Iranians on early Islam while undergoing its urbanization process.³⁶

Without reference to the concerns of the female cousin about bread, sugar, tea or chintz, the male cousin continues to say that: "Cousin until sight is not banished from my eyes, and my body is able, I will stand all the toils and troubles in this alien land." There are a number of ideas implied in the lines. One implication is that male cousin cannot stand the existing situation of his homeland, he prefers to "stand all the toils and troubles" of the foreign land till the day that "sight is not banished from" his eyes, and his "body is able." Another implication may be the fact that despite the difficulties, he wants to stay in the alien land and work hard in order to improve the condition of his family. It also means that his stay in the foreign land will help the arrival of "the dawn of civilization" which the poet refers to in the following lines. I will discuss this issue further in Chapter IV when I speak about the influence of the modern views through the trips and travels of the Iranians to Istanbul and other places outside Iran. However, the lines also imply that the life in the exile by no means is easier. Thus desiring no sign of hope and no token from the advent of the "dawn of civilization" in the near future, the male cousin goes to sleep advising the female cousin to sleep as well. "The dawn is still far away, I slept, you go to sleep

too,/when the dawn of civilization breaks in our land, we'll both wake up," he writes.

It appears that Mo'juz is writing the presumed letter or the poem during the late hours of night after which he wants to sleep. Thus he draws a parallel between the real dawn and the dawn of civilization which he expects to break in his country. By advising the female cousin to sleep until the advent of the dawn of civilization, the male cousin implies that hibernation is preferable to life under the existing situation in Iran. Imagining the auspicious breaking "dawn of civilization" in his homeland, Mo'juz creates one of his beautiful depictions: "When the sun of advancement rises, and our development is illuminated, /I will come to you, but it will be the time,/when neither beauty will be with you, nor youth with me." In fact, the male cousin's letter meets its two ends by the pathetic tone of the concluding lines. The sense of loss, implied in the opening lines with the use of a word such as "alas," surfaces itself with stronger notes pertaining the thwarted desires of the male cousin and the lost lives of both. The imagined reunion of the couple when no "beauty" is left with the wife and no "youth" with the husband is charged with a sense of disappointment, frustration, betrayal and being swindled. With a pathetic tone, the poet depicts the picture of the victimized couple holding each other's hands, strolling the boulevard with the desire of recapturing the life from which they have been robbed. "With henna I'll color my beard, and you'll color your locks, /hand in hand we'll hold, and the boulevard we'll stroll," the male cousin writes in a resigned tone. The lines demonstrate that the poet had watched happy looking couples strolling in the parks and boulevards of Istanbul and had hankered after similar moments. In the two concluding lines, the poet lets his audience know about the identity of the male cousin by associating Mo'juz with him. "They say Mo'juz is ashamed of shaving his beard,/no, should we be ashamed, we need to be ashamed of our ignorance," the poet says. Establishing relations between the henna-colored beard of the male cousin and Mo'juz's being "ashamed of shaving," the poet indicates that the he-cousin or Mo'juz will have no beard. He is no longer ashamed of shaving his beard. If there is anything to be ashamed of, it is the ignorance and backwardness of his people. In some way, the male cousin (Mo'juz) tries to avenge for the life which has been robbed away from him by changing the scene and transposing the male cousin of henna-colored beard with a cleanly shaved Mo'juz. He lets the mask drop from the face of the male cousin of henna-colored beard and exposes the clean-shaved face of Mo'juz hiding behind it. The poet's vindictive assault against the ignorance of his people can be taken as another token of the poet's anger and retaliation for the lost life.

Mo'juz's Advocacy of Science and Knowledge

As mentioned earlier Mo'juz considered the illiteracy of the masses as the fundamental problem on which all other difficulties hinged. He placed the blame of ignorance on the religious leaders who constituted the literate class of the community. In the poet's criticism of Khvaja Nasiruddin Tusi, although briefly, I tried to present how Mo'juz viewed the people like him as planters of superstitions and spreaders of heretic views. According to Mo'juz, those early authors were responsible for the creation and popularizing of heresies because others in the garb of clerics with seemingly lesser knowledge and discretion picked up their words, and without giving any thought to their validity, they disseminated them among the masses. Considering many of the people in the garb of clergy as the source of the problems in his community, Mo'juz takes quite a radical stand in his attacks on superstition, baseless dogmas, or the authority of the people in clergy garb, and for the same reason, he had many enemies and many friends as well.³⁷ In his attacks on enemies, at times he softens his position, or he introduces a compromising version of his own to replace an undesirable situation. He might swear at a self-acclaimed *seyyid*, a descendent of the prophet, and associate him with all the vices in the society, yet he would like to kiss "the threshold" of the true *seyyid*'s door.³⁸ He would advise his wife to knock down a clergyman and trample his body, yet without the help of the living Imam, he would not be able to walk away from it. In a poem called "Mo'juz's Will,"³⁹ the poet envisions himself dead and gives instructions to his wife, Tukaz Khatun, to take the necessary measures. He needs no charity, nor does he need alms to be given away, but a very simple burial which is a necessity. The poet has no cash, no land and no property. He has only a house and whatever there is in that house which can support Tukaz Khatun only three years if she does not want to work. After three years, the poet advises his wife to take her *chador* off and walk to the market place in order to findwork because "all the sisters used to walk around that way at the time of the prophet." Without viable work, Tukaz Khatun will starve, and the poet would be "uncomfortable in the Garden of Eden." Thus any exhortation of the preacher against what the poet wills should never be heeded.

Uzun gostarma khalqa ta varam man bu vlayatda,
 Man olsam chaderan ach goy yera aylashma khalvatda.
 Na chayim var na kahrizim, na nagdim ey Tukaz khatun,
 Faqat bu evdi bu ashya manimki mali dowlatda.
 Uch il baslar sani bu ev, bu ashya gormasan bir ish,
 Galarsan aj sora, na-rahata ollam bagh-e jannatda.
 Na kheyrat isdiram sannan, na halva, na gabir dashi,
 Faqat ver dot gran ghassalila gorkana albatta.

Uzun ach, gilchini gostarma, chikh bazara mardana,
 Ki bu now'ei gazardi bajilar ahd-e risalatda
 Agar va'iz diya achma uzun, satma Firak sapi,
 Khuda zamindi rezga, aylash evda, koynayin bitda,
 Doshunnan bir tapik vur, yikh yera, chikh sinasi usda,
 Gafasin az gunahi boynuma ruz-e giyamatda.
 Agar Gordun gujun chatmir, ach aghzin, yum gozin, soyla:
 "Haram olmush tijarat orata hansi shari'atda?"
 Chorakchikhanasi yokhdur khudavandi ta'alanin,
 Ki har kas soyliya "ajam" eda nazil o sa'atda.
 Agar bazzaz oleydi, haq verardi bir turman koynak,
 Geyardi aynina yokhsul dollanmazdi o halatda.
 Agar attar oleydi gondarardi chayila gandin,
 Ichardi gizdirardi janin ayyam-e borudatda.
 Agar qassab oleydi yokhsulun solmazdi gul rangi,
 Verardi la mahala bir jiyar vaqtie zaruratda.
 Na khayyatam tikam jama, na mirzayam yazam nama ,
 Na akhundam ziyam mufda, aylasham ali emaratda.
 Na huriyyat verirsiz na ghaza, insaf edin akhar,
 Gafasda gush yiyar dana, yashar taht-e asaratda.
 Zuhur-e hazrat-e qayim yakhindur olma ya Mo'juz,
 Bulut altinda galmaz dayiman gun, khalq zulmatda.
 Gorarsan tez o molani bir alda hokm-e huriyyat,
 Bir alda tigh-e khunin, murtaje'a khake mazallatda.⁴⁰

Do not show your face to the people as long as I am in this world,
 after my death, open your *chador*, throw it away, do not be a recluse.
 Neither have I water wells, nor river, nor cash,
 I have got nothing more than this house and whatever is in it.
 This house and its contents will suffice three years if you do not work, but after that
 you will starve, and I will not be comfortable in the Garden of Eden.
 I want no alms, no charity; not even a tomb-stone,
 off course, give four grans to the mortician and sexton.
 Uncover your face, but do not expose your legs, walk like a man out to the market
 place,
 since at the dawn of Islam, sisters walked the same way.
 If the preacher says: "Cover your face, don't show off to be a Frankish,
 "God is responsible for the sustenance of creatures, sit at home, and kill the lice of
 your shirt,"
 knock on his breast, kick him down, walk over his chest,
 trample his body, I'll take responsibility on the Judgment Day.
 If you find yourself no match for him, shut your eyes and open your mouth, swear
 at him and ask:
 "in which religion is working forbidden for women?
 "God the Almighty has no bakery shop
 "to send down a loaf of bread when you say 'I am hungry.
 "If the God were a draper, He would send a shirt and pair of pants,
 "The poor would wear, and their bodies would not be exposed.
 "If God had a grocery store, he would send a little sugar and tea,
 "the poor would drink and warm their bodies during the cold days.
 "If the God were a butcher the face of the poor would not get pale,

"at least, he would send down liver in their day of need.
 "Neither am I a tailor to make dresses, nor a *mirza* to write letters,
 "nor am I a *mulla* to eat for free and live in a mansion.
 "You neither set me free nor give me food, be fair, at least,
 "the bird in the cage is given a food while kept captive."
 O Mo'juz do not die, the advent of the living Imam is at hand;
 the sun will not stay hidden behind the clouds everlastingly, leaving the world in
 darkness.
 Very soon, you'll see the Lord coming, in one hand the edict of your freedom,
 in the other, the blood-soaked sword and the reactionary fallen on the earth of
 perdition.

In the first line of the poem, advising his wife, the poet wants Tukaz Khatun not to uncover her face as long as he is alive. However, in the second line, she is advised to throw away her *chador*, the traditional covering, and make a "manly" appearance in the market place. The reason why the poet wants his wife to appear in public after his death, is perhaps he wants to avoid further confrontations with his detractors. Moreover, like many Iranian men, the poet does not feel to ask his wife to work in the absence of urgent financial need. However, the poet's death will make the wife's work outside the house necessary. The poet has no cash, no land or property; he has only a house and whatever there is in that house which will support Tukaz Khatun only three years. "This house and its contents will suffice three years if you do not work, but after that, you will starve, and I will not be comfortable in the Garden of Eden." the poet says. As for the expenses of the poet after his death, they only need four *grans* to be paid the "mortician and sexton." The dead poet needs no charity, no alms to be given away, and even he needs no tomb-stone. "I want no alms, no charity; not even a tomb-stone, of course, give four *grans* to the mortician and sexton." Mo'juz says. Mo'juz's denial of alms and charity is an issue of interest which needs to be addressed here. With his rejection of the traditions and rituals in respect to his death he implies that those acts of charity are meaningless in a community which is infested with many urgent needs. It also may imply that the poet lacks the conviction in the way those rituals are performed. However, if those acts of charity are intended to help in earning a comfortable place in the other world, the poet is already in the "Garden of Eden." In line five, the poet tells his wife that the house and the things in it will only keep her three years, and she will starve if she does not work after that time, and as a result, he "will not be comfortable in the Garden of Eden." Mo'juz's remark about being in the Garden of Eden is also interesting because according to his pietist detractors a man with ideas and thoughts such as Mo'juz would go to hell the moment he shuts his eyes. Moreover, Mo'juz presence in the Garden of Eden makes the position of his pietist

opponents problematic. It raises the question that if Mo'juz is making himself comfortable in the Garden of Eden, where his opponents will be after they are dead? Obviously, they cannot be in the same place with Mo'juz.

Mo'juz cancels his injunction to "do not show your face" at the opening line with his command of "uncover your face" (line nine), and he provides plausible reasons for doing so. "Uncover your face, but do not expose your legs, walk manly out to the market place,/since at the dawn of Islam the sisters walked the same way," the poet advises his wife. Besides the possible reasons which already I mentioned concerning his injunction about the removal of his wife's *chador* at the poet's life time, it appears from his other works that the poet, expected a social change in his country. There is an implication that because of the change in the attitudes of people; they will support Tukaz's walking in the market place in the event of a clergy's barring her from doing so. His admonition to his wife to take tougher position in the event of the clergy's stopping her from doing business could be construed to that aim. However, his statement concerning the fact that "the sisters walked the same way" at the time and presence of the prophet is the last resort which no body should stand against it. Thus the poet's setting his standard for the removal of the traditional *chador* is based on the belief that at the dawn of Islam women dressed in the way he advises his wife to do. This statement of Mo'juz runs contrary to the idea of line four of his "Correspondence" when he says that "Iran was darkened by thirteen hundred years of ignorance." However, many progressive thinkers of Mo'juz's time have upheld the unadulterated Islam of the prophet's time in order to find a way out of the prevailing superstitions.⁴¹

Harnessing himself with equipments of the Islam at its nativity, Mo'juz is emboldened in his challenge of the people who wore the garb of the clerics, but they propagated superstitions and heresies. In response to preacher's admonitions: "Cover your face, don't show off to be a Frankish,/God is responsible for the sustenance of the creatures, sit at home, and kill the lice of your shirt," the poet says, "Knock on his breast, kick him down, walk over his chest,/trample his body, I'll take the responsibility in the day of judgment." As implied earlier in the poem, Mo'juz's abode will be in the Garden of Eden after his death despite the poet's opposition to the pietists. In line 14 also Mo'juz assures his wife about having a strong case in the Day of Judgment. He assertively says that he will take the responsibility for Tukaz's knocking down the preacher, walking over his chest, and trampling his body. He further advises his wife "If you find yourself no match to him, shut your eyes and open your mouth, swear at him and ask: 'In which

religion is working forbidden for women?" In Azeri the expression of shutting eyes and opening mouth means to spare nothing and say what ever one wants speak. Once the eyes are shut, one would not feel any shame thus s/he would spare nothing. The poet advises his wife to pour out her life long suppressed wrath. The poet's questioning about in which religion is working prohibited, again implies that the preacher belongs to no religion and his presumption about being a Moslem is erroneous. Then the poet tries to repudiate the preacher's claim that "God is responsible for the sustenance of the creatures, sit at home, and kill the lice of your shirt ." Using very simple and concrete examples from daily life, the poet tries prove that without working and laboring the God's responsibility in providing sustenance of the creatures is questionable.

Like a story teller of an oral community, Mo'juz tries to make his point by using common-place examples from daily life. From lines 17 though 24, the poet lays out the picture of a market place that a villager would find when s/he traveled to a nearby town in Mo'juz's time. In a simple demonstration, the poet proves that the God's guarantee of his creatures' daily bread is earned by hard work. "God the Almighty has no bakery shop/to send down a loaf of bread when you say 'I am hungry,'" the poet avers. "If the God were a draper, He would send a shirt and pair of pants,/the poor would wear, and their body would not be exposed," he continues. In his roster of the guilds, Mo'juz would not miss naming a grocerer and a reference sugar and tea. The poet quite often speaks of his addiction to tea, and its important place in the life of Iranian villagers. In the lines 25 to 28, the poet admonishes his wife to make his point quite clear by speaking out her most desperate situation. She is advised to say that there is no way for her to stay at home. She has not been taught any profession to work from home. "Neither I am a tailor to make dresses, nor a *mirza* to write letters,/nor I am a mulla to eat for free and live in a mansion," she is advised to say. Again Mo'juz hits at the clergy by his reference to their profession by asking his wife to say that "I am not a mulla to eat for free and live in a mansion."

The desperate call for freedom comes in lines 27 and 28 when Tukaz Khatun finds herself in a prison where the jailer intend to starve the captive. "You neither set me free nor give me a food, be fair, at least,/the bird in the cage is given a food while kept captive," she is directed to say. In the concluding lines, 29 and 30, the poet speaks for himself. He does not want to die because the long-awaited living Imam is going to make his appearance soon. "Mo'juz do not die, the advent of the living Imam is at hand;/the sun will not stay hidden behind the clouds everlastingly, leaving the world in the darkness," the poet says, "Very soon, you'll see the Lord coming, in one hand the edict of your freedom,/in the

other, holding the blood-soaked sword and the reactionary fallen on the earth of perdition." The expectation for the advent of the living Imam in Shi'a Islam is some thing similar to the Second Coming of Christ. Once more, the irony of Mo'juz's statement is quite clear. The people in the garb of clergy presume that they are the agents of the hidden Imam on earth; Mo'juz, an apostate from their point of view, lines himself with the Imam to fight against his supposed and self-acclaimed deputies.

Like many free-thinkers of his time, Mo'juz fails to pinpoint the fine line which might be drawn between superstition and religion. In fact the line is a variable one, and it can shift according to a personal taste and judgment. What distinguishes Mo'juz from both Azeri and non-Azeri Iranian authors is his courage to fingerprint a class in the society standing for or, at least, supporting superstition and ignorance. With all his "temerity" Mo'juz followed the path paved by writers such as Maraghe'i and Talibuf from Southern Azerbaijan and many others such as Akhundzadeh, Mamed-Qoli-Zade and Saber --to mention only a few-- from Caucasus. Both Maraghe'i and Talibuf were excommunicated and their works were banned in Iran.⁴² They did not suffer and didn't pay for the adverse reaction which came from the clergy and the their followers. They simply were outside the geographical borders of Iran. However, Maraghe'i's work was published anonymously, and for many years the identity of the author was not known.⁴³ Although Mo'juz had difficult time in drawing a line between what is superstition and what is religion, yet he challenged the clergy without any reservation. In his taking refuge under the name and authority of the living Imam, the poet might have thought to keep some kind of safety valve and hold the door ajar in respect to his relations with the religious authorities. Perhaps he simply did not want to drive everything to its very extreme --he was virtually expelled from his hometown though. The poet's shaky compromises with the elements of holy attributes can also manifest that he could not totally sever himself from the values with which he was brought up, the fact which also demonstrates an unresolved conflict in the matters concerning religious beliefs. To my understanding Mo'juz would not like to place himself in a belligerent position against what can be termed as religion. He attacks heresies and practices that any believer Moslem at some point and time would do the same. That is why the poet believes that he will be in the "Garden of Eden" after his death. He says that his wife's lack of funds and hardship will disturb his peace in the "Garden of Eden." The poet advises his wife to knock down any one who bars her from doing business in order to earn her livelihood. He says that if the clergy or any authority orders you to "cover" your face and not to ape the Westerners "kick him down, walk over his chest." The poet is quite

right; no religious edict bars a woman from engaging in business. That is why the poet finds himself a better believer than the clergy. When he announces the good news of “the advent of the living Imam,” he finds himself on the side of the Imam fighting the heretic clergies.

Mo’juz is quite candid and direct in conveying the idea that in the absence of education the people of a society are relegated to the bestial plane. They are dehumanized. Like many other Azeri authors of the period, he blames the clergy for keeping the people illiterate.⁴⁴ In one of his poems called “Allah,”⁴⁵ Mo’juz attacks the clergy without any reservation,

Bir az istar ayela millati Iran Allah,
Dasti yorgani chakar bashina mallan Allah.
Yatdi nadan, goyub sajdiya bashini akhund,
Dedi ey jismima jan dardima darman Allah,
Yaradipsan mana yarab na hamil heyvanlar,
Minmasi, surmasi, yuk-chatmasi asan Allah. (lines 1-6)

(O God once the Iranian nation wakes a little bit,
o God your clergy promptly pulls the blanket over its head,
once the ignorant sleep, the clergy will prostrate,
saying : “the soul of my body and remedy of my pains, o God!”
“What docile animals you have created for me!”
“their mounting, their riding, their loading is so easy o God.”)

The poet uses a very common-place metaphor to depict the picture of the people being kept ignorant; they are made to go back to sleep by clergy’s forcing their head under the “blanket.” Again, there is an irony in the poet’s complaint to God about the tyranny of His own agent --the clergy. The clergy, who is supposed to awaken the masses and be their teacher, is carrying out something against his presumed mission; he is forcing people back to their sleep. However, in his condemnation of the “ignorant clergy” Mo’juz misses the point that “the ignorant” clergy could be a cause of an effect. He is the product of a system against which the poet wants to revolt.

Mo’juz has a number of poems addressed to God complaining about the people’s dehumanization through the lack of education and social injustices which seem to contradict the Almighty’s epithet of justice. In a poem called “Ya Rab,”⁴⁶ the poet compares and contrasts the life of the Iranians with that of the European nations. He depicts the dehumanizing effects of the illiteracy and ignorance; he gives graphic pictures of the self-mutilators, who during the frenzied rituals of *Ashura*⁴⁷ brandishing their sword, inflict deep cuts in their own head. Again the clergy is blamed as the cause of the problem:⁴⁸

Va’iz buyurur bashiva vur, januvi injit,

Bu barada taklifi Musalman nadi Ya Rab?
 Kallan dedim ahandi ghazablandi kafan-push,
 Ahan dayi gar, kalley-e nadan nadi Ya Rab?
 Taghyir agar vermiyajak khulqna khalqin,
 Pas falsafe-ye din nadi, arkan nadi Ya Rab? (lines 19-24)

(The preacher says "hit your head, torture your body,"
 o God what is a Moslem's obligation at this juncture?
 I said "your skull is iron, the man in the shroud got mad,"
 if it isn't made of iron, then what is the ignorant's skull made of, O God?
 If they'll do no good in edifying the masses,
 then what is the philosophy of religion and its tenets?)

It seems the poet wants to prove that with the violation of the natural laws and in the absence of the fundamental necessities of life --education and literacy being the prime necessities-- human beings lose their privilege over the other animals, and there remains nothing to distinguish their world from that of the beasts. They simply cease to be humans. The poet finds no human soul residing in the body of self-mutilators. There is a metaphoric implication that no privilege of thinking power can be attributed to the iron skull --the head being known as the seat of thinking faculty. With the preacher's advice to "torture your body," the poet refers to self-flagellation ritual of the month of Moharram in which many people used to beat and still do beat their own body with iron chains or with their naked hands. The poet, himself a professed Moslem and brought up in the value system of both the clergy and the self-mutilator "iron skull," draws a line between his imagined ideal Moslem and the self-mutilator. Thus he calls us to remember the common and popular belief that a religion is to save human beings from ignorance and bestiality and guide them to salvation. He says that the purpose of religion is moral edification of the people and "mannering of the masses." That is why he puts a rhetorical question and asks: if the edicts of religion "do no good in manning the masses" then what is its real purpose?

Conclusion

Mo'juz's poetry is part of an immense movement toward fundamental changes in literature as well as social and political life of Iran in general and in Azerbaijan in particular. As we saw examining the poet's autobiographical note in the earlier chapter, Mo'juz thought of himself as social reformer rather than a poet. Yet he proved to be one of the responsible and prolific poets of the period. "Modernism" in Persian and Turkic literatures is marked by a reaction against the traditional themes which found its manifestations in the treatment of social and political issues in the late decades of 19th and early decades of 20th centuries. Like many other poets of the period, Mo'juz's modernity is reflected more in his

dealing with modern issues than in his form and pattern of poetry. However, in dealing with issues such as victimization of women, mass illiteracy, prevalence of superstitions, insanity, poverty and nonexistence law and order, apathy of the clerics and irresponsibility of the ruling class, Mo'juz is more outspoken than any other poet of the Iranian Constitutional era. Mo'juz's treatment of women's status is very unique. As mentioned earlier, as far as I know, the depth and enthusiasm of Mo'juz's advocacy of women's cause has no precedence in Persian and Azeri literature. Dealing with women's problems dominates all other issues in his poetry. Advocating women, he always upholds their cause, and when he wants to speak for the two genders simultaneously, he presents a very impartial, selfless and balanced picture of the situation. The poet's ability to drop off his gender while speaking on women's issues reveals him to be a man who always had a holistic view of life. He did not look at the world from a single perspective; in other words, a single dimension of one issue opened itself up into many dimensions while being viewed by Mo'juz. While speaking about women, he could not cease to see their presence in every aspect of life and in every part of his own existence --as a mother, a sister, a wife, a sex partner, an aunt and etc.. At this point, I would like close my treatment of Mo'juz's poetry and his approach to women's issue as the predominant aspect of his modernism. Mo'juz is inexhaustible in his approach to women's issues; obviously while discussing other themes dealt with in his poetry, his reference to women will still continue to flow in. Although the medium of Mo'juz's poetry and his treatment of his subject matter make him a unique case to examine yet our study of the poet will only be possible in the light of Persian literature with ample references to the Persian poets. In the next chapter, we will examine Mo'juz's modernism in the light of other Iranian poets who wrote mainly in the Persian language.

Notes to Chapter II

1. See Berengian, *Azeri and Persian Literary Works in Twentieth Century Iranian Azerbaijan*, PP. 20-1.
2. See H. Javadi and K. Burrill in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Azeri Literature in Iran X, P. 252.
3. See Berengian, P. 12.
4. *Ibid*, P. 10.
5. See Jeoffery Hartman's explanations on modern lyric, *Unbelievable wordworth*, P. 44.
6. Discussion on "My Sahand" falls far beyond the limits of this work yet I would like to mention the point that the poem has been considered as the climax of Azeri poetry by many critics of high erudition. The poem is a mosaic of some of the well-known poetry pieces written both in the West as well as in the East. There are passages in the poem that ring associations with Keats' "Ode to Grecian Urn," Yeats' "Sailing to Byzantium" and T.S. Eliot's "Wasteland." Shahryar's "My Sahand" is written almost three decades after Mo'juz's death.
7. See Berengian, P. 93.
8. See Mo'juz's poem entitled "Ya Rab" in which he calls the self-mutilators "iron skull," *Kulliyat*, P. 126.
9. *Ibid*, P. 25.
10. *Divan-e Khaje Shams-ud-Din-e Muhammad-e Hafiz-e Shirazi*, Ed. Muhammad Qazvini & Qasem Ghani. Tehran: Sina Publishing.
11. *Kulliyat-e Sa'di*, ed. M. A. Foroughi, P. 30.
12. In a number of poems, Mo'juz complains about the difficulties of the WWI during which people could not get tea and sugar. There are famous Azeri traveling lines by anonymous poets which complain about people's tooth-ache because they drink their tea with raisins.
13. *Ibid*, P. 85.
14. I failed to find the line commonly attributed to Rumi "sag vafa darad nadarad zan vafa" (a dog is more faithful than a woman) in M. T. Ja'fari's concordance of the poet. Perhaps, Mr. M. T. Ja'afari does not believe that it belongs to Rumi, otherwise, he would have included it in his edition of *Mathanvi-ye Ma'navi*. I believe that M. A. Ja'fari is one of the most authentic sources to refer in this respect.
15. See Fariba Zarrinebaf-Shahr in *Encyclopedia Iranica vol.VII* under "Diaspora IV in Ottoman Turkey."
16. *Ibid*, PP. 64-8.
17. See Rypka's *History of Iranian Literature*, PP.313-4.
18. See Khvaja Nasiruddin Tusi's *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, P. 230
19. A district in Azerbaijan to which Shabustar belonged.
20. *Kulliyat, Okhudun Gizlari*, "Let the Girls to Study," P. 67.
21. See plate 6. The drawing from *Mulla Nasreddin* depicts a toddler girl who barely can walk. The picture demonstrates the child walking while her father throws his hat to knock her from behind. Since the strike from the hat fails to knock her down thus he asks the *Qazi* to carry on with the recital of marriage extracts. Standing the strike of the hat is a sign of a girl's coming of age and her wedding time.
22. *Kulliyat*, the poem called "Olajakh, Will Become," P. 69-70.

23. In fact, Azeri literature is replete with the stories concerning fortune-tellers and women's enchantment by them. Akhunzadeh's *Hekayat-e Mosyo Jordan Hakim-e Nabatat va Darvish Mast-Alishah* is one of the examples. In the mentioned play Khan Pari, the foster mother of Sharaf Nisa, provides the audience with a long roster of women's names who have consulted Darvish Mast-A'lishah and their wishes have been fulfilled. See also Hamed Algar's "Akhunzadeh" in *Encyclopedia Iranica*.
24. Mo'juz refers to the issue in his poem entitled "God Willing" See *Kulliyat* P 110.
25. *Ibid*, P. 110.
26. *Ibid*, P. 92.
27. Being from a region famous for farm products, Mo'juz often uses metaphors and motifs from farming. To express whiteness and enticing delicacy of a woman's navel, the poet uses *kalam-e latif* (delicate cabbage). The variety of leaf cabbage indigenous to Azerbaijan is very delicate and beautiful to watch. Moreover, the more the outside leaves are peeled, the whiter and more beautiful they look. Mo'juz's metaphors are also suggestive of undressing and taking the outer covering off.
28. In *Mulla Nasreddin*, August 12, 1907, Mamed Qoli-Zade has an article entitled "Bir Bugcha Su." The author has a hyperbolic statistics of Moslem population, he mentions that there are three hundred million amulet writers, chiromantists, astrologers, fortune-tellers, navel-scribes ... See also Mamed Qoli-Zadeh *Sechilmish Asarlari*, P. 540.
29. Mo'juz and the authors of *Mulla Nasreddin* circle were critical of many superstitious minded Iranians and Southern Azerbaijanis. Plate No. 4 shows *Mulla Nasreddin's* parody of the Iranians crossing the Araxes River to Northern Azerbaijan. The picture shows how the Iranians who have no expertise and professional training cross the river to go to Northern Azerbaijan and earn their lives through charlatanism.
30. In Iranian culture 'Anqa is a mythical bird whose abode is the mythical mountain, Qaf. In Persian literature we find many references to both the bird and the mountain.
31. The literature of the period is full of references to the superstitious acts of Moharram. See also Mamed Qoli-Zadeh's "Bash Yarmag," PP. 518-21, and "Neja Gan Aghlamasin ...," PP. 583-6, *Sechilmish Asarlari*.
32. *Kulliyat*, PP. 18-21.
33. *Ibid*, PP. 53-4.
34. The example of such holy matrimony is set by Ali (the demi-god of Shi'ism, the prophet's cousin) and Fatimeh (the infallible daughter of the Prophet). There is an adage in Azeri culture and language which says "the marriage of cousins are arranged in the heavens."
35. The unrestrained glorification of pre-Islamic Iran and Zoroastrianism as opposed to Islam and Arab vilification is quite common among the Iranian thinkers of the so-called "awakening period." Many Iranians put the blame of their backwardness upon Arabs as well as Turks.
36. See Kasravi's *Khaharan-o Dokhtaran-e Ma*.
37. See Memmedli's edition of *Mirza Ali Mo'juz Asarlari*, P. 16.
38. See Mo'juz's Poem entitled "Seyidin," *Kulliyat* Volume PP. 94-5.
39. *Ibid*, Volume I, PP. 234-5.
40. *Ibid*, Volume I, PP. 234-5.
41. See Kasravi's *Khaharan-o Dokhtaran-e Ma*, P. 7.
42. Both authors claim in their own works that they were excommunicated and their works were banned by the Iranian government and the clergy. In fact, Maraghe'i's work was published anonymously. According to Arianpur, a number of people were arrested and persecuted for being the alleged author of the work. See *Az Saba ta Nima Volume I*, P. 256. Kasravi believes that publication of a book such as *Siyahat-Nameh-ye Ebrahim Beg* would mean the perdition of the author, See *Tarikh-e Mashrut-ye Iran*, P. 46.

43. *Ibid.*

44. The works of Akhundzadeh, Talibuf, Maraghe'i, Mamed Qoli-Zade and Saber are replete with the concept and ideas that the clerics are not sincere in helping out the people from ignorance. See *Masaliku'l-muhsisin* PP. 86-9 and 151, also see Maraghe'i PP. 105-6.

45. See *Kulliyat* PP. 128-9.

46. *Ibid.*, PP. 126-7.

47. Ashura is the tenth day of Moharram when Imam Huseyn was martyred along with 71 helpers.

48. See also Mamed Qoli-Zade's *Sechimish Asarlari*, PP. 518-21 and PP. 583-85.

Chapter III

Mo'juz in the Spectrum of the Iranian Constitutional Era

In the previous chapter, I had referred to modernity in Azeri literature, marked by its social realism and inclination toward social and political change. I also talked about aspects of Mo'juz's poetry which are "modernist." In this chapter I will try to examine Mo'juz in relation to other Azeri and non-Azeri Iranian authors of the Constitutional era. I will further elaborate what we mean by modernity when it pertains Mo'juz and his contemporary Azeri and non-Azeri authors. I will also try to define Mo'juz's place in the departure from the classical tradition and movement toward new systems of signification. Discussing the trend of change and the degree of deviation from the traditional norms, I will also contend that Mo'juz, like many other Azeri authors, posits a more drastic change and wider departure.¹ Before I start my study of Mo'juz in relation with other Iranian poets of the Constitutional era and compare and contrast their traits of modernism, I would like to make a brief reference to major Azeri authors of the period and discuss what I mean by modernity in Azeri literature.

The modernist movement began with Azeri writers and poets such as Akhuzadeh, Mamed Qoli-Zadeh, and Rafa't on a very self-conscious plane and swept over Iran.² The pioneers of modernism in the Caucasus were either from Northern Azerbaijan, or they were born in Southern Azerbaijan and migrated to the North. The Azeris in the Caucasus had the advantage of mastering the Russian language, which enabled them to develop a thorough understanding of what was happening in Russia as well as in Europe. Of course, Turkey was another bridge between the Azeris and Europe. Thus the works produced by Azeri authors both in Persian and Azeri are not only important in themselves, but their significance lies in the influences they effected on Persian literature as a whole.

Commenting on the subject, Sakina Berengian says:

Literary influences from Turkey and the Caucasus are significant not so much in themselves, but rather as channels for European influences. And as much as, at least in certain periods, these influences are not confined to Turkic works produced in Azerbaijan, or for that matter, the Persian literature of the province as well. But ultimately, they reached the literature of the country [Iran] as a whole.³

In fact, Azeri authors in Turkey and the Caucasus wrote both in Azeri and Persian for an Iranian audience although many of them were not Iranian citizens. They felt themselves culturally attached to the Iranians, not so much for the sake of Iran, but because they had not developed a nationhood of their own in the modern sense. The Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan was established in the wake of World War I after the collapse of

Czarist Russia. On May 28, 1918, the National Council of Azerbaijan adopted its Declaration of Independence.⁴ It was, therefore, during the first and second decades of the century that the concept of Azeri nationhood had been formed, and it only blossomed into reality out of the chaos of WWI. The phases of Azeri national formation find ample articulation in the deeds of the people, the politicians' activities and the works of writers and poets both from Northern and Southern Azerbaijan.⁵ Before 1918, having no independent country of their own, Azeris on both sides of the Araxes River saw themselves historically and culturally Iranian, and they attempted innovations in Iranian society and tried to modernize Iran as a whole. As a result, many Azeri authors' works have been established as part of the Persian literary heritage. For example, Akhundzadeh has often been recognized as one of the pioneers of modernism in Persian literature, irrespective of his national identity, cultural upbringing and the idiom in which he has produced his most important works.⁶ I will have further discussions on the issue in the following chapters when we deal with the tradition of satire and humor in Azeri literature and the problems of identity as it pertains Azeri authors.

In our readings of major Persian biographers such as Arianpur, we come across five major Azeri authors of the Constitutional era who have been canonized as effecting modern influences in Persian literature. Although I have referred to them in earlier pages, I would like to name them once again. They are Akhundzadeh (1812-78),⁷ Talibuf (1835-1909),⁸ Maraghe'i (1837-1910),⁹ Saber (1862-1911)¹⁰ and Mamed Qoli-Zade (1862-1932)¹¹ about whom I will further speak in the next two chapters. I do believe that, Mo'juz of Shabustar is a product of the paradigms established by the above-mentioned five authors. By "modernity" in Azeri poetry, I mean its emancipation from the constraint the of Persio-Arabic prosody adopted in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In earlier Turkic poetry, verse rhyming was attained both through grammatical structures -- repetition of identical nominal, verbal and other suffixes-- and assonance, alliteration, and onomatopoeic echoes.¹² In fact, during the periods before the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the adaptation of the Turkic verse to the *aruz* quantitative system was never successful. In Berengian's words, only "in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was this problem overcome owing to the increasing percentage of both Persian-Arabic vocabulary and of poetical cliches."¹³

Thus modernity in Azeri poetry is marked by the deliberate efforts of Azeri poets and authors to free themselves from the half millennium of Persio-Arabic classical

conventions and rules of *aruz* and to return to their native stress rhyme scheme. As mentioned earlier, the Persio-Arabic *aruz* rules had not been adopted by Turkic poetry with complete success, however, the attempts to liberate Azeri literature from the impediments of classical traditions with respect to content, form and diction were quite deliberate and self-conscious. Affected by foreign literature and rendered by the oral nature of Azeri culture and language, the new literature developed by the Azeri poets and writers had to use the language of the masses along with its ample employment of a wide variety of folk material, such as anecdotes, proverbs, riddles, popular songs, and lullabies.¹⁴ The oral and unpretentious quality of the new works soon became a major trend in the literature of the period. Besides their return to the popular idiom, Azeri authors' open rebellion against what was known as classical became a sign of modernism.¹⁵ In a letter to the translator of his *Tamsilat*, Akhundzadeh expressly speaks about his new agenda with regards to the social and literary change on which he has embarked. Contrasting his newly introduced *kritica* (criticism --literary and social--) and *mo'eza* (exhortation) Akhundzadeh explains that the latter has the predominant aspect of Iranian pedagogy and Persian literature. "Should exhortations and advice effect any good, why the people of Iran have taken no notice of them during the past six hundred years?" the author asks.¹⁶ Using plain and direct language, Akhundzadeh establishes new signs and new means to deal with the urgencies of his contemporary world. He paves the way for modern thinkers in the Caucasus, Iran and Turkey.

With respect to the importance and influence of Akhundzadeh in the literature of the region, Berengian says that he "was the first original playwright, not only in the Turkic world, but in the whole Islamic East."¹⁷ Regarding his radical and dauntless approach to tradition and established canons, Hamed Algar speaks of him as "one of the earliest and most outspoken atheists to appear in the Islamic world."¹⁸ In Karimi-Hakkak's *Recasting Persian Poetry*, Akhundzadeh is the first author in the line of modernists to be studied throughout the work.¹⁹ Thus the births of Mamed Qoli-Zade, Saber and Mo'juz were an inevitable process in the development of Azeri literature. Although Akhundzadeh influenced many Persian-speaking Iranian authors, Azeri modernist authors were his direct progeny. By the same token, I find Mo'juz to be more radical in his approach to classical traditions in comparison to his contemporary non-Azeri authors, and he excels in vitality and vigor of expression and profundity of humor.

In our comparative study of Mo'juz and other Iranian poets of the Constitutional era in this chapter, we will select only a handful of them who are either non-Azeris, or are

known to be non-Azeris because of their exclusive use of the Persian language and also their extended residence in Tehran or other Persian-speaking regions of Iran. Iraj Mirza (1874-1925) and Bahar (1886-1951) are chosen as the major poets of the period. Poems from Lahuti (1887-1957) will also be discussed when we compare them with those of Mo'juz. Ashraf ud-Din of Gilan (1871-1934) is selected because his paper, *Nasim-e Shomal*, could not exclude itself from the influences of *Mulla Nasreddin*, which was a source of inspiration for Mo'juz as well. Like Mo'juz, Ashraf ud-Din lived a very simple life, and he did not crave political and material gains.

My comparison of Mo'juz with the mentioned Persian poets of the Constitutional era will focus on two main prevalent themes: 1- the treatment of women's issue 2- superstition and ignorance of the uneducated masses as manifested in the heretic acts of Moharram including self-mutilation and self-flagellation. Nearly all the authors of the period, Azeris and non-Azeris as well, addressed social maladies such as women's victimization and their problems, illiteracy of the masses, lawlessness, ignorance of the people and the irresponsibility of the ruling class. However, each author had his own unique way of approaching the issues. In fact, dealing with the issues of social relevance was a subversion of the content of poetry and creation of a new poetic signification. Although the familiar structures and classical forms were preserved and the old *aruz* rules were still being observed, the poets' feeling of loyalty to them were shaken. They were trying new forms, and they let the rhyme pattern collapse should it prevent them from what they wanted to say.²⁰ However, the degree of each individual poet's departure from the old norms, and his or her willingness to sever the mechanism of the established significations varied accordingly. My study of the many poets of the period has proved that Azeri authors have usually heralded the change, and they have been a leading force in debunking traditional signifiers. Perhaps the linguistic and cultural "otherness" of an Azeri author has facilitated his easy dispensing of the traditions structured in an alien center. However, our examination of different poems by different authors of the period and their comparison and contrast with similar pieces from Mo'juz will sufficiently elucidate the point. My study of the poetry of the period has proved that while poets like Bahar, Lahuti and others dealt with the ideas and concepts of social maladies, Mo'juz depicted what those maladies meant to the lives of "women and men." In order to illustrate how Mo'juz's approach to a social problem was different from that of the others, I would like to move to the discussion of two specific themes named earlier.

Gender Issues in the Poetry of the Period: Giving recognition to women, granting

them some degree of freedom in society, advocating their education, and finally, unveiling them were among the modern issues appearing in the works of the period. In the poetry collections of Bahar and Lahuti, and Iraj and Gilani, we find a few poems dealing with issues concerning women in comparison with other issues. Both in their treatment of women's issues and the space in the work allotted for women, they vary from Mo'juz drastically. In this section of the chapter, I will discuss each poet's case separately, then by quoting relevant poems from Mo'juz, I will talk about their differences or similarities.

Bahar's depiction of a woman: In the bulky *divan* of Bahar, we find very few poems dealing with women's status in Iranian society. There are two relatively long poems, *qasidas*, referring to women in Bahar's voluminous collection of poetry -- "Zan She'r-e Khodast" (The Woman is God's Poem) and "Ey Zan" (O Woman). I would like to quote some lines from the two named poems analyzing them briefly. Bahar's "The Woman is God's Poem" is a *qasida* composed according to classical *aruz* meter.

Considering the limits of this work, I will only quote some lines of the poem.

Khanum an nist ke janane vo delbar bashad,
 Khanum anast ke bab-e del-e shohar bashad.
 Behtarast az zan-e mah-tala't-e hamsar azar,
 Zan-e zeshti ke jegar gushe-ye hamsar bashad.
 Zan yeki bish mabar zanke bovad fetne vo shar,
 Fetne an beh ke dar atraf-e to kamtar bashad.

.....
 Nashavad monqate'a az keshvar-e ma in harakat,
 Ta ke zan baste vo pichide be chadar bashad.
 Hefz-e namus ze ma'ajar natavan khast Bahar,
 Ke Zan azadtar andar pas-e ma'ajar bashad.²¹

(A woman is not desirable if she is only beautiful and nice,
 a woman should be agreeable to a man.
 A woman, who is ugly but loved by her husband,
 is better than a gorgeous woman who nags her husband.
 Do not take more than one wife since she is vice and misfortune,
 better to have less vice and misfortune around you.

.....
 These behaviors will not end in our country,
 as long as women are being wrapped in *chadors*.
 O Bahar do not expect chastity from the veil,
 women are more licentious under their veil.)

In the four opening lines, Bahar argues that no matter how beautiful a woman is, if she fails to fulfill the gratification and comfort of her husband, she is worthy of nothing. The lines imply that a woman is part of a man's belongings, and he might have varying preferences about the different aspects of her. As for Bahar, his preference is for an ugly

but obedient woman, rather than a beautiful and disobedient one. However, Bahar does not want to sound too old-fashioned, he advises his countrymen not to “take more than one wife” which could be considered a step toward social change. Despite his attempt at advocating change, Bahar only manifests how he is bound with the tangles of traditions and an archaic mode of thinking. Bahar speaks of “taking a wife” as opposed to “marrying someone.” In fact, the poet’s admonition, *mabar*, (do not take) qualifies a man to privileges of picking and choosing with respect to the number and variety of wives. The poet’s advice regarding not taking “more than one wife” collapses when the poet continues to say that taking a woman results in “vice and misfortune.” Since a man cannot help taking a wife, and he has to shoulder “vice and misfortune” anyway, he is advised to minimize his misfortunes by taking only one wife. “Better have less vice and misfortune around you” and “take” one wife, the poet exhorts.

Bahar wants a woman to fit his definition; her value is measured by how far she can meet his desires. The issue of vital importance such as beauty for which every woman may strive in her own way, is thrown away at the expense of being “agreeable” to her husband. “A woman is not desirable if she is only beautiful and nice,/a woman should be agreeable to the man” Bahar says. Thus Bahar does not care about the fact that a woman wants to be beautiful. Having no understanding of a woman’s world, the poet even goes on to say that “a woman who is ugly, but loved by her husband,/is better than a gorgeous woman who nags her husband.” To betray himself further, Bahar reveals his veiled patriarchal mind set, by saying that a woman is “vice and misfortune,/better to have less vice and misfortune around you.” Again Bahar’s doing a favor to women by advising his male counterparts not to “take more than one wife,” is a service for himself and his own gender. According to him, since every woman is a “vice and misfortune,” better to cut down the misfortune by cutting down the number of wives. The major section of the poem deals with the misfortunes which may come as a result of polygamy. Throughout his poem, Bahar finds only one problem with polygamy: The enmity which arises among the children begotten from polygamic life. “The generation burns in avarice, envy, hatred and slander,/if in one house two mothers are made to co-habit,” he says. Bahar’s disapproval of polygamy is only based on the problems which might arise among the children of the polygamous marriage. The poet does not have any idea of what happens to a woman in a polygamous life. In the concluding four lines of his poem, Bahar makes a connection between polygamy and the veil. He says that “these behaviors [polygamy] will not end in our country,/as long as women are being wrapped in chadors.” Thus according the poet,

unveiling women will help to stop the undesirable “behaviors” such as polygamy. Like other poets of the period, the poet avers that a woman’s chastity has nothing to do with her covering, “women are more licentious under the veil,” he concludes. It is a standard procedure with the poets of the era to argue that the veil does not make a woman chaste, neither will it enhance her morality. On the contrary, they argue that the veil becomes a curtain behind which a woman can commit immoral practices. “Women are more licentious under their veil,” Bahar also avers.

Bahar’s opening lines echo the traditional notes of a masculine society in which a good wife was only considered an amenity of a house. In fact Sa’di, six hundred years before Bahar, spoke the same words in a more eloquent and unconventional manner when he said :

Dar-e khorrami bar sarayi beband
Ke bang-e azn az vey bar ayad boland.²²

(The window of felicity will be shut in the house
from which a woman’s voice is heard aloud.)

or

Zan-e bad dar sara-ye mar-e neku
Ham darin a’lamast duzakh-e a’u.²³

(A bad woman in the house of a nice man
Makes his life a hell in this world.)

Both the couplets quoted from Sa’di reveal a man who speaks about what he likes and what he dislikes about women as he would speak about any other possession. In the first couplet, the poet shuts the window of felicity to a house from “which a woman’s voice is heard loud.” The poet speaks of a woman in terms of gender as *zan*, not in terms of a wife or a feminine member in the family. Thus Sa’di suggests that a woman as a gender opposed to a man is not allowed to speak in a loud voice. The implication is that a man is allowed to do so, and there is no such inhibition for him since he belongs to the opposite gender. The implication of “a bad woman in the house of a nice man” in Sa’di’s second verse is that a man’s goodness or badness is out of the realm of question. In other words, men are always good, and they need not be governed by any rule. The rule only applies to women. They ought to be nice, otherwise, they will turn the lives of men in this world into a hell. Like other worldly possessions, women are part of men’s amenity, they will not serve their expected purpose if “a nice man” finds her to be “a bad woman.” Thus we find Bahar speaking within the paradigms set by a classics such as Sa’di, and he remains an “unabashed apologist”²⁴ of traditions. He neither could nor did attempt to free his mind

and poetic practice from the paradigms set by classical masters. Both poets' appraisal of a woman is based upon the service she would provide to a man.

In order to get a sufficient understanding of Bahar's value system and his treatment of women's problems, I would also like to quote parts of his "O Woman" which also is a *qasida* composed on the classical poesy pattern some seven years later than the poem quoted above. It seems the passage of seven years has made the poet observe a woman as a member of the male dominated society and deserving of a place in social life, although undefined yet. The poem opens with words flattering women:

Javan bakhto jahan arayi ey zan,
Jamal-o zinat-e donyayi ey zan.
Sadaf khanasto sahebkhane ghavvas,
To dar vey gohar-e yektayi ey zan.
To yekta gohari dar dorj-e khane,
Vazan behtar ke gohar zayi ey zan.

.....
Darigha gar to ba in husho edrak
Bejahl az in fozuntar payi ey zan.
Darigha kaz hesab-e khod vatan ra
Be nime tan falaj farmayi ey zan.
Suye e'lmo honar beshtabo kon shokr,
Konun azadeh rah peymayi ey zan.
Be kar-e elmo effat kush emruz,
Ke mam-e mardom-e fardayi ey zan.²⁵

(O woman you are felicitous and gorgeous,
you are the beauty and adornment of the world.
the home is an oyster, the landlord[husband] is a diver,
and you are the rare pearl in it.
you are the only pearl in the treasure-box of the home,
out of which you had better procure new pearls.

.....
It's a loss! Should you, with such intelligence and receptivity,
remain in your ignorance longer than this.
It's a loss! With the exclusion of your population'
you should cripple the half of the homeland's body.
Be thankful and hurry toward science and art,
now, it is time to stride freely.
Do your best in the learning and chastity today,
because you are the mother of tomorrow's generation.)

This *qasida* of Bahar, from beginning to end, praises woman in conventional terms. The poet's words "You are the beauty and adornment of the world" are not much different from the old familiar way of extolling the beloved's beauty. The main body of the poem extols woman employing different epithets of adoration and admiration along with which the poet (a man) reserves a solid position and power to play as a diver and hunt for the

pearl. "The home is an oyster, the landlord[husband] is a diver, and you are the rare pearl in it," Bahar says. Thus a woman becomes a piece of jewelry or a pearl which should remain in the "oyster" of home waiting for the "landlord," *sahebkhane*, to arrive and carry on his diving function. The limits of this work does not allow us to elaborate on the sexual suggestiveness of the lines. However, Bahar's pearl/oyster image and also his pearl/treasure-box metaphor will contradict any idea about a woman's becoming a social entity. The oysters depicted lying in the sea-bed yield themselves to the ravages and exploitation of the diver. Moreover, the pearl image turns a woman into a property for ownership by the husband, just as we saw in the earlier poem. The poet's reference to a husband as the "landlord" in possession of a house, which is referred to as the "treasure-box" in which the pearl, a woman, is kept leaves no room for doubt about the owner/owned relationship between a husband and a wife. The poet also reserves the privilege of freedom to man in moving around in contrast to woman's world which is confined to the limits of "the treasure-box of home" where she can give birth to other "pearls." However, in the four concluding couplets, the poet expresses his desire to see women taking steps toward the elimination of their ignorance. Bahar declares that half of the society's body cannot continue to remain crippled. Yet he is not clear enough to let us know where he wants to place the newly revived half. He is not sure how and where the newly revived half is going to function. He has no idea about the social status of women. If he wants the newly revived half of society's body to function in the "treasure-box of the home," why does he advocate all the changes? In the concluding lines, Bahar admonishes women to carry on their learning along with preserving their chastity. "Do your best in the learning and chastity today," he says. It appears that Bahar, like many fundamentalist believers of his time, believed in the antithetical relations between literacy and chastity. This is why he wants to make sure that his ideal woman will be able to combine learning with its opposite --chastity.

Lahuti's Depiction of Women: Lahuti's treatment of women is different from that of Bahar. There is a self-conscious move toward change in Lahuti, and assigning new roles for women in the new world. Lahuti proves that he can manipulate the conventional signs and signification, and assign new meaning to the old signifiers. With his open attacks on both social and poetic conventions, Lahuti tries to build his own social system and poetic mode. He tends to reverse whatever he has received from the previous generations. I would like to quote pieces from Lahuti's "Beh Dokhtaran-e Iran" (To the Daughters of Iran) and analyze his treatment of Women's issues. Since the poem appears

in Karimi-Hakkak's *Recasting* in its entirety, I would like to use his translation of the poem. I will only select fragments of the poem to discuss here because the scope of this work does not allow us to quote the entire poem.²⁶

Man Az emruz ze hosn-e to boridam saro kar
 gu be divanegiyam khalq namayand egrar
 ay mah-e mulk-e ajam, ay sanam-e 'alami sharq
 hush gerd avaro bar gofte-ye man del begomar
 ta konun pish-e to chun bande bedargah-e khoda
 labe-ha kardamo bar khak besudam rokhsar
 likan emruz mojiddane vo rasmane tora
 ashkara sokhani chand beguyam hoshdar
 ba'd azin az khato khalat naharasad del-e man
 zankeh ba hosn-e to karam nabovad digar bar.

.....
 pesar-o dokhtar-e khod ra sharaf-e kar amuz
 ta bedanand bovad moftkhori zellato ar
 sokhan az danesho azadi-yo zahmat miguy
 ta ke farzand-e to ba in sokhanan ayad bar
 beh yaqin gar to chonin madr-e khubi bashi
 mes-e eqbal-e vatan az to shavad zarr-e 'ayar.²⁷

(From this day on, I have severed my relation with your beauty.
 Let people declare me insane.
 O moon of Persia, o idol of the eastern world!
 Gather your wits and set your heart on my words
 thus far, like a slave before God, I have made
 lamentations, supplicated myself before you.
 But today, seriously and formally
 I address a few words to you openly, harken!
 From now on, my heart fears not your visage and mole,
 for no longer shall I have anything to do with your beauty.

.....
 Teach your sons and daughters the nobility of work
 so they will know that freeloading is a shame, a disgrace.
 Speak to them of knowledge, freedom and toil
 so your children will grow up with these words.
 Surely if you become such a good mother, because of you
 the copper of the motherland's fortune shall turn into pure gold.²⁸

In the opening lines of the poem, Lahuti warns the "daughters of Iran" that the old order and its values are no longer valid, and he has something new to say. However, the poet fails to find anything new to address the daughters, ironically, he uses the very same old epithets "O moon Persia, o idol of the eastern world." As a matter of fact, the metaphors such as full moon or idol (*sanam*) are as old as Persian poetry. Yet addressing his "daughters of Iran," Lahuti asks them to call upon their "wits" and listen to what he is about to say. From the very beginning, both the reader and the addressee in the poem get

the signs that what the poet is about to say will be something new. It will be something quite different from what has been said by earlier poets. Lahuti starts detailing what was considered to be a blessing in the past will be considered as a curse in the new world order; all the values are being transposed by their opposites. Lahuti stipulates that a beauty, which is not complemented with learning and knowledge, has no validity in the new system. "No longer shall I have anything to do with your beauty," he avers. Despite all the promises from the poet, there is a wide discrepancy between what Lahuti intends, and the tools he uses to convey his message. Lahuti claims that he will dispense with classical signs, and he will not speak of the "chain" of "tresses," "arrows" of "eyelashes" and "ruby lips" yet he uses them in a very effective and unconventional manner. By the claim of not mentioning them, he mentions them quite emphatically. In fact, he invents new ways of using them. He blows from the other end of the trumpet --making a more pleasant music. His audience and addressee are the same old people. The poet's addressee is the very same old beloved whose bow of brows and arrows of eyelashes used to gore the hearts of Lahuti's predecessors. The classical beloved conceptualized in her inverted new form continues to be the same despite Lahuti's new expectations. The poet speaks from his old higher position --desiring to see his object of his interest in a new fashion. It is left to the poet's discretion to see his beloved in any fashion he wants.

Lahuti has no clear idea who he is talking to. The poet needs to articulate whether he is talking to the literate reader, the literate reader's abstract object of amusement,--the codified classical beloved-- or the illiterate majority of Iranian women who could neither read and write, nor did they have any knowledge of what the eyebrows and eyelashes have been doing throughout many centuries. Addressing the latter group and asking them to "speak to them[their children] of knowledge, freedom and toil" will hardly make a clear sense. They can do nothing to change their wretched condition, they have no power of themselves. This issue will be further analyzed when we talk about Mo'juz's approach to the issues concerning women. Mo'juz usually accuses fathers, husbands, brothers and authorities in the male dominated society for women's problems. He demonstrates that without the change in their attitude other changes will not be possible. Lahuti develops this kind of understanding in later years after he leaves Iran and settles in the Soviet Union.²⁹ In order to demonstrate this development in Lahuti's poetic practice, I would like to quote some lines from the poet's later works. In his "Be Dokhtar-e Aftab" (To the Daughter of the Sun), Lahuti speaks of a man as "idiot and defective," who has thrown his wife "into the prison" of a black veil. Lahuti advises his daughter of the sun to "stage a revolution"

against her “deceitful man,” and throw the veil away. Yet, as we will see, his treatment of the issue is quite different from that of Mo’juz. Lahuti treats each problem as an isolated cause, and he directs his criticism against it with his Communistic bravado. Whereas Mo’juz depicts a holistic picture of life, with the chain of the problems stemming from each other. Our quoting some parts of Lahuti’s “Be Dokhtar-e Aftab” will help to illustrate the poet’s approach.

Ay dokhtar-e namdar-e Iran
Az ruy-e khod in neqb bardar.
Chun dokhtarakan-e ozbekistan
Chadur beneho kitab bardar.

To dokhtar-e aftab hasti,
Sharmat nayad zi ruy-e madar?
Az bahr-e che dar hijab hasti?
Chun madar-e khud neqab bardar.

Ruy-e to magar che eyb darad
Kanra bedarun-e parde kardi?
Dar hosn-e to har ke reyb darad,
Benoma ke fetad berang-e zardi.

Ney ney rokh-e to zi eyb pakast,
khejlat makash az goshadan-e an.
mard-e to safih-o eybnakast,
Kafkande tora be tire زندان.

.....
Ta chand bedast-e mard-e ghaddar
Pamalo asiro bande hasti?
Nehzat kono in neqab bardar
Sabet benoma ke zende hasti.

Dar jang-e hayato rastgari
Albatte to nisti tanha,
Midan ke konand ba to yari
Zahmatkesh-hay-e khak-e shura.³⁰

(O the celebrated daughter of Iran
take this veil off your face.
Like the Uzbek girls
put the *chador* down and pick up a book.

You’re the daughter of Mithras,
be not ashamed of your mother ?
Why you are under cover?
Like your mother take off the veil.

What defect have you got on your face?
For which you’re covering it?

Show your face and embarrass them,
Those who doubt your beauty.

No no, your face is far from defective,
don't be embarrassed of exposing it,
your man is an idiot and insane,
who has put you in this dark prison.

.....
How long are you going to be trampled, remain captive, and enslaved
to the deceitful man.
Stage a revolution and take off this veil,
make it known that you're still living.

In the war of life and salvation
of course you are not alone,
the good news is that all the proletariat in the Land of Union
will be your support.)

The poem was written in 1926 after Lahuti had settled in the Central Asian states of the Soviet Union. The poem is more a tribute to the poet's newly found home than a real feeling of responsibility toward his old home --Iran. The poem seems to be composed of erratic pieces of exhortation from a political leader who pushes his way toward his goals using the fragmented ideas as his political agenda. Addressing "the celebrated daughter of Iran," Lahuti recommends her to take her veil off and start reading books like the Uzbek girls. In the second stanza, there is a reference to Mithras, the ancient Persian goddess of light and justice. The poet says that the "daughter of Mithras" should not cover her face under a veil. In fact, it will be an irony for the daughter of the sun to cover her face in the presence of the ubiquitous sun. In the third stanza, the poet asks about the reason for veiling the face. He wants to know if there is something wrong with the face of the daughter of the sun. In the fourth stanza, Lahuti has the answer for his own question. He avers that "no no" her face is immune from any defects, only her man is "idiot and defective." In the penultimate stanza, Lahuti encourages his addressee to rise up against her "deceitful man" and stop being "trampled," remaining a "captive and slave." In the last stanza, the poet assures the daughter of Iran will not be left alone in her "war of life and salvation." The proletariat of the Land of Union will support her. Lahuti sounds like a savior in his patronizing voice to advise a category of the people who need his guidance. Contrasting him with Mo'juz, I find Lahuti far detached from the reality of life --making commands and injunctions to the people who have no power themselves. He lacks the sincerity of participating in what he speaks about. His reference to the "idiot and defective" sounds as an isolated personal reaction after his abortive military uprising in Azerbaijan and

settling down in the Central Asian states of the Soviet Union.³¹ It seems the poet is angry about the jealousy of the “idiot and defective” husband who desires to keep the daughter of Iran for himself –by keeping her veiled and far from other men’s view. Lahut’s approach to the women’s issue sounds very fragmentary, it seems that Lahuti finds the “idiot” man only guilty of keeping women under veil, and there are no related issues.

Iraj’s Treatment of Women’s Issues: A major poet of the Constitutional era, Iraj, deserves our attention in this section of the chapter although there are very few poems in which the poet gives serious consideration to women’s issues. I would like to refer to Iraj Mirza’s story of having sex with a woman who, despite the poet’s continuous insistence, did not uncover her face during intercourse. The whole idea of the poem is designed to disengage decency and chastity from *hijab*, veil or any kind of covering. Iraj tries to problematize the old connection between veil and chastity. Even so, Iraj serves the same purpose as the street-walkers of the Shah Avenue in Tehran used to do –proving the connectedness between veil and what was known as chastity. Iraj tries to say that veil could not stop his subject from surrendering to the poet’s desire; Tehran street walkers tried to make the public believe that, by wearing *hijab*, they were observing the codes of chastity despite their immoral way of earning their sustenance. In other words, by wearing *hijab* they tried to hide their immoral way of earning their livelihood. Although from different perspectives, they both demonstrate that the connectedness of veil and chastity was, and to some extent is, out of the question.

Iraj’s “Entegad az Hijab”³² (On the Criticism of the Veil) is another poem in which the poet directly deals with an issue regarding women –the veil. In his “On the Criticism of the Veil” and other pieces dealing with women, it seems Iraj considers *neqab* (veil) as their only problem. Not only does Iraj try to prove that a woman’s chastity has nothing to do with covering of her face, but he argues that all perpetrators of crimes commit their immoral and unlawful acts behind some kind of covering. In Iraj’s “Entegad az Hijab” the veil is a signifier for an immoral act. It becomes a symbol of crime. According to the poet, the clergy opposes the removal of veil because there exist points of interest shared by the two. In the poet’s view, the clergy veils and mystifies issues in order to exploit the situation. Thus he says:

Faqih-e shahr be raf’ a-e hijab mayel nist,
Chara ke har che konad hile dar hijab konad.
Cho nist zaher-e Qor’an be vefq-e khahish-e u,
Ravad be bateno tafsir-e na savab konad.(couplets 2-3)

(The clergy of the town opposes the removal of the *hijab*,

since he does under the cover whatever deceit he commits.
 Since the exoteric meaning of the Koran does not agree with his whims,
 he finds esoteric meanings and fabricates erroneous commentaries.)

Throughout his poem, Iraj emphasizes a binary opposition between veil and chastity. The veil stands against chastity, honesty, sincerity and morality. By emphasizing the chastity/veil dichotomy, Iraj thinks that his mission is accomplished. Yet in the concluding lines of the poem, the poet betrays himself by the same recommendations that Bahar ended up imparting to women --to remove physical coverings and wear the veil of moral integrity and chastity. Trying to disengage chastity from the veil throughout the poem, he ties them together in the concluding lines. Thus addressing women, Iraj says:

To niz parde-ye esmat be pusho rokh befiruz,
 Behel ke sheykh-e dagha owow-e kalab konad.
 Be e'etidal azin pardeman rahayi nist,
 Magar mosaedati dast-e enqlab konad.
 Zi ham bederrad in abrhay-e tire-ye shab,
 Visaqo kuche por az maho aftar konad.(couplets 19-21)

(You too, wear the veil of chastity and expose your bright face,
 heed not if the liar sheik is barking like a dog.
 We will not be relieved from the encumbrance of this covering,
 unless the hand of a revolution will arrive to help us.
 It will tear apart these dark clouds of night,
 and will make the homes and alleys fill with moon and sun.)

Unwittingly perhaps, Iraj makes an equation between “wear[ing] the veil of chastity and expos[ing]” the “bright face” --removing the physical veil. The poet stipulates that if women expose their faces and put aside their veils, they might put aside their chastity and morality. A superior poet to my knowledge, Iraj is full of humor and wit although sour and sarcastic. His open antagonism with the “liar sheik” is very similar to that of Mo’juz. Being born and raised in Tabriz, Iraj has inherited a good deal of Azeri humor, candor and simplicity, but his obscenity and indecency of language hardly knows any limit. According to Berengian, the specific traits which made Iraj a great poet such as “his clear-sighted and realistic outlook on life, his approach to poetry that was free from the clutter of mannerism, and finally his solid sense of humor were in fact general traits shared by Azeri poets of the period.”³³ While advising women to expose their bright face, with no reservation, Iraj says that “heed not if the liar *sheikh* is barking like a dog.” The message and voice of the line find their resonance in Mo’juz with a diluted tone probably. Like Mo’juz, Iraj merges his persona with the audience, using the first person plural, he says: “We’ll not be relieved from the encumbrance of this covering,/unless the hand of a revolution will arrive for our

help.” In the last two lines, Iraj makes the “hand” of his “revolution” tear the “dark clouds of the night” asunder, and fill the “homes and alleys” with “moons and suns.” The metaphor of “the dark clouds” stand for the dark veils of women who had to live in the “night” of illiteracy and ignorance. According to Iraj, the “night” of ignorance is the product of the “dark clouds” covering the faces of women. “Veils on the face of women is a hurdle on the way to her access to knowledge,” he says earlier in the poem.

However, Iraj’s insistence on disassociating morality and chastity from *neqab* or *hijab* makes a reader think that the poet ignored many other problems of women which were closely related to the social and political structure of Iran. In general, Iraj seems to have reservations against allowing the political or social issues to flow into the work of esthetics. Pointing to the issue, Sakina Berengian says:

However, his work shows few direct reflections of the political events of the Constitutional era. Some observers maintain that because of his blood ties with the Qajar rulers, “the pathos of the events remained alien to him.” There may be some justice in this assertion, yet a more likely explanation seems to be that a man with his intellectual accomplishments, critical sense, and above all sense of humor would find the emotional and over-enthusiastic political partisanship of many poets of the period rather naive --especially when, as he aptly observes, so much of this political literature fell short of the barest aesthetic requirements.³⁴

I find Berengian’s observation quite justifiable since one can detect a snobbish coloring in the tone of Iraj’s language. I do believe that the prevailing Azeri humor in Iraj, quite often, turns into sour cynicism both because an ever present awareness from his royal blood and a high esteem to his own art and intellect. Reading Iraj leaves a reader with the idea that the poet advocated the removal of the veil for his own sake not for the sake of changing women’s situations for the better. The poet disliked the view of “that dirty veil.” It is interesting to note that in a relatively long poem of 42 lines such as “On the Criticism of the Veil,” the poet only refers to the term “woman” twice. He speaks about woman through allusions and neologisms. Unlike Mo’juz and Bahar, repetitive use of words such as “sisters,” “girl” or “woman” sound “rather naive” for a poet like Iraj. The poets devoting their works to social or “political partisanship” either have proved to be lesser poets, or they have forfeited the “aesthetic requirements” of their art.

Ashraf ud-Din Gilani’s Treatment of Women’s Issues: Before I begin our discussion of the relevant poems of Mo’juz, I would like mention Ashraf ud-Din of Gilan’s name as well. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Ashraf ud-Din of Gilan was the editor of a paper called *Nasim-e Shomal* which was greatly influenced by Azeri paper *Mulla Nasreddin* --a source of inspiration for all Azerbaijanis in general and for Mo’juz in

particular. Ashraf ud-Din of Gilan is a traditional mulla, and an unpretentious believer in religious traditions. However, carried away by the revolutionary thoughts of his time, he advocated social changes through improving and reforming the existing situation. Yet he could not imagine men and women having equal social ranks, and for him, unveiling women was out of the question. Like any preacher, Ashraf ud-Din encourages the girls to perform their religious obligations, to be faithful to the “fasting month” and preserve their chastity by wearing their *neqab* and covering their face. He chooses women’s issues as topics of his poetry only because others do. However, in his paradigm, veil and chastity are closely tied together. In a poem entitled “Khaharan Bekhanand” (For Sisters’ Reading) the poet urges women to stick with their veil in order to stay away from immoralities.

Madaran ra dar do ruz-e omr e’ffat lazemast,
 Dokhtaran ra dar miyan-e khalq esmat lazemast.
 Effato esmat ze adab-e mosalmani shodeh,
 Bahr-e esmat dar sharia’t hokm-e Qora’ni shode.
 Anham az dastur-e ahkamat-e rabbani shode,
 Dokhtaranra dar miyan-e khalq esmat lazemast.
 Ru gereftan ze shorut-e mazhabo ayin-e ma,
 Ma mosalmanim esmat az shorut-e din-e ma.

.....
 Har che mardan-e khoda goftand bayad gush kard,
 Dar miyan-e khalq bayad fekr aqlo hush kard,
 Dokhtaran ganjand bayad ganj ra rupush kard,
 Vaqte jan dadan sharab shahdo shirin nush kard.
 Dokhtaran ra dar miyan-e kuche esmat lazemast.³⁵

(Chastity is a requirement for mothers in this short life.
 Decency is required for girls appearing in public.
 Chastity and decency are recognized as Islamic tenets,
 there are Koranic edicts regarding chastity and decency.
 Koranic edicts are the direct orders of God.
 Decency is required for girls appearing in public.
 Covering the face is a requirement in our faith,
 We’re Moslims, chastity is required in our religion.

.....
 The orders of the men of god should be obeyed.
 Intelligence and wisdom should prevail.
 The girls are treasures, the treasures should be covered.
 On the death bed, death should be embraced happily.
 Decency is required for girls appearing in public.)

As is evident from the lines, Ashraf ud-Din’s chastity and decency concepts are synonymous with *neqab* and women’s covering of their face. Thus unveiling women would mean immorality and indecency in Ashraf ud-Din’s value system –something which Iraj tried to prove the opposite. As a preacher, Ashraf ud-Din employs the transiency of

life and the Day of Judgment as his tools to make his audience to accept his premises. He argues that because the life is “short” (*do ruz*), and we will be taken responsible for our deeds in the Day of Judgment so “chastity is a requirement for mothers,” and “decency” will be a requirement for “girls.” Ashraf ud-Din continues to say that “chastity and decency” are “the Islamic tenets,” and the girls “appearing in public” should observe the codes of “decency.” That is to wear their veil or covering. The poet says that “we’re Muslims” every one of us should obey the commands of “the men of God” concerning the codes of chastity. The poet concludes that if we want to have an easy passage at the point of death, we need to abide with the commands of “the men of God.” Using priestly analogies, Ashraf ud-Din argues that “the girls are treasures,” and we should cover our “treasures.” As mentioned, based on his social standing and education, Ashraf ud-Din would not make women’s issues his theme, he does only under the political and social thrust of the era. In another poem entitled “Dar Tahris-e Dokhtaran-e Mah tala’t be Effat-o Esmat”³⁶ (On Encouraging the Moon-Faced Girls in Chastity and Morality), the poet has nothing to say but stipulates that chastity is equal to the *niqab*.

After my introduction of four non-Azeri poets’³⁷ approach to women’s issue, we come to our study of Mo’juz. Driven by social and political urgencies of the age, the mentioned poets choose to talk about women in their poetry simply because they are modern. They represent a departure from the old poetical practices and conventions. Their poetry mirrors their contemporary social and political events. However, we discussed that their treatment of social issues such as women’s problems varies according each different poet. We find Mo’juz’s difference from the mentioned poets to be more drastic one since he comes from a rather different cultural background and different literary tradition. He follows the legacy left by Akhundzadeh, Talibuf, Maraghe’i, Mamed Qoli-Zade and Saber.

Mo’juz’s Treatment of Women’s Issues: No poet of the era in Iran or in the Caucasus, has allotted a big portion of his work to the cause of women such as Mo’juz. In fact women’s case is one of central issues in Mo’juz’s poetry. There are very few poems without a reference to women’s problems. For the same reason, I refer to him as “the poet of women.” If dealing with issues such as women’s causes is considered to be as a sign of modernity, we can claim that Mo’juz is the most modern among his contemporary poets. As his allocation of the large portion of his poetry to women’s causes, Mo’juz’s approach to problems concerning women, and his presentation of the women’s case vary widely from other poets. Mo’juz appears to be a lesser preacher or a lesser admonisher than the others. He is a satirist and social critic in the sense Akhundzadeh proposed. As we

mentioned in the early part of the chapter, Akhundzadeh vehemently rejected any kind of exhortation, instead, he favored criticism and satire. Thus Mo'juz is more a painter, more a narrator and more a story teller. He usually has a low profile as an addresser or admonisher. In order to find matching pieces for my comparison with the poems quoted from Bahar and Lahuti and others, I had to select some of the rare cases in which Mo'juz presents himself as an admonisher. For example, a closer look at Mo'juz's "Bajilar" (Sisters) will illustrate how Mo'juz conveys the same new message of Lahuti to the illiterate majority in his own unique way. Although quite different in approach and content, Mo'juz's "Sisters" strikes a similar note with Lahuti's "To the Daughters of Iran" in its opening line. Here is the entire poem in its transliteration and translation:

Gulakh verin siza var bir iki sozum bajilar,
 Gedin yazin okhuyun ey iki gozum bajilar.
 Alimda nama zi baski dolammisham kandi,
 Iki dizim gozi sizilar, szim szim bajilar.
 Dadashlar evda dayer, mallalar gedip darsa,
 Besh alti gundi galip baghli kaghazim bajilar.
 Garak kaghaz yazana yalvaram man har hafta,
 Va dulduram jibina bir charak uzum bajilar.
 Evima galsa diyarlar dalimja bir para soz,
 Na gaynanam na nanam var, na baldizim bajilar.
 Agar gedam evina gorkhurar julowdardan,
 Evim galar bashina, man neja gazim bajilar.
 Boyumi gormaz, eshitmaz sasimi na mahram,
 Agar yazam okhyam kaghazi ozum bajilar.
 Neja diyum ona man har sozi bela yerda,
 Utaniram, oluram doghrudur sozum bajilar.
 Agar deyam yaz ushaglar galipdi tumanchakh,
 Neja diyum bu sozi tarlir a' rizim bajilar.
 "Eshitmiram sasivi, gal khanem bir az irali,"
 Ita'at eylamiyum, neyliyum guzum bajilar.
 Gahi alim gorunur, gah bilah, gahi bilazik,
 Gahi chanam, gahi gashim, gahi gozum bajilar.
 Zi baski tanga dushar qalb, raziyam buna ki,
 Gedim Jahannama, amma kaghaz yazim bajilar.
 Okhur, yazir hami millat khanemlari, lakin
 Alif goranda dirak zann edar bizim bajilar.
 Nishan verun mana, man Mo'juza, o manna'i
 Ki ta gafasini bu dashila azim bajilar.
 Oleydi kash okhudaydem beragham-e akhundand,
 Hezar heyf ki yokhdur manim gizim bajilar.³⁸

(Listen to me! O sisters, I have to tell you a word or two,
 go write and read! O my two eyes! O my sisters!
 Holding the letter in my hand, I have been roaming the village,
 my two knees are crying out their throbbing pains, o my sisters!
 My brothers are not at home, the mullas are gone to their schools,

o my sisters! This letter has been left unopened for five or six days.
 Every week I have to implore a letter-writer,
 and I have to fill his pockets with many pounds of grapes! O my sisters.
 If he comes to my house, the gossip will know no limits.
 O sisters, I have no mother-in-law, no mother, no sister-in-law at home.
 If I go to his house, I am afraid of the vigilantes,
 my home will be left unattended. O sisters! Is there any other choice left to me?
 Neither a stranger would see my stature, nor he would hear my voice,
 were I able to write and read my own letter, o my sisters.
 How can I tell all my words to him in such a private place?
 It is embarrassing, I feel dying, believe me o my sisters.
 If I say "please write that the kids need pants, their legs need to be covered,"
 how can I utter such words, I get drenched in sweat. O my sisters.
 "I can't hear you lady, move a little bit closer," he would say.
 Should I obey him or not ? O my dear innocent sisters.
 At times my hands are exposed, at times my wrists, and at times my bracelets.
 At times my chin is exposed, at times my eyebrows and my eyes do show, o
 sisters.
 The dilemma makes my heart stop beating, and I prefer
 to go to the hell, and learn to write my own letter, o sisters.
 The women of all nations can read and write,
 but our sisters think of a beam when they see *alif*.
 Show me, to this Mo'juz, one who bars you from learning,
 I 'll crush his head with this stone in my hand, o my sisters.
 I wish I had a daughter and let her read and write, despite the clergy's disapproval.
 Alas! A thousand times alas! I have none, o my sisters.)

Mo'juz in his "Sisters" and Lahuti in his "To the Daughters of Iran," both demonstrate that they are struggling with the challenges that their audience encounters. Both poets show an awareness of the responsibility they feel as the poets in their society. They are aware of their new mission. Almost with the same tone and intention of Lahuti, Mo'juz opens his poem. Yet we find no abstract concept in what Mo'juz speaks. "Listen to me! O my sisters, I have got to tell you a word or two" he says. At the very same moment the poet disappears from the scene, he merges with the "sisters" and seemingly becomes one of them. He only reappears in the four concluding lines. Even we are not quite sure if the very first and second lines are spoken by Mo'juz, or they also belong the poet already disguised as one of the sisters. In the third line we are positive of him becoming one of the sisters who is holding an "unopened letter" in her hand "roaming the village" alleys in order to find some one to read it for her. "My two knees are crying out their throbbing pains," she complains. Unlike Lahuti, Mo'juz has a very low profile in his poem. He finds nothing to admonish the sisters or daughters in order to make them move or change direction. They are almost powerless to do anything. Mo'juz pulls back and lets the story take its course shedding light onto every dark corner of a village woman's life.

Mo'juz depicts a real picture of daily life. The scene belongs to a typical young woman of Shabustar whose husband is either in Istanbul or Baku earning their livelihood. In the fifth line, we find the young woman articulating the tyranny she suffers in the family --the prejudice concerning the sex preferences among family members. "My brothers are not at home, and mullas are gone to their schools," she says. The line suggests that the "brothers" could read if they were at home. There is the inference that only the girls in the family are deprived of education. The masculine siblings are not barred from reading and writing. The poet demonstrates that the social problems such as sexism and sex preferences start at home. He depicts the different layers of the tyranny. In a society in which there was no law, no sanity, no health and no amenities, the women were doomed to suffer the most. Mo'juz creates a tantalizing and desperate scene by saying that "O my sisters! This letter has been left unopened for five or six days." There is nothing more pathetic and disturbing than having a letter in hand and not knowing its contents. In the sixth line the poet/sister says that the day's problem is not an erratic one, it is the same any time she receives a letter from her husband. She needs "to implore a letter-writer," and "fill his pocket with many pounds of grapes" in order to read her letter and, possibly, write an answer. As we have mentioned in the earlier chapters, the Guney county in Southern Azerbaijan is famous for its farm products especially the variety of grapes. No wonder, the young lady measures the expenses of reading and writing of a letter in terms of grapes. We find Mo'juz referring to the farm products, fruits, grapes and vineyards quite frequently.

Later on, Mo'juz addresses the dilemma of having a letter read by another person who, obviously in a masculine society, is a man --a stranger. "If he comes to my house, the gossip will know no limit," she says. The existence of a mother-in-law or a sister-in-law at home would fend her against "gossips." It is interesting to see that the young woman is made to give in to a lesser pain in the face of a greater one. In Mo'juz's "Letter of Condolence," we have seen how a bride celebrates "pushing the mother-in-law into her grave." Here at this juncture, she thinks of having a mother-in-law as a blessing. If she had a mother-in-law at home, the gossip would have some "limits," and it would not hurt her too much. She consents to having a mother-in-law at home in order to overcome the problem of reading the husband's letter. She cannot go to a letter writer's house because she cannot leave her house "unattended." The young woman, caught in the dilemma, resorts to wishful thinking: "Neither a stranger would see my stature, nor he would hear my voice/were I able to write and read my own letter," she thinks. Although Mo'juz is ironical in writing the line, there is truth in his reference to the prevalent beliefs of his time.

It was against the code of conduct to let women's stature be seen by strangers or her voice to be heard outside the family. These words of Mo'juz will be fully sensible when we read them in their cultural and social setting.

Majlisi, an icon in Shi'a jurisprudence until very recently, who was quoted in the earlier chapter, admonishes people with the injunctions such as "do not assign a room for your wives in the upper level of your house, do not teach them any writing, do not teach them Joseph's Chapter [Chapter XII of Koran]." Then he says "Teach them spinning, teach them Chapter of Light [Chapter XXIV]."³⁹ Majlisi wants women to be housed in the lower levels of a residence in order to minimize their vantage view. Otherwise, they will have a glimpse of the neighbor's men and will get corrupted. It is also interesting to know that from Majlisi's point of view the story of Joseph and Potiphor's wife (a Koranic chapter and God's words) could have immoralizing effects on women. Mo'juz in his poem called "Malak Nisa Will Understand Everything by Nature" mocks the idea saying that "It is not necessary for Joseph to teach *alif* and *lam*,/when the time comes Malak Nisa will understand by herself."⁴⁰ The poet mockingly makes his reader to ponder that the God could not be wrong in "sending down" Chapter XII of the holy book. He says that Malak Nisa (a woman's name in rural areas) will know everything by her biological drive. It is also interesting to note that the content of Koran's Chapter of Light (XXIV) runs ironical to its title. It does not deal with light, it opens with quite grim verses dealing with the God's wrath against "the adulterer and adulteress" whom He orders "scourge ye each one of them (with) an hundred stripes..." XXIV.2.⁴¹ Ironically, talking about adultery, "adulterer and adulteress" could have more immoral effects than the story of Joseph since it signifies the possibilities of committing adultery and being punished for it. The detailed and precise edicts about scourging the adulterer and adulteress could point to the prevalence and feasibility of adultery in a given society.

Here, I would also like to say few words about one of the common place beliefs concerning why girls were barred from schooling. It was commonly believed that the girls would write love letters to their lovers if they were literate. Mo'juz has parodied the idea in many instances. In his poem entitled "O Tarafda-Bu Tarafda" (On that Side-On This Side), parts of which I quoted in the previous chapter, Mo'juz compares and contrasts the life of the people on the two sides of the Araxes river --Northern and Southern Azerbaijan. The poet speaking on behalf of a clergy derisively says that "the ladies, who read and write, will write letters to their lovers." Then he mockingly argues that any person who "allows her daughter to hold pen in her hand" will have many reasons for "remorse in the Day of

Judgment.”

I referred to Majlisi’s ideas in order to illustrate the prevailing values and the social background against which Mo’juz’s poetry should be read in order to become more sensible. I need to have such references in order to have a better understanding of the period in general, and Mo’juz in particular because his poetry is so intimate with the life of his people. After having a brief glance at the prevailing values of the time, I would like to continue examination of Mo’juz’s “Sisters.” Discussing the problems on both sides of the dilemma, Mo’juz allows the young woman find herself with a male letter writer in a lonely room. “How can I tell all my words to him in such a private place,/It is embarrassing , I feel dying, believe me o my sisters,” she says. It may be beyond the imagination of the people in the literate societies to visualize such a scene and fully understand the signs and significations that the succeeding lines are loaded with. A young married couple want to communicate through the pen and paper of a third person. It might be a shocking irony that in a society where hearing a woman’s voice is considered to be a taboo, the mediating third person --the letter writer-- inevitably is a man. She has to let her husband know that the children’s “legs need to be covered,” they need to have new pants. The sexual overtones of the words such as “legs” or “pants” might only be comprehensible through the parallel stories and anecdotes of Victorian England.

While the young woman is spelling out her words, and the letter is being written in line 19, sincerely or out of malice, the letter writer expresses that he cannot hear his client --the young lady. It is a dilemma within the existing dilemma --to move forward or to remain where she is. Imagine a young woman sitting in a lonely room within inches from a strange man, their minds framed by the edict of not assigning “a room” for the “wives in the upper level” of the house, lest they might get a higher vantage point and see a stranger. Mo’juz tactfully lets the young woman think that with her every movement a hand, a wrist or a bracelet is being exposed. The poet also demonstrates the suggestiveness of revealing those small body parts and ornaments. Mo’juz’s description of the scene should be understood in terms of a society where women were veiled and strictly covered. Being critical of the situation, the poet makes the young lady say that going to hell is easier than suffering the pain of asking another person to write a letter for you. She parodies the idea that the women who learn reading and writing will be thrown into hell. Having a letter written in the depicted situation by no means is less than being sent to hell. Committing the sin of learning to read and write and being thrown in the hell as its result are preferred to getting a letter read or written under such difficult conditions --a hell with its worldly and

real dimensions.

In line 25, the poet's presence starts surfacing as he says that "The women of all nations can read and write." We are informed that other nations' women are reading and writing, but "our sisters think of a supporting beam when they see *"alif."* *Alif* is the first character in Persio-Arabic alphabet which looks like a vertical line. Mo'juz usually speaks to his people in terms and standards of an oral community. Since an illiterate person cannot assign abstract signs for things and events around him/her, s/he tends to convert any abstract idea into a sensible familiar object. Thus a vertical short line will find its associative material object such as "supporting beam," and any circular concept will become a bucket or plate. In line 27, Mo'juz makes a bold appearance purposefully by saying "Show me, to this Mo'juz, one who bars you from learning, / I'll crush his head with this stone in my hand o my sisters." Since he is in the position of challenging the adversary, the poet emphatically says "show me, to this Mo'juz." It is against the codes of tribal and primitive fidelity to advocate a cause, and challenge the adversary and be hidden when the actual confrontation is about to take place. Thus the poet uses his own name, "Mo'juz," even though he refers to himself with the pronoun "me" earlier in the line. Mo'juz had no children. In the last two lines the poet pathetically refers to his own real life and says "I wish I had a daughter and let her read and write, despite the clergy's disapproval. / Alas! A thousand times alas I have none, o my sisters."

We notice how Mo'juz deals differently with the same issues approached by his Persian speaking contemporaries. Mo'juz deals with life without mediation of a formal and established medium. He speaks with the same words and syntax that a father would speak to his daughter. Poets like Bahar and Lahuti cannot mold their old formal language into a medium to address a real situation effectively. Lahuti's new message is held back by the limits framed by the formalities of a language which was overused by the court poets of many centuries. Reading Mo'juz's poetry makes us to feel and sense the warmth and breath of real life within his lines. The oral characteristics of Azeri language and culture make Azeri poetry pulsate with warmth of life. Being employed usually in informal interactions, the Azeri language can hardly detach itself from real life. The language falls short of a formal medium. A comparison between Bahar's "O Woman" Parts of which I quoted earlier and Mo'juz's poem entitled "Ay Giz" (O Girl) might illustrate the point further. As mentioned earlier, Mo'juz's "O Girl" is one of the few instances in which the poet's person appears as an admonisher, yet it will show how the two poets are different in their approach, and they vary in their world views quite drastically. Here is Mo'juz's "O

Girl" in its entirety:

Har millat edar kasbi ulumo hunar ay giz,
Bizda yashadikh dahrida misli bagar ay giz.

Tark etdi jahani atan ey mahi latafat,
Orgatdi na san'at sana, na e'lmi kitabat,
Onnan sana miras fagat galdi jahalat,
Oldin ghami ayyamila khunin jigar ay giz.

Zann etma ghamo ghussa dan azad olajakhsan,
Iqbal uzun guldirajak shad olajakhsan,
Na Qaziya, na Hajiya arvad olajakhsan,
Ki kef chakasan qasrida sham-o sahar ay giz.

Dowlatlini dowlatli alar, Yokhsuli yokhsul,
Ortar Haji gizlarinin eybilarini pul,
Na sanda hunar var va na a'eina, na ostul,
Na farsh, na sajjada, na simo na zar ay giz.

Bir boyni yoghun ganmaz olar ar sana mutlaq,
Lakin sana yar olmaz o bie'urza mohaqqaq,
Zira ki o namard, o forumaya, o alchaq,
Almish boshamish san kimi chokh bi pedar ay giz.

Vaqt ki sonar atashi nafsi o la'eynin,
Bu "mard" gabirgasin azar taza galinin,
Tapdar deyar ey qahba halal eyla kabinin,
Rahm eylamaz hargiz sana o narra khar ay giz.

Akhirda boshar malla ki kasmishdi nikahin,
Foran govar evadan sani o pushti panahin,
Aflaka chikhar shamo sahar sho'ale-yi ahin,
O gunki oshakh tarpani, garnin shishar ay giz.

Getdin ora bir janli gayitdin iki janli,
Dardin biridi, indi min oldi azavalli,
Gizlar okhusun olsun aghilli va kamalli,
Mo'juz diyar amma siza etmaz asar ay giz.⁴²

(Every nation aspires to science and art, o girl,
but, like a cow, we spent our lives.

O delicate moon! Your father passed away,
he neither trained you for a vocation, nor did he teach you how to write.
His bequest to you was only his ignorance,
you were left alone in the grips of sorrow o girl.

Don't think that you'll be freed from your doles and sorrows,
don't think that you'll laugh and see happiness;
you will neither be the wife of a lawyer nor a Haji;

you'll never live in a mansion and enjoy your morn and evening o girl.

The wealthy marries the wealthy, a pauper marries a pauper,
money covers up all the defects of the wealthy's daughter,
you know neither art, nor have you a mirror, no stool,
you have no rugs, no prayer carpet, no silver no gold o girl.

An illiterate ignorant culprit will become your husband;
but that culprit cannot make a real spouse for sure;
because that mean, that abhorible and detestable man;
has married and divorced many fatherless ones like you.

After that detestable creature's flames of carnal craving get extinguished,
the unmanly *man* will crush the ribs of the newly wed bride,
he will pound you and will say "O whore disown your dowry."
That beast will never have mercy upon you o girl.

The very same mulla who had wed you will perform the divorce.
The unfaithful creature will kick you out of your nest;
the fire of your flaming heart will burn down the firmament
when the baby in your womb starts moving o girl.

You went to your husband's house with one soul, you are returning with two,
you had one problem, now it became one thousand you poor thing.
Girls should master reading in order to become wise and independent,
Mo'juz keeps telling you, but you don't want to listen to him o girl.)

Although the poem appears to address girls, Mo'juz makes it clear that the problem concerning girls or women is not separate from the society as a whole. Addressing girls, Mo'juz expresses his regret that "like a cow we spent our lives" in idleness. Unlike Bahar or Lahuti who depict their lives detached and unaffected by women's problems, Mo'juz blames himself for the plight of the women. Before speaking a word about women, Mo'juz reminds us that every nation on earth "aspires to science and art," whereas, his life has been as idle as that of a "cow." From the very start, Mo'juz does not isolate the girls' plight from the totality of the whole society. The poet makes it very clear that the many-folded tyranny to which the women were being subjected in the Iran of his time was a result of the illiterate and ignorant men who would like to house their wives in the basement of their buildings rather than allowing them to have a "room in the upper level."⁴³ With a sense of compassion and pity about the tyranny to which the girls are subjected, the poet says "O delicate moon! Your father passed away, he neither trained you for a vocation, nor did he teach you how to write." As we have seen in the earlier chapter, Mo'juz shows some kind of understanding about the causes of the social problems. He does not blame

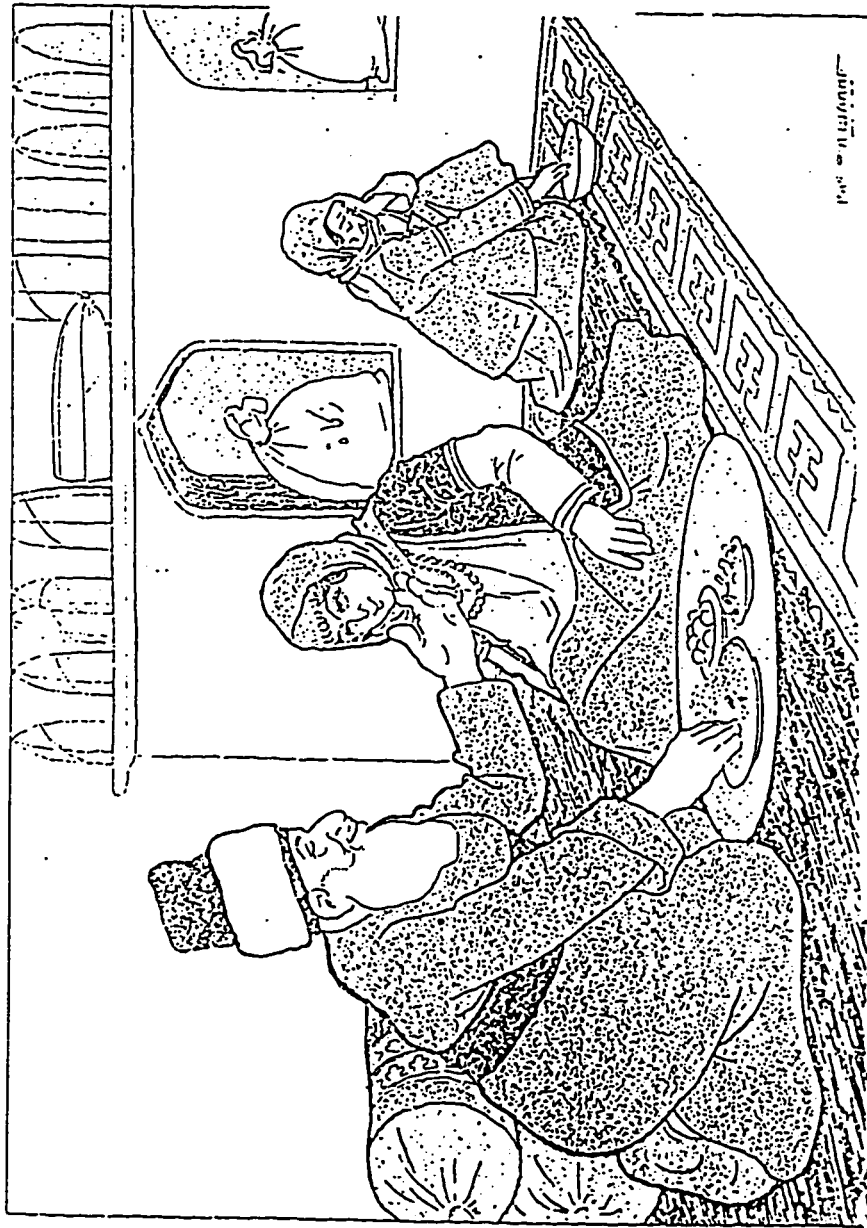


Plate 5: A Young Girl Married to an Old Man
Mulla Navreddin No. 17 April 28, 1907

girls for their illiteracy or their belief in fortune-tellers. He blames the father for the daughter's miseries in life. He clearly expresses that all the miseries of a girl's life stem from the fact that her father did not function as a responsible guardian. It is interesting to note that Mo'juz also employs an overused metaphor addressing the girls --"delicate moon." Conventionally, a bright full-moon is used to refer to the beauty of a beloved. Mo'juz uses the classical signifier, but he refers to the quality of delicacy of moon in order to contrast it with the harsh phases of the subject's life which he is about to depict in detail. Such an expression is used only once in the poem in order to show the irony between what a girl has been called or imagined, and her dire destiny. Later on, Mo'juz blames the father for his own ignorance as well. He says that the father's "bequest to you was his ignorance only," for which the poet quite often blames the clergy and the ruling class. Once more we see how tyranny operates in different layers.

In the third stanza, the poet reminds his audience that misery will breed fresh miseries. "Don't think that you'll be relieved from your doles and sorrows; /don't think that you'll laugh and see happiness," the poet says. Later on, he switches to talk about positioning the different categories of people in the society according to their financial and educational merits. Obviously, "The wealthy marries the wealthy, and a pauper marries a pauper." However, knowledge of a profession or being able to read and write could be an asset for the people lacking material wealth. The poet argues that a girl, who does not know "an art," or has no "mirror, no stool," should not expect a smooth and easy life. Her lot will not be "a lawyer or a [wealthy]Haji." "An illiterate ignorant culprit will become" her husband. Thus the unhappy end of the luckless marriage is bleakly visible from the very beginning. The illiterate "culprit cannot make a real spouse for sure," because that "mean, that abhorible and detestable" creature "has married and divorced" many orphans like her. He "will pound" her until she disclaims her rights to ask for her "dowry." The poet uses "fatherless" to mean orphan. The word *bipedar* meaning "fatherless" both in Persian and in Azeri has bad connotations. It is a curse on father which, to my knowledge, is intended by the poet; it means ill-mannered and lacking any decency and morality. From the very beginning of the poem, Mo'juz has put the blame on the father for the girl's looming miseries. There is an inference that the existence and nonexistence of the father who does not function as a responsible one is the same. Thus the "newly wed bride" will be pounded to the point of disowning her dowry. *Kabinim halal janim azad* --my dowry disclaimed, set me free-- is a proverb in the Azeri language which is occasioned after this commonly known practice. The men who refrained to pay

their wives' dowry at the time of divorce, it was a standard procedure for them to beat and abuse their wives to the point in which they disclaimed their right for their dowry which was considered to be their legal property. Mo'juz depicts a typical woman's miserable life in its different stages. The unhappy story does not end by saying "my dowry disclaimed set me free." There are other miseries yet to encounter.

It is interesting to see how the problem of women's illiteracy develops into a chain of problems. While the poet refers to each problem, a complete picture of the society is given. Mo'juz's depiction of the problems manifests that every one in the society is guilty of what is happening to women, and every one is to be blamed. Yet the degree of their guilt and blame vary according to their assumed and expected responsibilities. The girl as a minor in her father's house is depicted as an innocent victim. The ignorant father, abusive and "mean" husband and social system each play a role in her victimization. Mo'juz usually puts the most blame on the clergy and the ruling class. The clergy and the ruling class were the two poles which governed the people's minds, their private and social lives. That is why the poet continues sarcastically to say that "the very same mulla, who had wed you, will perform the divorce." There is a sense of contempt in the idea of the same clergy performing both wedding and divorce. There is the inference that the mulla is performing his act of wedding and divorce practice as a routine business, he acts quite irresponsibly and indifferently without showing any human feeling toward the plight in which a woman has ended up. After the divorce "the unfaithful creature will kick" her out of her "nest," and the catastrophe will reach to its most acute point "when the baby" in her "womb" will start moving.

In the concluding stanza, we have both the problems complicated and compounded on the one hand, and their resolution on the other. The girl had gone to the "husband's house with one life," and now she is coming back "with two." She had gone to face one problem --the culprit husband-- now she is back with "one thousand problems." However, the poet has the key to all those problems: "girls should master reading in order to become wise and independent," he says. There is a sense of openness and light-heartedness in Mo'juz's recommendation. There is a sense of forgiving in case of women's short comings. According to my reading, the last line is quite suggestive about such forgiveness when the poet says "Mo'juz keeps telling you, but you don't want to listen to him." It seems the poet has taken on the duty of continuous and repetitive remarks until he makes the girls start listening to him. I would like to compare the two concluding lines of Lahuti's "To the Daughters of Iran" with the two ending lines of Mo'juz here. Both poems end with

some kind of propitious resolutions. Yet the two poets differ in their prioritizing the necessities. Mo'juz finds the girls victimized and deprived of their basic rights. He wants to save their lives, and he recognizes their literacy as the first step in the process; he has a defined remedy to cure the problem –“girls should master reading in order to become wise and independent.” Mo'juz wants to save the girls for their own sake primarily. Lahuti does not see the women's plight; or their plight is of lesser importance to him. The poet's own art and the motherland appear to be his priorities. He wants to change the old rhetoric into a new form. He wants to make them better mothers for the children and better wives for men. He wants to make them better tools in converting the “copper” of the homeland into gold. He does not recognize the reality of women's lives.

While speaking on Mo'juz's blames of the ignorant father bequeathing ignorance to his daughter and pouring out his wrath on the abusive husband, I would like to mention that Lahuti has referred to the idea as well. However, Mo'juz is someone who belongs to the same sphere as the girls or sisters do. He gives his audience a full picture of a society in which a man is both an “ignorant” father or a “culprit” husband. He depicts an illiterate and poor girl's plight in a society in which “the wealthy marries the wealthy and a pauper marries a pauper.” The reader gets a complete picture of the society in which every one functions according to his/her assigned position –ultimately instituting an adverse environment for unprivileged women. There are no commands or injunctions from the poet. The poet, the audience and reader are faced with realities to which they are to react accordingly.

Before we close our discussion on the reflection of women's issues as a feature of modernity in the literature produced by both Azeri and Non-Azeri Iranians of the Constitutional era⁴⁴ and the relevance of *neqab* to the codes of morality and chastity, I would like to analyze another poem from Mo'juz entitled “Gizim Giz Doghdi” (My Daughter Gave Birth to a Girl) in order to sum up our comparison of Mo'juz with Lahuti, Bahar, Iraj and Ashraf ud-Din of Gilan. Again, the poem manifests how Mo'juz depicts a full picture of a society: father, mother, brother, the rich, the poor, the clergy and the ruling class all shoulder their share of burden and misery. The poet depicts the layers of tyranny and misery to which the people are subjected to in relation to their social standing –women suffering the most and being the most deprived category in the system. While other poets present segments of life, Mo'juz presents life as a complete whole:

Khabar galdi mana indi bu sa'at,
Gizin bir giz doghub saqi basharat.
Vali oqatini talkh eylamish chokh,

Pedar nozadin o kan-e malahat.
 Diyillar gashgabaghin turshdibpdir,
 Sizin damad o mard-e kam farasat.
 "Yena giz doghmusan san" soyliyirmish,
 Gaman eytir ki gizda var qabahat.
 Ki ya'ni isdaseydi nar doghardi,
 Onunchun sakhlayib kino a'davat.
 Danishdermer na muddatdur a'yalin,
 Chakar khijlat o zahu binahayat.
 Manimdur mujda saqi lutf gil tiz,
Jazakallah hkayran valbashashat.
 Cho soz bitdi galib ghalyana saqi,
 Dedi ey bum-e shum-e bimorovvat;
 Ajab owqatemi talkh eyladin san,
 Ajab etdin mani gharg-e kasalat.
 Agar damad soymur giz ayalin
 Yaqinan onda yokh jay-e malamat.
 Agar che ne'mat-e rabbul'atadur,
 Moa'azallah gizi soymak na hajat.
 Magar biz Inglisukh ya Frangukh?
 Va ya Rus etmiyakh gizdan shikayat?
 Khuda Iranliya hech vermiya giz,
 Be haqi rutbe-ye shah-e vilayat.
 Ara getsa nagadri kharjo zahmat,
 Yeri narahat olsa dardo mehnat,
 Ari oldi va ya inki boshandi,
Fa-bashshir bilpedar ja-almosibat.
 Gedanda bir ozi amma galanda,
 Ilahi galmiyeydi sagh salamat.
 Biri garninda, biri gujaghinda,
 Uchi yaninda qad qamat qiyamat..
 Ata bichara heyran oz ishinda,
Faja'at binthu belkhamsi mehnat.
 Musalman ovrati hech ish goranmaz,
 Haramdur chun ona kasbo tijarat.
 Ali gorasansa ya inki jamali
 Tokar ganin o dam tigh-e shari'at.
 Olanmaz giz ki bir attara shagerd,
 Satanmaz giz ki bir qassab kimi at.
 Acha bilmaz ki dukkan charsuda,
 Eda bilmaz ki bir najjara khidmat.
 Olarmi ki ola bazzaza mirza?
 Olrmi ki eda khalqa tababat?
 Ola bilmaz, suvayinki dilanchi,
 Gorabilmaz bir ish gheyraz vaqahat.
 Dada oldi, parishan oldi dokhtar,
 Parishana kim eylar iste'anat.
 Yola dushdi dilanchi karvani,
 Ga bakh ey haji-ye sahib dayanat.
 Gunuzlar hamrah-e obasho gallash,
 Gejalar hamsar arbab-e shahvat.

Zarurat pozdi akhlaqin faqirin,
 Kharab oldi tamamen o vilayat.
 Garak azad ola oghlan kimi giz,
 Che dar san'at che dar fann-e kitabat.
 Gichin tutsin garak, achsin jamalin,
 Vabali boynuma ruzi qiyamat.
 Kishi bashina mirfash salmiyubki,
 Oni har gun gorur ya gormur owrat?
 Jahalat pardasin yert at uzunnan,
 Tulu'a etmaz biza shams-e sa'adat.
 Garak dursun baba giz bir dukanda,
 Sharik olsun garak Ahmadla Esmat.
 Pedar nakhoshladi baghlendi hijra,
 Na yapsin giz? Neja etdsin ma'ishat?
 Shikast oldi gichi bichara zojen,
 Dayandi gapiya faqro zarurat.
 Talab batmaz, dukan baghlanmaz akhar,
 Agar azad ola kablayi Showkat.
 Tamam etdi sozun Mo'juz bunila'
 Gualg ver pandima eyla ita'at.

(O saki! The tidings! I got the news just now
 that my daughter gave birth to a girl.
 But that innocent new-born baby
 has roused her father's anger.
 I have been told that my son-in-law --dense man--
 frowning, is sitting like a lunatic.
 "Did you bring a girl again?" he has been yelling,
 since he thinks that having a girl is a shame.
 As if she had a choice in having the boy,
 that is why the husband is mad and angry.
 He is not talking to her anymore,
 the poor parturient is in extreme embarrassment.
 O Saki, the good news is for me;
 God bless you with reward of happiness.
 Once I was over with my words, saki got infuriated
 and said "O! You forecaster of portents and bad omens.
 "You made me mad!
 "You ruined my day.
 "If your son-in-law does not like a girl,
 "you have no right to blame him.
 "Although a girl is God's blessing as has been said,
 "God may forgive me, but we have no reason to like a girl.
 "Are we English or French?
 "Or Russian not to frown for having a daughter.
 "May God stop giving daughters to Iranians!
 "I swear to the glory of the first Imam.
 "Sending her to a husband's house means expenses and difficulties;
 "and a bad husband will bring troubles and catastrophes.
 "If the husband passes away, or she gets a divorce,
 "tell the father that your troubles are coming.

"When she left, she was by herself,
 "but when she returns! No perish! Die! Do not return,
 "One in her womb, one in her lap,
 "three walking on her side, they'll make the father's doom day.
 "The poor father is shocked from what is happening;
 "his daughter has returned with five catastrophes.
 "A Moslem woman cannot perform any job,
 "since she is banned from any business or vocation.
 "If her hand is exposed or her face is seen,
 "the panderers of Shari'a will shed her blood.
 "The girl cannot work as an apprentice to an apothecary;
 "neither can she sell meat as a butcher.;
 "she cannot open a store in a market place.
 "neither can she be at the service of a carpenter.
 "Could she become a clerk in a drapery store?
 "Could she become a physician and heal the people?
 "Except pan-handling, she deserves no other job;
 "except prostitution, she can perform no profession.
 "After the father's death, the daughter is distressed and hopeless,
 "the hopeless and distressed have no support.
 "After the father's death, the caravan of beggars will set out!
 "O pious Hajis! Come and watch the pageantry.
 "During the day, she will be an accomplice of the hooligans,
 "during the night, she will be in bed with the lecherous.
 "Neediness results in the immorality of the poor;
 "the whole land will be corrupted as a result.
 "The girls should be free like the boys
 "both in vocation and education.
 "She should open her beautiful face and cover her leg,
 "I will be accountable in the Day of Judgment.
 "Do the men cover their heads or faces?
 "Don't the women see them every day?
 "Tear this curtain of ignorance off your face,
 "otherwise, our sun of prosperity will never rise.
 "Father and daughter should run the same store.
 "Ahmad and Esmat should be business partners.
 "If the father falls ill, and the store gets shut down,
 "what should the girl do? How should she earn her life?"
 "If the poor husband broke his leg,
 "paupery and neediness will knock at the door;
 "Checks and balances will not be lost, the business will not get shut down,
 "if Kabalayi Showkat is emancipated."
 Mo'juz has finished his advice with these words,
 Listen to them and put them in practice.)

While reading the poem, we become part of the time and place of the poet through our participation in the episodes of the narrative. The poet helps his reader develop a critical approach to the values which were, and still are, governing the minds of many people in Iran and the region. The poet starts his depiction of his environment with a

simplistic whim which lingers in the minds of men even women in many places and among many peoples --the preference of having a son rather than a daughter which is not acknowledged or articulated yet it haunts many minds. However, as an affectionate grandfather, the poet is happy to hear that his daughter has given birth to a girl. Yet the news is not wholly happy because the arrival of the "innocent new born baby" has caused a big rift in the family. The son-in-law is mad at his wife for bringing a baby girl. He thinks "that having a girl is a shame," and yells at his wife and asking why did she "bring a girl once again?" From the very beginning, the poet makes it clear that the "lunatic" behavior of the son-in-law is an inhuman act which deserves condemnation. Before digging into the roots of this major social issue, Mo'juz exposes the heinousness of the notion with the bluntness of a man who blames his wife for having a baby girl "as if she had a choice in having the boy." Against the picture of the blunt and irrational man, the poet also depicts "the poor paturient," who barely recovering from the labors and complications of child bearing, is subjected to the "embarrassment" and contempt: her husband "is not talking to her any more."

From line 16 onward, Saki functions as the poet's conscience analyzing the different social factors and dissecting the traditions from which the "lunatic" and "dense" son-in-law is a product. Defending the son-in-law, Saki begins to say that if he "does not like a girl,/ you have no right to blame him." Mo'juz, disguised as Saki, refers to the famous tradition from Prophet Muhammad in which he calls having a girl a blessing from God. Thus the poet says that "although a girl is God's blessing," but "God may forgive me, we have no right to like a girl." Then the poet starts speaking in a very concrete and plausible manner. "Are we English or French?" or even a "Russian not to frown for having a girl?" The answer to the rhetorical questions is quite clear, thus the poet makes a wish by saying "May God stop giving daughters to Iranians."

With taking an oath to the "first Imam," the poet enumerates the reasons why parents, especially father, perhaps, might not like having female children. "Sending her [a daughter] to husband's house means expenses and difficulties," he says. If the husband proves to be a bad one, it will be another catastrophe. By a mishap, if the husband passes away, or she gets a divorce, again they all add up to the worries and troubles of the parents --the father in particular. From line 29 to line 36, Mo'juz provides us with clear pictures of what happens to a young woman when she is divorced. "When she left, she was alone by herself,/but when she returns," she has "one in her womb, one in her lap, three walking by her side." They'll make the father's "doom's day." Mo'juz creates a very unique situation;

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marriage.

If the daughter does not fall while being hit by the father's hat then it is time for her

"She did not fall! Mulla perform her marriage ceremony!"

Plate 6: Testing the Time of Marriage
Mulla Nasreddin No. 39 October 20, 1907

the lunatic and dense man, who does not speak to his young wife because she did not choose to give birth to a boy instead of a baby girl, disappears from the scene. He becomes an old man whose daughter has been divorced, returning home with four children and a fifth one in her womb. Later on, the poet starts discussing some apparently small issues which eventually produce those catastrophes for the daughters and their parents. In very plain language, Mo'juz makes us rethink what we believe and how we behave. He wakes his readers up to rethink about the traditions and conventions which frame our mind with no valid reason or rationality. "A Moslem woman cannot perform any job," he says. She is not allowed to learn a "vocation" or engage in "business." Then he mockingly provides the reasons; "If her hand is exposed or her face is seen,/ the panderers of Shari'a will shed her blood."

Later the poet names all the legitimate vocations and professions in a community that every person can perform. Yet women are unjustly barred from engaging in them. "The girl cannot work as an apprentice to apothecary,/neither can she sell meat as a butcher," he says. She can neither work as a "carpenter" nor can she work as a "clerk in a drapery store." She cannot "become a physician and heal the people." Ironically, the only jobs left open for the women are pan-handling and prostitution. The poet's ironies become more effective with our earlier knowledge that the women have been barred from all the legitimate and permissible professions which they could perform. The poet comes to the conclusion that if "the panderers of Shari'a" have banned women from engaging in the honest ways of earning their sustenance, they have opened the door for the dishonest ways of life such as pan-handling and prostitution. Thus he ironically continues to say: "except pan-handling she deserves no other job,/except prostitution she can perform no profession."

Mo'juz continues to depict a very typical story. A young woman is kicked out of her husband's house. She has no education; she neither has a profession nor is she allowed to engage in any business. She is born and bred to be dependent to an abusive man. Thus with her five children, she has no where to go but her father's house. As a rule of nature, the father's time arrives, and he dies. The poet pictures the young woman and her children when he says: "a hopeless and distressed [daughter] has no support,/after the father's death, a caravan of beggars will set out." Parodying the situation and deriding the consequences of the misconceived traditions and dogmatic beliefs, the poet addresses the religious pietists and says; "O pious Hajis! Come and watch the pageantry." There is a two-fold irony in the poet's addressing the pious Hajis to come and watch the pageantry of

beggars' caravan. Besides the inference that the catastrophe befalling the young woman is the direct aftermath of the wrong beliefs, there is an ironic reference to the pageantry and passion plays of Moharram when watching them and participation in their performance were considered to be beatific and rewarding acts. The "pious Hajis" who participate in the pageantry proceedings of Moharram are also invited to watch the beggars pageantry, and ironically, get their rewards. There are other implications to the poet's addressing of the "pious Hajis" in order to watch the pageantry of beggars' caravan. The illiteracy of the young woman and the impermissibility of her engaging in some kind of legitimate vocation were usually ideas advocated by the "pious Hajis," in fact, barring girls from learning or acquiring a vocation were considered to be the tokens of piety. The reader is made to construe that the piety, which engenders immorality and social ills, is in reality an impiety. In the social hierarchy of Mo'juz's community, the word Haji was also closely tied with significations such as wealth and power. Again Mo'juz's calling the Hajis to watch the miserable scene of beggars reverses all those positive significations of the signifier and strips it from all its recognized associations. Thus the villain of Mo'juz's story keeps shifting his class wearing different masks. At our first encounter with the story the villain was the "lunatic" and "dense" husband, then we got "the panderers of Shari'a" as villains; finally "the pious Hajis" are introduced as villains. As we have mentioned earlier, Mo'juz did not see social problems isolated from each other. He usually saw them interrelated within the totality of the social system. He does not blame a single person or class for the tyranny to which women were subjected to. He demonstrates that every one has her/his share of the guilt. Therefore, if the young woman is "an accomplice of the hooligans" during the day time, and she is "in the bed with lecherers" at nights, every one in the community is to take a blame. "Neediness results in the immorality of the poor," the poet stipulates. The rich in the community must take its share of the blame.

Finally, beginning with line 57, the poet offers his resolution for the problem. "The girls should be free like the boys," he says. There should be no gender preference. Girls and boys should enjoy equal privileges "both in vocation and education." Then the poet offers his prescription of clothing for a girl inspired by the attire and the traditional clothing of rural and tribal women to which he belongs.⁴⁵ "She should open her beautiful face and cover her leg," he prescribes. Then he derisively adds that he will be "accountable" for all its conceived ill consequences in the Day of Judgment. Again, with his simple logic, Mo'juz wants his audience to understand that uncovering women's face or hairs cannot be a sin as it has wrongly been conceived. "Do the men cover their head or

face?” he asks “Don’t the women see them every day?” The poet advises the girls “to remove” the “curtain of ignorance” in order to enable them to work in the same store along with their father and brother. “Father and daughter should run the same store,” he says, “Ahmad and Esmat should be business partners.” As an oral narrator, Mo’juz tends to speak in concrete and plausible terms. A literate man talking to a literate audience tends to classify and encode his ideas, Mo’juz speaking to the illiterate Azeri masses tends to declassify and decode the abstract ideas. By using proper names such as Ahmad to mean boys, and Esmat to mean girls, the poet tries to objectify the issue and make it to appear as a fact of the real life. According to the poet, a father’s illness or his death will not ruin the totality of a daughter’s life. If the husband breaks his leg, paupery and destitute will not “knock at the door.” The debtors will not default, and “the business will not shut down/ if Kabalayi Showkat is emancipated.” Once more, Mo’juz picks out a very common woman’s proper name –Kabalayi Showkat– instead of using a word attributing to a class or a group of people. Thus the poet closes his narrative and his moral teachings by asking his audience to “listen to them and put them in practice.”

I think some elaboration would be helpful concerning Mo’juz’s criterion for a girl to “open her beautiful face and cover her leg.” Belonging to the rural area and being the heir of tribal traditions to some extent, Mo’juz would consider a veil as an encumbrance for a rural woman’s active life and hard work. In fact, women in tribal and rural communities not only did not cover their faces, but they had a pivotal role in managing the family affairs. Mo’juz belongs to the rural and tribal culture in which a mother has been referred to as a “lioness” who goes out after her prey to the remote corners of the wilderness, at the same time she feeds and trains her cubs at home. To get a true picture of a woman’s position and her role in the tribal Azeri tradition of life, I would like to quote a short passage from the *Dada Gorgut* epic to which all Turkic peoples place their claim for credit. The stories of the epic belongs to the early centuries of present millennium, but they have been put together in the form of a book long after those times.⁴⁶ My quotation is from Bulut Qarachorli’s rendition of the epic. The passage is from the story of *Dohka Goja Oghlu: Dali Domurul*.

Dishi aslan bizim ana,
amzik vermish nar oghlana,
khamir yaymish, chorak yapmish,
goyun saghmish, inak saghmish.
Arkhalnmish oz arila.
O yaradan allarila,
tokhmushdir rahli gaba.

Ahsan olsun bizim daba!⁴⁷

(A lioness is our mother,
nursing her male cubs,
she kneads the dough and bakes the bread,
she milks the sheep, she milks the cows.
With her own husband, she sleeps.
With her creative hands
she weaves colorful mats.
Praise be to our customs.)

The passage places a woman in the center of a tribal life performing almost all the vital works. The metaphoric reference to the woman as a lioness depicts a very powerful and effective image. We get the picture of a lioness who excels her own male counterpart. She is the one who “nurses” male cubs; she is the one who “kneads the dough and bakes the bread” --without whom no one will be fed. “She milks the sheep, she milks the cows,” playing a key role in the productivity and meeting the needs on the one hand, and managing the family on the other. The line “With her own husband, she sleeps” yields an inference of moral discipline and determination. The poet uses the word *arkhalanmish* which means both to lie down in the same place and to support each other back to back. Again the “creating hands” of the lioness mother weave colorful “mats” to cover the floor and to provide warmth and comfort to the family life environment. Thus such a mother who has instituted the orderly “customs” and canons deserves a “praise.” Although succinct in its wording, the passage is a miniature of a wholesome tribal life and suggestive of many ideas and meanings. The encumbrance of a face covering --*hijab* or *niqab*-- cannot have place in an efficient and dynamic life depicted in the passage. In fact, the authors and politicians of Iranain Constitutional Era who supported women’s unveiling referred to the life, clothing and the moral discipline of the tribal women as their ideal examples. Kasravi, the prolific and famous Azeri historian addresses the urbanized veiled women and admonishes them to follow the example of the tribal and rural women.

In respect to the veil issue, you urban women need to emulate the veil-less rural women. Clearly, every thing in town is superior to the village, urban dwellers should supersede the villagers in all respects. Yet it has been *visè versa* in the case of women, for sure, the rural women have been superior to the urban ones. Because rural women are real partners of their husband in sharing both the evils and goods of life, they have more awareness about the works of their husbands, and they show more enthusiasm and concern for them. But the veiled urban women lack these privileges of theirs.⁴⁸

It is interesting to note here that the authors such as Mo’juz and Kasravi not only pointed at the tribal and rural women as examples, they also looked for their prototypes in

the early days of Islam --*ahd-e risalat*.⁴⁹ In his poem called "The will," quoted in the previous chapter, Mo'juz advises his wife to uncover her face and walk in the market place after his death in order to find a job. The poet claims that the "sisters" at the dawn of Islam appeared in the public the same way without covering their faces.

I would like to sum up what I have mentioned in my comparison of Mo'juz and other Iranian authors of the Constitutional era. With his choice of the Azeri language as the only medium of his poetry, Mo'juz took the fundamental step to differentiate himself from his other Iranian contemporaries. He articulated a difference upon which other differences depended. Following his Azerbaijani precursors, he conveyed his message in his typical indigenous way to his people and to his Azeri homeland. In order to discuss an issue or speak on a problem, he depicted a complete picture of the society in which all members of the community acted in a network of relationships. As a storyteller of an oral community, he employed a narrative technique to convey his messages. He avoided abstractions, he dealt with concrete events of real life. The orality of the Azeri language, its vigor, simplicity, its immediacy and intimacy with life, made Mo'juz sound more sincere, more real and more involved. He used the language of the most intimate circles --the language of father talking to his daughter, the language of mothers, brothers and siblings as opposed to the predominately court-oriented Persian language.

Tantamount to his employment of language, Mo'juz dealt with the reality of life as a whole. Mo'juz depicted graphic pictures of women's life shedding light on its dark corners, digging into the different layers of their victimization --exposing each and every misery to which they were subjected. Mo'juz's concern with the problems of women is the fundamental theme in his poetry. His poetry allotted to the cause of women far exceeds that of the combined works of all other poets of the era in both Northern and Southern Azerbaijan together. Poets such as Bahar, Lahuti and Ashrafuddin could hardly cut themselves off from the redundancies of the court-oriented Persian language. His mentality framed by the old value system, Bahar was baffled with his own rapid upward move in the political ladder and fast changing scene. He contradicted himself by advocating a cause in which he did not believe sincerely. One could feel some kind of a gap between his language and the idea he pretended to advocate. Lahuti was able employ the old concepts and figures in a very fresh and unconventional manner. Although Lahuti's language became more simple and refined in the later stages of his career as a poet, he lacked the sincerity and involvement to replace his artful recycling of rhetorical figures of classics. In fact, he lost the tenacity of the classics, failing to attain the sincerity and realism of the

modern. His poetry became the Communistic bravado of a responsible comrade after he settled in former Soviet Union. Ashrafu'd-din continued to be a faithful believer. Like Bahar, he also wrote contradictory lines which reflected his inability to adapt this value system with fast moving social events. Iraj was the only poet among the authors of the period who wrote in the Persian language yet taming and twisting it and making it fully serve his ideas. "Iraj is to be remembered as one who succeeded, not in bringing the language of the classicists down to the earth, but in elevating the popular language of the classicists," in Yarshater's words.⁵⁰ However, his vulgar diction and his inconsistencies at times make his reader think if there is any sincerity or truth in what the poet is speaking. With his obscene and direct attacks against people or ideas, Iraj tends to vulgarize very serious issues and reduce them to the trivial personal grudges.

Criticism of Ignorance and Superstitions in the Works of the Major Poets of the Constitutional Era: Criticizing people's ignorance, their belief in superstitions, treatment of the heretical Moharram pageantry, self-flagellation and self mutilation, and above all believing in fortune-tellers of different kinds are among the issues discussed in the works of the authors of the Constitutional Era. Again, Mo'juz , considering himself less a poet and more a satirist or social critic, wrote on people's ignorance and their belief in superstitions more than any poet of the period. The poet directed his parodies, satire and criticism at the social maladies such as illiteracy, ignorance and superstitions by depicting them in the people's lives. While other authors of the period dealt only with the ideas concepts of the social maladies, Mo'juz tried to show what all those problems mean as reflected in each and every individual's life. Mo'juz avoided any abstractions or intellectualization of any problem. He tried to present the concrete reality of people's miserable life. Out of four non-Azeri poets discussed in the earlier part of the chapter, I will choose to discuss only two major figures –Bahar and Iraj. I will examine only a single poem from each one; a single poem also will be quoted from Mo'juz. All three poems from the three poets are in criticism of the heretical performances of Moharram.

Bahar and Superstitions: As mentioned earlier, although Bahar is one of the prolific poets of the period; we find very few poems from him that deal with the social problems in the modern sense. In fact, Bahar's voluminous collection of poetry can be categorized as part of the literature of "exhortation and advice" which has been with "the people of Iran" for hundreds of years, and they "have taken no notice of them" in Akhundzadeh's terms. Bahar's poem selected for our study here is entitled "Dar

Moharram" (In Moharram). Bahar criticizes the heretical traditions of commemorating Moharram, yet his language hinders him from doing so completely. Recounting the people's acts on the occasion, the poet tries to say that those acts are heinous and undesirable, but he fails to do so. He fails to demonstrate why those acts are not desirable and how he desires to correct the people. The poet's description of the scenes of Moharram performances becomes an elegy at best --by no means different from the elegy recited by the people whom the poet intends to criticize. Here is a selection of lines which deals directly with the issue.

Dar Moharram ahl rey khod ra degargun mikonand,
 az zamin ah-o faghan ra zib-e gardun mikonand.
 Gah oryan gashteh ba zanjir mikuband posht,
 gah kafan pushideh farg khish por kun mikonand.
 Gah begshude geriban ruz ta shab sine ra
 dar mo'aber ba sheregg-e dast golgun mikonand.
 Gah be yad-e teshne kaman-e zamin-e karbala
 juybar-e dide ra az gerye Jeyhun mikonand.

.....
 Haq govahast ar Muhammad zende gardad var Ali
 har do ra taslim-e Navvab-e homayun mikonand.
 Ayad az darvaze-ye Shimran agar ruzi Hoseyn,
 shamash az darvaze-ye Dulab birun mikonand.
 Hazrat-e Abbas agar ayad pey-e yek jore'h ab,
 Mashk au ra dar dam-e darvazeh varun mikonand.
 Qayem-e al-e Muhammad gar konad nagah zohur,
 Kalleh-ash daghun bezarb-e chub qanun mikonand.
 Gar Ali Asghar byayad bar dar-e dokkaneshan,
 Dar do pul an tefl ra yek pul maghbun mikonand.
 Var Ali-Akbar bekhahad yari az in Kufiyan,
 Ruz penhan gashte shab bar vey shabikhun mikonand.
 Leyk agar zin nakasan khanum bekhahad Ibn-e Sa'ad'
 Khanum ar peyda nashod, da'vat zi khatun mikonand.

..... 51

(The people of Rey transform themselves on Moharram,
 they adorn the heavens by their soaring moans and groans.
 Uncovering their backs, they beat themselves with chains at times,
 wearing shrouds, they cleave their heads other times.
 At times, they unbutton their shirt and beat their chests
 in the streets and alleys painting it a crimson color.
 At times, remembering the thirst and suffering of the Karbala martyrs,
 they let a river from their eyes flow like the Oxus River.

.....
 God knows if Mohammad and Ali come back to life,
 they would hand them both to the executioners of the king.
 If Huseyn arrives in the town from Shimran Gate in the morning,
 they will kick him out from Dulab Gate by the evening.
 If Hazrat Abbas [standard bearer and water distributor] asks them for a drink of

water,
 they will tear his water-skin up at the very gates of the city.
 If the living Imam comes out of his occultation,
 they will break his head for his punishment.
 If Ail Asghar [the baby martyr of Karbala] comes to the door of their shops,
 They will cheat that innocent infant doubly.
 If Ali-Akbar asks for help from these people of Kufa [the betrayers of Imam
 Huseyn],
 they'll go to hiding during the day in order to make a night raid on him.
 Yet if Ibn-Sa'ad [the commander of the enemy army] asks for a woman from these
 pimps,
 And if they cannot find one, they will offer their own wives.)

.....
 Referring to the people of Rey (Tehran), Bahar says that "the people of Rey transform themselves on Moharram." It seems the people are of different nature during the other months of the year, and they change when the mentioned time arrives. I believe that the constraints of prosody have forced the expression *degargun mikonand* (they transform) upon the poet. Otherwise, those people are the same all the year long, and they play other games in other months of the year. Bahar designs his poem to be the criticism of certain undesirable acts practiced by the people of Rey in a certain part of the year. Yet the ignorance of the people and their illiteracy which built the basis of those silly acts are neglected by the poet. The second line of the poem points to one of those acts: "they adorn the heavens by their soaring moans and groans." The poet's use of *zib-e gardun mikonand* (they adorn the heavens) sounds to be somewhat high-flown for an issue of social importance. Bahar fails to cut himself free from the high-flown diction of the classics which cannot afford a direct criticism of the performances such as the mentioned heresies. The third line imparts a direct information about another unwise performance: they uncover their backs, and "they beat them with the chains." Line four refers to a more gruesome performance: they wear shrouds of white material, and "they cleave their heads at times." We will get a more graphic and clear picture of this act of self-mutilation when we analyze Mo'juz's descriptions on the issue. Line five refers to beating the bare chest with the noisy and hard slaps of palms as they walk through "the streets and alleys painting it [their chest] acrimson color." Again, the expression such as *golgun mikonand* (they make of crimson color) belongs to the rosy classical poetry which does not sound to match with the reality of a social morbidity. Neither to "adorn the heavens" in the second line nor "of crimson color" here manifest a sign of irony or parody; they are used to convey their classical connotations. Again the metaphoric expression of letting "the river of their eyes to flow like the Oxus River" appears to be a hyperbole which has a reductive effect in speaking on

a serious issue. However, they cry fervently when they recount the “sufferings of the Karbala martyrs.”

It appears that Bahar switches from the criticism of the people’s physical acts to what they might do according to the poet’s assumptions. From the performed acts of the people of Rey, he infers that they might perform even more heinous acts. After mentioning some of the thoughts that they might have, or things they might do, Bahar says that if Mohammad (the prophet) and Ali (his cousin and the first Imam) come to life, the people of Rey will kill them. “God knows if Mohammad and Ali come back to life, they would hand them both to the executioners of the king,” he says. Later the poet states that if Imam Huseyn, whose occasion of martyrdom is remembered by those acts, walks in the town from one gate, the people will expel him from the other gate “by the evening.” Bahar keeps counting the imagined heinous acts which might be performed by the people. He says if the standard bearer and water distributor of Imam Huseyn’s army, Hazrat Abbas, “asks for a drink of water” from them, they “will tear his water-skin up” before they allow him to enter town. Bahar further thinks if the living Imam comes out of his occultation, the people will punish him by breaking his head. The people of Rey also will “doubly” cheat the baby martyr --Imam Hoseyn’s infant son. If Imam Huseyn’s older son Ali-Akbar asks for help from the people of Rey, not only they will not help him, but also they will go “to hiding during the day in order to make a night raid on him.” On the contrary, Bahar believes “if Ibn-Sa’ad [the commander in chief of Imam Huseyn’s enemy army] asks for a woman from these pimps,” in case they fail to get one, “they will offer their own wives.”

Bahar’s accusation of the people for imagined and uncommitted sins turns a real social criticism into the description of an individual’s personal hatred of a group of people. The poet tends to ignore the reasons why the people behave that way. He does not say why their action deserves reproachment. In fact, the poet pays no attention to the cause, he only keeps blaming the effects. Unlike Mo’juz who always finds himself in the society and with the people, Bahar seems to be far removed from the people and their environment. He places himself in an opposing front and keeps blaming people for committed and uncommitted sins. Bringing the martyrs back to life and exposing them to fresh atrocities and their victimization by modern oppressors, Bahar composes a new elegy and rouses the pity of his reader. Bahar depicts the people of Rey (Tehran) to be more cruel and more gruesome than the people of Kufa who martyred Imam Hoseyn. Bahar’s unrestrained exaggerations on the imagined and uncommitted sins and blending them with the real problems tend to reduce the seriousness of the social ill. Ignorance and illiteracy of the

masses which breed the heinous acts such as self-flagellation and self-mutilation are relegated to a lesser degree of importance. In fact the main issue of social criticism is forfeited for the poet's exaggerated assumptions and a mode of mind framed by classical diction and conventions.

Iraj and Superstitions: Iraj also has a tendency to turn any discussion of serious consideration upside down, reduce it to the plane of personal hatred, vulgarize it by his vicious and self-centered remarks. Yet unlike Bahar, whose language knows no economy, Iraj is direct in his expression, his economy of language and clarity deserve their due appreciation. In his poem "Inteqad az Qameh Zanan" (In the Criticism of Self-Mutilators), Iraj tends to ignore the many problems that self-flagellation and self-mutilation might mean in a society. Without looking into the causes of those "ridiculous" acts, the poet only highlights the issue as an attempt by self-flagellators to bring back to life someone who had been killed thirteen centuries before. "O son of a bitch! What are you racking yourself for? /Huseyn will never come to life again." I would like to quote the poem in its entirety in order to compare and contrast Iraj with both Bahar and Mo'juz.

Zan qahbe che mikoshi khodat ra?
 Digar nashavad Hoseyn zende.
 Koshtand-o gozasht-o raft-o shod khak,
 khakash alaf-o alaf charandeh.
 Man ham guyam Yazid bad kard,
 la'nat be Yazd-e bad konande.
 Amma degar in kotal motal chist?
 Vin daste-ye khande avarande.
 Tokhm-e che kasi boride khahi
 ba in qameha-ye naborande?
 Aya to Sakineyi ke guyi?
su isdtamiram amim galanda.
 Ku Shemro to kisti ke guyi?
gal goima mani Shimir alinda.
 To Zeynab-e khahar-e Hoseyni?
 ey narre khar-e sebil gunde.
 Khejlat nakeshi miyane mardom,
 Az in harakat-e mesl-e jende?
 Dar jang-e do sal qabl didi,
 shod chand krur nafs rande?
 az in hame koshtagan nagardid,
 Yek mu ze zehar-e charkh kande.
 Dar sizde qarn-e pish agar shod,
 Haftad-o do sar ze tan fekande.
 Emruz chara to mikani rish?
 Ey dar khor-e sad hezar khande.
 Key koshte shavad do bare zende"
 Ba nefrin-e to bar koshande?

Bavar nakoni biya bebandim
 yek shart be sarfe-ye barande.
 Sad ruz-e degar boro cho emruz,
 beshkaf sar-o bekub dandeh,
 hey bar sar-o rish-e khod bezan gel,
 hey bar tan-e khod bermal sende,
 hey ba qame zan be kalle-ye khish,
 kari ke tabar konad be konde,
 Hey bar sar-e khod bezan do dasti,
 Chun bal ke mizanand parande.
 Hey gu ke Hoseyn kafan nadarad,
 hey pare bekon qaba-ye zhende.
 Gar zendeh nashod anam berishat,
 gar shod, an-e to be rish-e bandeh.⁵²

(O son of a bitch! What are you racking yourself for?
 Huseyn will never come to life any more.
 They killed him, it is over, he's under ground,
 his dirt has turned into grass and the grass to the grazer.
 I also say that Yazid [the Umayyad Caliph against Huseyn] committed a heinous
 crime.

Cursed be the criminal Yazid.
 But what is this banner for? And what is this standard?
 And what is this mocking pageantry?
 Whose testicles are you going to cut off
 with these blunt daggers of yours?
 Are you Sakina [Huseyn's daughter] to say that
 I don't want water, may my uncle return unharmed?
 Where is Shimir? And who are you to say
 come free me from Shimir's grips?
 O you giant male ass of braided moustache!
 Are you Zeynab, Huseyn's sister?
 Are you not ashamed of the people
 because of these ridiculous behaviors?
 Didn't you see during the war two years ago
 how many millions of people perished?
 And for the sake all those slain people
 a single hair was not taken from the pubis of this senseless world.
 If thirteen hundred years ago
 seventy two heads were severed from their bodies,
 why are you ravishing your beard today?
 O you, the mocking stuff of hundreds of thousand grins,
 with your imprecations o you ominous creature,
 how can a dead person come to life?
 If you don't believe, let's make a wager,
 a wager to the good of the winner.
 Live a hundred more days like today,
 cleave your head and pound your ribs,
 keep smearing clay on your forehead and your beard,
 keep smearing crap on your body,
 keep hitting your head with daggers,

something that an axe does to the stump,
 keep beating your head with your both hands,
 like the wings of a fluttering bird.
 keep crying that Hoseyn was buried with no shroud,
 keep tearing your shabby garments off.
 If he didn't come to life, my crap on your beard,
 but if he came to life, then your crap on mine.)

As we have discussed earlier, Iraj's direct and unpretentious language knows no restraints in his attack against the objects of his scorn. With the very first word of the first line, Iraj swears at his opponent. "O son of a bitch! What are you rending yourself for?/Huseyn will never come to life any more," the poet begins. Then he continues to say that Huseyn was killed, he has mingled with earth and turned to dust like any mortal being. His dust has turned into grass, and the grass has entered the body of grazing animals. In line five, the poet joins his opponent in condemning the heinous crime of Yazid, the second Caliph of Umayyads, for issuing the orders to kill Imam Huseyn along with his 71 helpers. In lines 7 and 8, the poet continues to attack against those who carry banners and standards in the "mocking pageantry." Lines 9 and 10 refer to the procession in which the participants carry swords for their use in self-mutilation. The poet's asking whose testicles they are going to cut is another way to insult the irrational people. Iraj defiles his opponents further by saying that their "blunt daggers" could cut nothing. Perhaps the poet's employment of the word "blunt" has a reference to the people themselves rather than their daggers because those "blunt" people used to sharpen their daggers especially for the occasion. The daggers by no means could be blunt.

The pageantry of Moharram was usually performed in the form of simple passion plays --different people assuming different roles and each person or group chanting the words assigned to them. In lines 11 to 16, Iraj refers to the people who used to assume a role in the play. Line 11 is addressed to the ones who assumed the role of Sakina, Imam Huseyn's daughter. The poet asks them if they really are the daughters of Huseyn to say that they "don't want water," they only want their "uncle returned unharmed." The reference of the word "uncle" is the same as "Hazrat Abbas" in Bahar's poem. He was Imam Huseyn's brother, standard bearer and water distributor as mentioned in chapter one as well. It is a sign of sacrifice from the children of Imam Huseyn's family not ask for water, but to ask for the safe return of their uncle from the front line of the battle. In line 13 there is a reference to Shimr, the actual murderer of Imam Huseyn who cut his head off. Line 14 addresses the people who assumed the role of children and women of Imam Huseyn's family, who, crying for help, say "come and free me from Shimr's grips."

Lines 11 to 14 are written alternatively in Persian and Azeri languages. They are parts of familiar Azeri requiems which were chanted during Moharram pageantry. I believe Iraj had watched the processions during the years he had lived in Tabriz, and he had memorized the lines. Lines 15 and 16 ask if the performer, the “giant male ass” can really play the role of Imam Huseyn’s sister, Zeynab, with his “braided moustache.” Lines 17 and 18 ask the addressee if he is not “ashamed” of his “ridiculous behaviors.” Lines 19 to 28 try to draw a parallel between the “war of two years ago,” World War One, in which “millions of people perished” and the war of Karbala, which occurred “thirteen hundred years” ago. The poet tries to juxtapose the myth of the Karbala incident with the reality of the modern catastrophe and to prove how those self-mutilators were detached from real life, and they are living in the world of dream. No one is commemorating a human tragedy such as World War One which only ended “two years ago.” “Didn’t you see during the war two years ago/how many millions of people perished?/And for the sake all those slain people/a single hair was not removed from the pubis of this senseless world,” the poet says. Yet the blunt people are racking themselves because of the battle in which 72 people were killed “thirteen hundred years” ago. In line 27, Iraj returns to the idea with which he had started his poem: with people mutilating themselves in order to bring to life someone who was killed centuries before. “With your imprecations o you, ominous creature,/how can a dead person come to life?” the poet asks. As mentioned earlier, Iraj seldom bothered himself with selecting his words with respect to their decency or indecency. The poet further continues to attack the dense people with more obscene terms. He wants to make a wager with his opponent and says “Live a hundred more days like today,/cleave your head and pound your ribs,/keep smearing clay at your head and your beard,/keep smearing crap on your body” and continue with all your crazy acts if Huseyn “didn’t come to life my crap on your beard,/but if he came to life, then your crap on mine.” Iraj’s open attack on self-mutilators turns an issue of social relevance into personal belligerence between the poet and a self-mutilator. The poet’s approach to the issue not only ceases to be constructive, it calls for the resistance of the opponent. It invites the self-mutilator to pick up the challenge and fight against the poet. As we notice, Iraj has a tendency to isolate a very serious social issue from its interrelated causes and effects, trivialize it and turn it into a personal grudge against a person, group or a class. His satire is usually dominated with chagrin and cynicism.

Mo’juz and Superstition: Mo’juz’s satire is always enveloped and controlled with his strong and unfailing sense of humor. Mo’juz would not isolate a social problem

like self-mutilation from ignorance, illiteracy, lack of sanity, problems of mental and physical health, and economic and material losses. He would not take a belligerent stand against the naive self-mutilator; the poet would join him in his act of ignorance and accompany him step-by-step revealing the detestfulness of his offensive act. In a poem entitled "The Dream," Mo'juz pays a visit to paradise and finds Imam Huseyn, the martyred third Imam, having good time with the *huris* there. The poet is shocked by the scene because the followers of the Imam, are still mourning the occasion of his martyrdom, they are crying and slashing their head because of his sufferings, but the martyred Imam is enjoying all the luxuries of paradise. I would like to quote the poem in its entirety, and examining its details, compare it to what we saw in the related poems from Bahar and Iraj.

Bir geja chokh aghladem, yatdem dil-e ghamginla,
 Rowzey-e rizvana girdim jibhey-e por chinila.
 Chun guzarem dushdi o shah-e shahidan qasrina,
 Dakhil oldum andarun-e qasra shuro shinila.
 Majlisi gordum ki hargiz gormaishdim mislini,
 Gol boyun olmushti mowla bir gozal machinila.
 Huri gorjak bandani guldi bland avazila,
 Manda bakhdem shahi dina dide-ye por kinila.
 Soyladim ya shahi din biz tutmushukh matam sana,
 San va lakin kef chakirsan burda hurole'inla.
 Chun mana bakhdi dedi bashindaki bukhja nadi,
 Soyladim ki bashimi yadem yaremarshinla.
 Soyladi illat nadur, arz eyladim sandan otur.
 Bakhdi bir muddat man-e bi yavara tohinla.
 Pas dedi hirsila chikh burdan aya jahil kishi,
 Gar alamdarim gora otlar sani benzinila.
 Dondi bir qasra taraf arz eyladim ya Mostafa,
 Ummatin bashin yarir ganin kasir serginla.
 Yasrebo Batha alir Islam alindan moshrikin,
 Jinni taskhir eyliyillar Shialar Yasinla.
 Kafir elmila neja gor eylamish Islami khar,
 Bashina od yaghdidir tayyara vo ziplinila.
 Sina sin eylar moshabbak oz alinan ummatin,
 Arkhasin zanjirla ham kallasin sikkinla.
 Banda pas arz eyladim aff ed mani ya Seyyidi,
 Chunki biz aylashmishukh mullay-e kutahbinila.
 Bizda yara yokh diyakh alemlara la vo ne'am,
 Haq deyan katdan chikhar takfirla tal' einila.
 Kash bu soz chikhmiyeydi kaj dahanemnan manim,
 Bakht yar olmaz dedim bu bande-ye miskinila.
 Amr olundi khazina nagah ki tut bu Mo'juzi,
 Gollarin baghla va gondar duzakha mashinila.
 Tapshirin siz duzakhin darbanena gudsun muni,
 Etmasin sohbat jahannam ahli bu bidinila.⁵³

(I wept copiously during the night and with a grief-stricken heart,

I entered the Garden of Eden scowling in my dream.
 I happened to come across the palace of the King of Martyrs [Imam Huseyn,]
 I entered the palace with enthusiasm and happiness.
 I saw a scene which I had never seen before,
 the master was cuddling with an adorable damsel.
 Once the *huri* [the damsel] saw me, she laughed loudly,
 and I looked at the King of Religion [Imam Huseyn] with envious eyes.
 I explained, "O the King of the Religion! We are still mourning your martyrdom,
 "but you are enjoying yourself with these *huris*."
 He looked at me and said "what is that bundle on your head,"
 I said "I have slashed it with an iron yard-stick."
 He asked "What for ?" I said "Because of you."
 He viewed me for some time with his contemptuous looks,
 then he angrily ordered me to abandon that place.
 "If my standard-bearer sees you, he will set you ablaze with gasoline," he said.
 Then I turned to the prophet's palace and said "O Mostafa [the chosen prophet,]
 "your *umma* [followers] are slashing their head and putting cow-dung in their open
 wound.
 "The pagans are taking Yathrib and Batha [the holy lands of Islam] from Moslems,
 "but your Shi'as try to capture *jinn*s by reciting Yasin.
 "See how the pagans are debasing the Moslems with their sciences,
 "they are pouring fire on our heads from their planes and tanks,
 "but your *umma* slash their chest with their own hands,
 "they injure their own back with chains, they slit their heads with knives."
 Then I said "O my master please accept my apology,
 "we do all that because we are being led by a short-sighted *mulla*.
 "We are powerless to stand up and say "yes" or "no" to the preachers,
 "anyone speaking a right word is expelled from the village, excommunicated and
 cursed."
 I wish these words never came out of my warped mouth,
 I knew my bad luck would never leave me alone.
 An order was issued to the archangel in charge of hell; "Arrest this Mo'juz,
 handcuff him, put him in armored car, dispatch him to Hades,
 and tell the gate-keepers of Hades to watch him carefully,
 do not allow the inmates of Hades to speak to this apostate.")

While Bahar and Iraj spare nothing in their attacks on the people who are ignorant,
 sick and in need of help and guidance, Mo'juz directs his penetrating satire and parody at
 sickness and morbidity. With his unfailing humor, the poet puts himself in the same boat
 with the sick self-mutilator. He shows that he is not much different from the people, who
 by some way or other, are sick, ignorant and superstitious. It is interesting to see that
 Mo'juz resorts to a dream device in order to depict the many dimensions of morbidities
 such as self-mutilation, chain-beating or pointless moaning and mourning. The characters
 of the Karbala event becoming myths by the passage of time, and the story turning into an
 epic among the oral people of Mo'juz, a dream approach to the whole issue becomes highly
 relevant. Dreams play an important role in the creation of myths and epics. They project

and condition the birth and development of myth and epic. The scope of this work will not allow us to go into further details, but the point I want to make here is that a good part of the Karbala epic, the elaborate *nowhas* about it and many related stories, have been developed out of the many dreams or visions of the believers. Thus Mo'juz's dream device is quite a relevant one, and it fits the pattern in which other pertaining stories are created.⁵⁴

Mo'juz starts his poem by saying that he wept copiously during one of the nights, and after he fell asleep, he had his claimed dream. It is interesting to note the relevance of the poet's crying to his falling asleep and its succeeding dream. I will discuss the cult of mourning in Shi'a Islam in Chapter IV when we study Mo'juz in the spectrum of the Azeri tradition of humor. However, we should note that the poet's copious crying is part of the mourning cult in relation to the Karbala tragedy. Perhaps, it was a night during the month of Moharram in which the frenzy of moaning for the Karbala tragedy reached its peak. Moreover, like that of a child, a primitive man's soothing sleep may come after his instinct for crying is satisfied adequately. Although not fully recovered from the symptoms of weeping, --"grief-stricken" and "scowling"-- the poet enters the Garden of Eden in his dream. Giving credit to the fact that all men of God and those of good deeds in this world enter the Garden of Eden after their death and enjoy all the privileges of paradise with all its sensual dimensions, the Karbala martyrs could be no exception. Being temporarily in Paradise, the poet would have the honor of meeting the men of God like Imams and prophets. Thus the poet's visit from the palace of Imam Huseyn is not a random selection.

The poet's sleeping and his dream are the natural and psychological results of his copious weeping for the martyred Imam. "I happened to come across the palace of the King of Martyrs [Imam Huseyn,]," I entered the palace with enthusiasm and happiness," the poet says. Once the poet finds the Imam's palace, he enters it "with enthusiasm and happiness" because, as a believer, he has developed a yearning to have a vision of Imam. For many a Shi'a having the honor of touching Imam's holy shrine is one of the burning desires in life. However, what the poet confronts in the palace is not totally unexpected although it is something unimaginable. Everybody knows that all men of God and martyrs are in paradise, and every Moslem knows what is awaiting the men of God in paradise, but no one imagines to find one of those men in such a scene. Only Mo'juz is able create a scene which he "had never seen before," his master "was cuddling with an adorable damsel." Although unimagined by many believers, the scene could be a real one because the picture depicted from the Garden of Eden far exceeds what the poet could see. The ingenuity of Mo'juz's depiction is in the fact that every Shi'a believer knows what is going

on in the Garden of Eden, and what awaits even an ordinary martyr, not to mention Imam Huseyn, there. The *huris* are lined up awaiting the martyr's arrival. However, the reality and grimness of death make everyone forget the luxury of paradise, and how the martyrs will be entertained there. With a depiction such as this, Mo'juz makes his audience reconsider their position and rationalize their stand –why mourn someone's martyrdom if he is being entrained in the best possible and imaginable manner?

What is more interesting in the scene is the fact that the *huri*, the “adorable damsel” in the arms of the Imam, laughs “loudly” once catches sight of the poet. Obviously, the swollen eyes of the poet after his copious weeping and wearing a bundle wrapped around his head to dress the slash inflicted by himself with the strike of an “iron yard-stick” would look worse than a clown for a *huri* in her innocent nativity of paradise. However, being a man, the envy and jealousy of the poet cannot pass the scene unstirred or undisturbed. “I looked at the King of Religion [Imam Huseyn] with envious eyes,” he remarks. Becoming the laughing stock of the *huri*, the poet explains to Imam Huseyn that he and his people are still mourning the Imam's martyrdom, whereas, he is enjoying the company of the *huris* in that beautiful palace. According to Mo'juz's narration of the story, even Imam himself is unaware of what his heretic Shi'as do during Moharram in order to commemorate his martyrdom. It appears Imam looks at the poet some what surprisingly and asks “What is that bundle on your head?” It seems he neither knew about the cult developed among his followers, nor was he aware of his followers' self-mutilation. Thus, it is not by chance that when the poet says that he has “slashed it [his head] with an iron yard-stick,” Imam, unaware of the traditions and heresies which developed during thirteen hundred years after his death, asks: “What for?” Inevitably, the poet says: “Because of you.” It is also interesting to note that the poet uses an iron yard-stick to slit his head to parody the sharp and shiny daggers of self-mutilators.

It appears that a sense of shock prevents the Imam from speaking further. With a feeling of revulsion and contempt, he examines him from top to toe. The Imam gets furious, and he angrily orders the poet to disappear from his sight. In order to stipulate that most of the performances of Moharram are sacrilegious acts and profanities, the Imam terms a self-mutilating follower such as Mo'juz an “ignorant man” *jahil Kishi*, and he orders him to abandon a sacred place like the Garden of Eden. “If my standard-bearer sees you, he will set you ablaze with gasoline,” he continues. The poet's amazing humor and his ingenious devising of the scene makes any self-mutilator or any one in his category rethink his own silly and disgusting performance. Unlike Bahar and Iraj, who position

themselves against the ignorant self-mutilator and spare no condemnation or curse in his insult and disgrace, Mo'juz disguises himself as an ignorant self-mutilator and becomes Imam's object of wrath and mockery. Thus after the poet makes it clear that the martyred Imam is quite displeased with the disgusting acts of his Shi'as during the pageantry of Moharram, he depicts the disillusioned self-mutilator leaving Imam Huseyn's palace in disgrace heading toward the palace of the prophet. Once he gets to the palace of the prophet he says "O Mostafa [the chosen prophet,]/your *umma* [followers] are slashing their heads and putting cow-dung in their open wounds." The poet does not finish his complaint with a single problem of self-mutilation, once he finds himself in the presence of the founder of the religion, he continues to address many other issues. "The pagans are taking Yathrib and Batha [the holy lands of Islam] from Moslems," whereas, "Your Shi'as try to capture *jinn*s by the reciting of Yasin./watch how the pagans are debasing the Moslems with their sciences,/ they are pouring fire on their heads from their planes and tanks."

As mentioned earlier, Mo'juz continues to loosely maintain the patterns and forms of classical poetry, but he tries to create his own diction and coin modern signifiers. As a modern man, he tries to make his advocacy of sciences and technology as visible as he can. The employment of a word such as "gasoline" is absolutely unconventional and unpoetic as well. Yet when Imam Huseyn gets angry with an "ignorant man" such as self-mutilator, he says that his "standard-bearer" will set him "ablaze with gasoline." When the poet tries to depict the decline and deplorable situation of Moslems, he says that the pagans are debasing them by "pouring fire on their head from their planes and tanks," all of which are the products of their sciences. The pagans are taking the most holy lands of Islam, Yathrib and Batha, with the power of their sciences; on the contrary, Shi'as are "capturing *jinn*s" by reciting Yasin. It is interesting to note that Yasin is one of the chapters of Koran which is often chanted or manipulated by amulet writers or pseudo-religious astrologers; and capturing *jinn*s (*taskhir-e jinn*) by the mentioned people used to be a common belief. By pointing at the pagan/Moslem dichotomy and his clear depiction of the deplorable situation of Moslems against their "others," pagans, Mo'juz is able to transcend the issue of self-mutilation and depict what it means in its national, international and universal spectrum. Contrasting the achievements of the pagan, "others," with the backwardness of his people, addressing the prophet, Mo'juz expresses that "your *umma* slash their chest with their *own* [my italic] hand." Thus the poet implies that the *umma* of the prophet not only are debased by the sciences of the pagans --their enemies, but they also help their enemies by inflicting

wounds in their own bodies. In other poems, the poet also refers to the economic losses of the acts such as self-mutilation by his reference to the imported materials like gauze in order to dress the self-inflicted wounds. By visualizing the scene of his own creation, the poet is overcome by a sense of shame and self-criticism. Thus addressing the prophet, he apologetically says: "O my master please accept my apology,/we do all that because we are being led by a short-sighted [*kutahbin*] mulla." The poet tries to put the blame of "all" he and his people do on the clerics, and he continues to say that he and his people "are powerless to stand up and say "yes or no" (*la-vo na'am*) to the preachers, "Any one speaking a right word is expelled from the village excommunicated and cursed." Clerics, being almost the only literate class in the society, and their social and religious authority were respected and revered; that is why Mo'juz recognizes them as being responsible for the good and bad of the community, and he believes in their authority as a key factor in changing society. That is why the poet says that no one in the community has the power to stand against the preacher if he dares to do so he will be "expelled from the village excommunicated and cursed."

Mo'juz's "The Dream" is somewhat different from his other poems. In his opposition to the clerics he usually tries to save face by invoking the support of a higher authority such the Imams or the prophet. The invocation of the higher authorities in this poem does not provide him with the immunity he needs to support his contest against the clerics. Once he utters his disgruntled words about the clerics, he finds that he cannot escape the jurisdiction of their influence and power. Even the affairs of the world after death are run according to their decision. The moment he utters his complaints to the founder of religion about the clerics, he is arrested and thrown into Hades. "I wish these words never came out of my warped mouth,/I knew my bad luck would never leave me alone." the poet says. Thus an order was issued to the archangel in charge to "Arrest this Mo'juz,/handcuff him, put him in armored car, dispatch him to Hades,/and tell the gatekeepers of hell to watch him carefully,/do not allow the inmates of Hades to speak to this apostate." The poet's reference to the clerics' power prevailing even in the world after death is merely a parody of their predominance in the real life of Mo'juz's time and land. However, the poet has another point to make; he implies that he was so crippled by the fear of the clerics' power and threat that even in his dream he cannot be immune from their anger and attack. In fact the poet curses himself for speaking those bold words against the clerics; he says he wishes the words would never come out of his "warped mouth" --*kaj dahanemnan manim*. It is also interesting to notice that the poet tries to revamp the archaic

Hades and introduce modern means of transportation there. Mo'juz is to be arrested, handcuffed and sent to hell by an armored car --something which is done with convicts in modern society. What is important in the poet's case is the fact that he might become a bad influence on the inmates of hell, and he may corrupt them further. That is why the gate-keeper was ordered to spy on him in order not to allow him to speak to any one in hell.

Conclusion

In Chapter III, I presented poems and pieces from poets such as Ashrafud-Din of Gilan, Bahar, Iraj Mirza and Lahuti and discussed how they approached modern issues such as women's illiteracy, ignorance of the masses and "ridiculous" acts of self-mutilation and self-flagellation. I tried to compare and contrast all the mentioned poets with Mo'juz and his treatment of the issues. I argued that Ashrafud-Din was a traditional cleric, and did not have any vision about how women's emancipation and their literacy would change the social structure. He wrote on the women's issue because dealing with women's problems was becoming a fashionable theme and sign of modernism. Bahar is a classicist almost in all respects, his approach to the women's problems and his advocacy of their literacy do not go further than skin deep. In the 1343 pages of his two-volume *divan* Bahar only has two *qasidas* and a quatrain that deal with women, and yet, neither of them contains much about the many problems of Iranian women. Iraj is a gifted poet who treats modern issues with his simple and direct language. Iraj's Azeri sense of humor is blended with the poet's cynicism which was a product of his high esteem toward his royal blood as well as of his art. As a result of such cynicism, Iraj tends to turn the discussion on any social issue to a direct belligerence between himself and his opponents. Lahuti, at his best, wants women to be good citizens. His recommendations to the daughters of Iran to become good citizens overshadows any desire of the poet about women living a happy life for themselves. Lahuti's later poems about women make us think that he is an agent of propaganda and tries to be a loyal Communist. Many lines of Lahuti strike a reader like untimely mottoes which do not fit in the reality of Iranian women's problems. Sharing some aspects with the mentioned poets, Mo'juz is different from them in many respects. None of the mentioned poets manifest the degree of Mo'juz's intimacy with women's life and his immediacy with human life as a whole. Mo'juz wants to educate women for their own sake in the first place, he wants to save women from the tyranny and victimization to which they were subjected as wives, daughters, sisters and human beings. Mo'juz has the ability to transpose his gender and talk for women from the women's point of view. We saw in his poem called "Sisters" how the poet dealt with the reality of the daily life's problems. The

poet became one of the “sisters” holding a letter in her hand in order to find someone to read it for her -- a husband’s letter to be read to his wife by a strange man. In his “My Daughter Gave Birth to A Girl,” the poet depicted a complete picture of a woman as daughter, a bride, wife and a mother. He showed his audience how a woman’s lack of knowledge of sciences or a vocation may end up in social ills. He clearly demonstrated that by depriving women from vocations and learning, a society opens the door of beggary and prostitution for women --the only jobs which they can perform. In fact, a woman sitting in the corner of an alley with her children was not an uncommon picture during Mo’juz’s days. Women’s issues for Mo’juz are almost the only issues in Iranian society. He implies that with the restoration of women’s rights all problems of Iranian society will be solved. In his treatment of women’s problems, Mo’juz illustrates that all women in the Iranian society have not the same problems, different categories of women have different problems --they are subjected to different layers of tyranny. Other poets of Mo’juz’s era, directly or indirectly, have linked the women’s veil to their decency and chastity, Mo’juz is the poet who raises the issue the least. For him a woman’s walking in the market place without covering her face is out of the question.

No poet of the Iranian Constitutional era has Mo’juz’s strong sense of humor and his power of parody and criticism. I do believe that he represents the pinnacle of the tradition set by Akhundzadeh, Talibuf of Tabriz, Maraghe’i, Sabir and Mamed-Qoli-Zade. Unlike Bahar and Iraj who position themselves at opposite poles of the social maladies while discussing the problems, Mo’juz places himself among the people whom he makes the object of his satire. Mo’juz does not pretend that he is different from the people he criticizes. Conversely, in order to effect his desired change, he pretends that he is one of the same people. He does not degenerate a social problem into a grudge between himself and the people whom he desires to change. Although it was a difficult task to bring about his desired changes in a short time, Mo’juz almost created a cult among his oral people. Of course, he had many “enemies” as well. Mo’juz owes the vitality and vigor and his immediacy of expression to the oral attributes of the Azeri language and culture. Mo’juz did not acquire fame outside his oral community because he was not published during his lifetime. Most of the poets of the period were journalists, or they contributed to their contemporary journals and papers, but Mo’juz remained out of the ever expanding world of journalism in his contemporary Iran or Azerbaijan.

Notes to Chapter III

1. Discussing the differences between Azeri and Persian literatures, I explained that Azeri poets' loyalty to the classics both from linguistic and cultural points of view has been less binding. It was easier for Azeri poets to intentionally sever their ties from the classics. See the opening pages of the previous chapter.
2. For further information on the importance of Akhundzadeh and Rafa't in promoting new literary canons and modernism see Karimi-Hakkak's *Recasting Persian Poetry* PP. 33-41 and PP. 104-36.
3. Berengian, P. V.
4. See Swietochowski's *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920*, P. 129.
5. An example of this process can be traced in writing career of Mamed Qoli-Zade. The author's essay "Azerbaijan" appeared only on February 20, 1921 of *Mulla Nasreddin* after the establishment of an independent Azerbaijan had been stifled by a number of foreign interferences.
6. See Karimi-Hakkak's *Recasting Persian Poetry*, PP. 33-41.
7. See *Arianpur, Volume I*, PP. 343-58.
8. *ibid*, PP. 287-304.
9. *Ibid*, PP. 304-313.
10. *Ibid, volume II*, PP. 46--60.
11. *Ibid, volume II*, PP. 40-46.
12. Berengian, P. 11.
13. *Ibid*, P. 12.
14. See H. Javadi and K. Burrill in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* Volume III, P. 252.
15. See Karimi-Hakkak, *Recasting Persian poetry*, P. 2.
16. Akhundzadeh, *Tamsilat*, PP. 8-9.
17. See Berengian, P. 50.
18. See Hamed Algar's "Akhundzadeh" in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, P. 735.
19. See Karim-Hakkak's *Recasting Persian Poetry* PP. 33-41.
20. We notice this feature quite often in Mo'juz. The poet cares very little when he confronts encumbrances from the classical *aruz* rhyming. See Berengian, P. 93.
21. Bahar, *Divan-e Asha'ar*, Volume I. PP. 459-61.
22. Sa'di, *Kulliyat*, P. 355.
23. *Ibid* P. 88.
24. Karim-Hakkak, *Recasting Persian Poetry* P. 126.
25. *Ibid*, PP. 190-1.
26. Karimi-Hakkak's masterful analysis of the poem opens new dimensions in understanding Lahuti's work. Dr. Karimi comments on the poem as being a parody of a classical qasida. However, according to my understanding of parody and the definitions we find for parody in the dictionaries of literary terms, the

poem is not a parody, but it is a serious poem attacking the classical conventions "seriously and formally" - to use Lahuti's own words. Parody is defined as "a consciously exaggerated imitation of another literary work...the purpose being humor or satire." See *Handbook of Literary Terms*, edited by H.L. Yellande. Harry Shaw's *Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines parody as "any humorous, satirical, or burlesque imitation of person, event or serious work of literature." Thus a key word in the definition of parody is *imitation*. Lahuti does not *imitate* the classics, he denounces them, repudiates them by saying that such and such value is no more valid in his system. Denouncing the classical conventions, Lahuti makes a very effective and unconventional use of them. A good example of parody in this respect is a poem by Mo'juz called "Mo'juzun Ma'shugasi" (Mo'juz's Beloved.) The poem is a burlesque imitation of a classical *ghazal* in which every part of the beloved's body is likened to an edible farm product. The poet likens the ears of the beloved to "dried apricot halves," (*lolo gulakh*.) See *Kulliyat*, PP. 51-2.

27. Lahuti, *Divan-e Abu'l-Qasim-e Lahuti*, PP. 272-75.

28. Karimi-Hakkak, *Recasting*, PP. 190-1.

29. *Ibid*, P. 188-241.

30. Lahuti, *Divan-e Abu'l-Qasim-e Lahuti*, PP. 649- 652.

31. Lahuti, *Divan-e Abu'lqasim-e Lahuti*, vol. I, P. *bisto yek* of introduction.

32. Iraj Mirza, *Divan-e Iraj Mirza*, PP. 13-4.

33. Berengian, P. 90.

34. *Ibid*, P. 87-88.

35. Seyyed Ashrafuddin Rashti, *Divan-e Kamel-e Nasim-e Shomal*, PP. 498-9.

36. *Ibid*, PP. 78-9.

37. I have placed Iraj in the category of non-Azeri poets because during his productive years, the poet was residing in Mashhad and Tehran. Moreover, he had chosen the Persian language as the medium of his poetry.

38. Mo'juz, *Kulliyat*, PP. 71-2.

39. Majlisi, *Hilyatul-Muttaqin*, P. 78. See also Nasiru'ddin Tusi's *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, P. 219.

40. *Kulliyat*, P. 80. By *alif* and *lam*, Mo'juz refers to the opening verse of Joseph Chapter which opens with three *muqatte'a* letters of *alif*, *lam* and *ra*.

41. *The Glorious Qur'an*, translated by Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, P. 359.

42. *Kulliyat*, PP. 80-1.

43. Majlisi, the author of many canonical texts in Shi'a Islam advises people not to assign rooms in the upper level of their houses for women in order to narrow their view range. Otherwise, from an upper level, they might view and see men in the neighborhood which might end up with falling in love or committing immoral acts. See the author's *Hihyatul-Muttqin*, P. 78.

44. As mentioned earlier, I have placed Iraj in the category of non-Azeri authors because of his extended residence in the Persian speaking parts of Iran (Mashhad and Tehran) during the most productive period of his life and his use of the Persian language as the medium of his poetry.

45. See Kasravi's *Khaharan-o Dokhtaran-e Ma*, P. 13.

46. See *Dada Gor Gut Kitabi*, edited by Mohammad Ali Farzaneh, P. 12.

47. Bulut Qarachorli, *Sazimin Sozu*, P. 53.

48. Kasravi, *Khaharan-o Dokhtaran-e Ma*, P. 13.

49. Kasravi in his *Khaharan-o Dokhtaran-e Ma*, narrates a tradition from Prophet Muhammad who was riding on a camel with his cousin Abbas. An Arab young woman approaches them. The prophet asks his young cousin not to peer at the face of the young woman. Many Shi'a and Sunni scholars have construed from the story that the woman had no covering on her face, and that there was nothing such as veil at the dawn of Islam.

50. Berengian, P. 87.

51. Bahar, *Divan*, vol. I, PP. 229-30.

52. Iraj Mirza, *Divan*, P. 202-3.

53. Mirza Ali Mo'juz *Shabustari: Tza Tapilan She'rlar*, PP. 4-5.

54. See *Vaqaye'olayyam dar Ahwal-e Moharramulharam* by Haj Mulla Ali Vae'z Tabrizi-ye Khyabani. The whole 489 page book is an anthology of dreams and visions which, in fact, takes the Karbala event out of its historical reality and gives it a mythical coloring to it.

Chapter IV

Mo'juz and the Azeri Tradition of Humor and Satire

In the opening part of Chapter III, I made a brief reference to five major Azeri authors who, I contend, effected considerable influence on the Persian literature of the Iranian Constitutional era and in Iranian thought and life in general. Akhundzadeh, Talibuf, Maraghe'i, Saber and Mamed Qoli-Zade also paved the way for Mo'juz and other modern Azeri writers and poets irrespective of the language they chose to convey their message. I believe that Mo'juz is a product of the atmosphere of criticism and satire expressly advocated by Akhundzadeh and followed by his next generation. Mo'juz is the culmination of the criticism and satire movement, but he, ironically, happened to remain least known of them for the Persian speaking public in Iran as well as Azeri scholarship. He is also the most radical and effective in wielding the tools and techniques of satire which resulted in the suppression of his works. In this chapter, I will further discuss the five major predecessors of Mo'juz quoting relevant pieces from their works. I will try to analyze my quotations, and I will demonstrate how the issues and themes with which they dealt were complemented by Mo'juz's unsurpassed humor. Establishing satire and criticism as a major trend in Azeri literature, Akhundzadeh, Talibuf, Maraghe'i, Saber and Mamed Qoli-Zade are the Azeri authors whose innovations, introduction of modern literary genres prepared the tastes and minds of the people to embrace modern values. Their important role in effecting change has been discussed by major Iranian biographers of the period such as Yahya Arianpur.¹

Akhundzadeh, (1812-1878) An Azeri playwright, essayist and literary critic, settled in Tbilisi after living in different cities of Southern and Northern Azerbaijan. There he developed a friendship with exiled Russian Decemberists such as Bestuzhev and became acquainted with the works of Russian authors such as Griboedov and Gogol as well as Europeans like Shakespeare and Moliere.² Akhundzadeh is considered to be "the first original playwright" in the Islamic east.³ He wrote letters to Iranian authors and eminent men of repute and talked about the innovations he wanted to bring about in literature and in the social fabric in general. According to Berengian, he was the first among Muslim social thinkers to advocate European thought and introduce "Western criteria of journalism and historiography" to nineteenth century Iran.⁴ In Karimi-Hakkak's words, Akhundzadeh exerted "the earliest substantive attempt at redefining literature."⁵ Akhundzadeh was proficient in Russian and Arabic and wrote in Azeri and Persian. In fact, his collection of plays entitled *Tamsilat* helped establish the Azeri language as a modern literary idiom.

‘Abdu’r-Rahim Talibuf of Tabriz (1835-1909) was born in Southern Azerbaijan. He migrated to the Caucasus and settled in Daghestan, at that time under Russian rule. A businessman and prolific writer, his importance lies in his introduction of “imaginative prose” writings such as *Masaliku’l al-muhsinin* –The Paths of the Righteous. Talibuf wrote extensively on scientific, philosophical, political and literary subjects. However, it was his *Masaliku’l al-muhsinin* in which he directly criticized the clergy and the ruling class of Iran and depicted the deplorable conditions of Iranian life. Although widely read in Iran, Talibuf’s works were banned by the clergy and the government.⁶ Talibuf wrote in the Persian language. His works are known to be among the earliest attempts to search for progress, freedom and social reform. Arianpur considers Talibuf’s works as “the alphabets of freedom.”⁷ Talibuf speaks of himself as “the engineer of new prose writing” with respect to his employment of simple and direct language.⁸

Zeyn al-’Abedin Maraghe’i (1837-1910) received a modest education in his birth place, Maraghe in Iranian Azerbaijan. Spending a rowdy and adventurous life in his early youth, he settled in Yalta and engaged in a thriving business there. He accepted Russian citizenship after he earned a reputation as “the honest Iranian merchant.” Years later, he moved to Istanbul and joined Iranian political and intellectual activists there. He contributed to *Akhtar* and *Shams* papers which were published in the Persian language in Istanbul. Maraghe’i’s importance rests on his *Siyahat-Name-ye Ebrahim Beg* (*The Travelogue of Ebrahim Beg*) which is considered to be one of the first modern novels produced in the Persian language. Like Talibuf and Akhundzadeh, Maraghe’i condemns the clergy and the ruling class of Iran for the sufferings of the Iranian people. Ebrahim Beg the protagonist of the novel is a Don Quixote who lives in an imaginary world of his own. His excessive love toward his homeland, Iran, has turned into a madness because of his separation from Iran and reading its heroic ancient history. Along with his Sancho Panza, Yusuf Amu, he travels to Iran. Encountering the miseries and deplorable reality of the Iranian life, Ebrahim Beg’s illusions start shattering. Like Don Quixote, he is beaten in a number of occasions, and he is given a touch of reality each time. Like Don Quixote, he succumbs to the burning fever of the sickness which comes to him with devastating reality about the miseries and backwardness of his countrymen. Maraghe’i’s work also was banned by the Iranian government, and the author was excommunicated by the clergy.⁹

Jalil Mamed Qoli-Zade (1866-1932) was a dramatist and short story writer. His parents were from Southern Azerbaijan, but he was born in Nakhjuvan in Northern

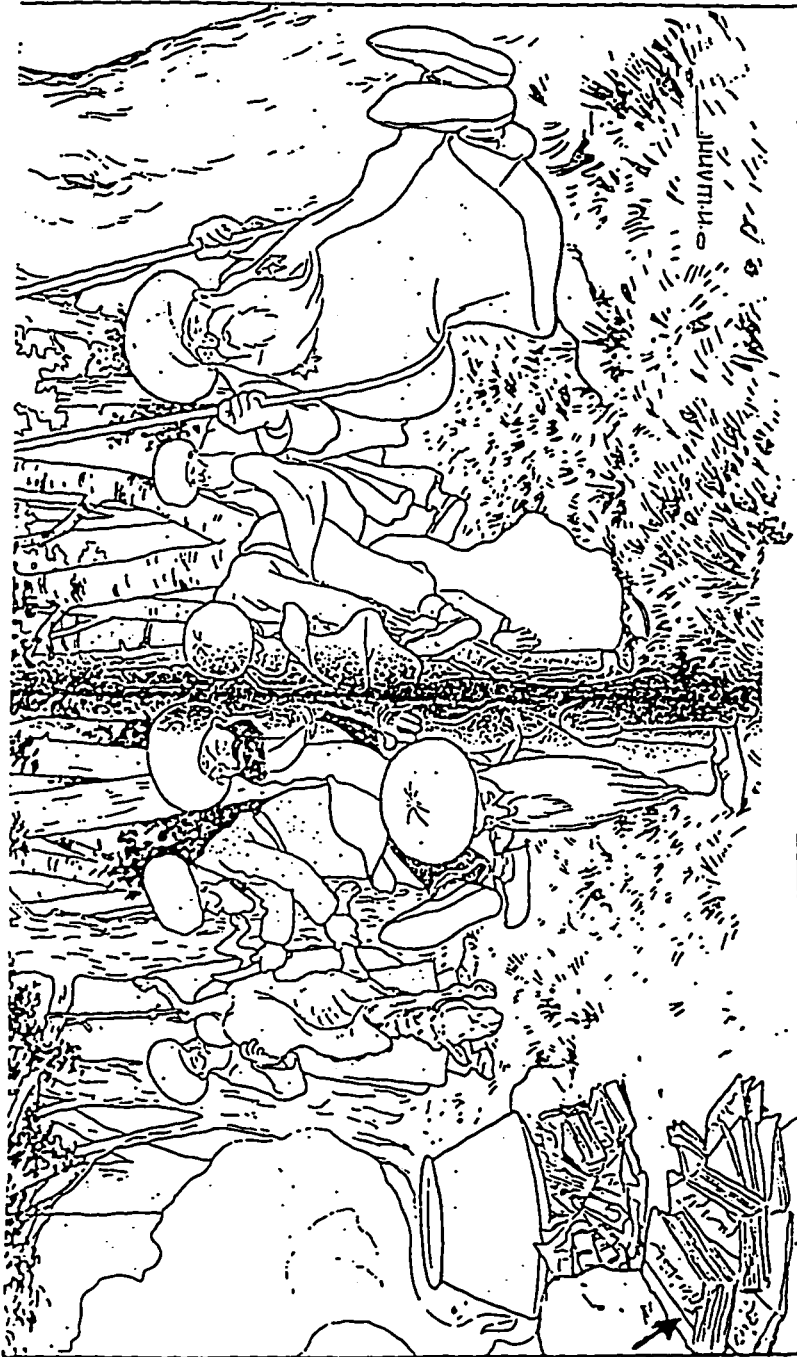


Plate 7: Book-Burning Feast
Maraghe'i's book (marked by arrow) is being used as fuel to fix clergymen's meal.
Mulla Navreddin No. 25 June 8, 1907

Azerbaijan. Mamed Qoli-Zade's works appeared mostly in his famous paper, *Mulla Nasreddin* which he started in 1906. In Arianpur's words "the third and fourth years of the paper's publication were the most exciting period in the paper's life. Its fame far surpassed the Caucasus spreading to Iran, the Ottoman Empire, Egypt and India."¹⁰ The paper ceased to be published during the First World War. A few issues appeared during 1917, again its publication was stopped. In 1920 Mamed Qoli-Zade moved to Tabriz, the central city of Southern Azerbaijan.¹¹ He resumed publishing his paper there, but he only managed to publish eight issues. He left Tabriz for Baku to serve as the Secretary of Education in the newly established government of Azerbaijan under Bolshevik Russia.¹²

Ali-Akbar Saber (1862-1911), a friend of Mamed Qoli-Zade and a major contributor to the paper *Mulla Nasreddin*, was born in Northern Azerbaijan. Saber was a poet of great satirical talent and humor whose fame enjoined the "unprecedented repute" of *Mulla Nasreddin* "throughout the Moslem world." The paper owed its satirical effectiveness and popularity to Saber's folk oriented poetry. Along with *Mulla Nasreddin*, Saber's poems were read "in Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Syria, and even in North Africa and India,"¹³ They were also memorized and chanted by the Azeri masses both in the North and the South. The limits of our work will not allow us to speak further on Saber's popularity and his influence both on the Persian and Azeri speaking peoples of Iran. However, a brief look at the papers published during those days will leave us with little doubt that each one has an echo of *Mulla Nasreddin's* Saber. In fact, following Saber's death in 1911, the paper lost its popularity, and it "was considerably reduced in stature."¹⁴

Of the five mentioned authors, Mo'juz is most commonly compared with Saber.¹⁵ Poets of great humor, they both have touched upon almost the same issues. Mo'juz has mentioned Saber's name and expressly professed that he wanted to continue Saber's path. "I will wake my people up from their slumber like Saber," he says.¹⁶ In former Soviet Azerbaijan, even after the collapse of Communism, attempts have been made to reduce Mo'juz to a mere follower of Saber and to depict him as a lesser poet.¹⁷ However, our study of the two poets will prove Mo'juz to be a poet of higher caliber with a stronger sense of humor. Mo'juz's totality of vision, eloquence and profound humor prove him to be the culmination of the criticism and satire tradition articulated by Akhunzadeh and followed by the *Mulla Nasreddin* school. The point will further be discussed later in this chapter when I quote examples from both poets and compare them in detail. Presently, I would like to open our discussion of this chapter with Akhunzadeh's advocacy of satire

and criticism, his modern ways of dealing with social ills as opposed to the archaic didacticism of exhortations and advice. Akhundzadeh stipulates that anything “written as an exhortation or a piece of fatherly advice will never effect any good in the nature of men after the wrong-doing becomes a habit with them.”¹⁸

Although criticism and satire seasoned with humor have been prevailing trends in Azeri literature before Akhundzadeh, and they stem from folk orientation of the Azeri language and the popular base of its culture,¹⁹ however, he is one of the earliest pioneers who consciously articulated the need for criticism and satire in order to effect changes in literature, tastes and all aspects of life. Akhundzadeh’s works and his letters to the men of distinction in Iran and Ottoman Empire are replete with his remarks advocating a critical and satirical approach to the social ills. Here, I would like to quote a passage from Akhundzadeh and demonstrate how the author ardently was determined to subvert whatever was recognized as outmoded and obsolete. Contrasting his newly introduced *kritica* (criticism –literary and social–) and *mo’ez*a (exhortation) Akhundzadeh writes a letter to his translator, M.J. Qaraja-Daghi, and explains:

Something which is not written as criticism, but is written as an exhortation or a piece of fatherly advice will never effect any good in the nature of men after the wrong-doing becomes a habit with them. Moreover, people hate to read or hear exhortations and advice. Yet they show a yearning to read criticism. The experiments and experiences of the European philosophers have proved that the vices and bad habits will never leave man’s nature except through criticism, parody and lampoon. *Golestan* and *Bustan* of Sa’di, may God’s peace be upon him, are full of exhortations and advice. Should exhortations and advice effect any good, why have the people of Iran taken no notice of them during the past six hundred years? Tyranny and lawlessness are on the rise every moment –never declining.²⁰

The author ardently revolts against Sa’di, the icon of Persian classical poetry and prose, whose didactic instructions were only second to the holy Koran. In a letter to the translator of his *Tamsilat*, his plays, the author defends his *kritica* against exhortation and advice for two reasons: first, he believes that “vices and bad habits will never leave man’s nature except through criticism, parody and lampoon.”²¹ Second, he says that “exhortations and advice effect” no good after wrong doing becomes a second nature with people. However, I believe that men like Akhundzadeh will make more sense if we study them against the huge body of classical works in which tyrants are extolled as “merciful and justice dispenser king of kings.” That is why Akhundzadeh finds his “criticism, parody and lampoon” as means to get rid of the dicta such as *har eyb ke sultan bepasandad honar ast* (any defect that the king may approve becomes an art) bequeathed from classical

icons like Sa'di.²² In fact, Akhundzadeh creates a binary opposition between criticism and exhortation --the former standing for modernism and the latter representing the classical and outdated. His stipulation on "the experiments and experiences of the European philosophers"²³ is a strong evidence for his upholding criticism and satire as signs of modernity which, he thinks, distinguish his others, Europeans, from the selves, people in the Moslem world.

Reading Akhundzadeh's plays, *Tamsilat*, and the author's own comments clearly demonstrate that he had read many European authors and tried to make them available for his people by recreating them in his own language.²⁴ Long before Akhundzadeh's time, Molière had left his influence in English Restoration comedy, and the so-called comedy of manners and intrigues had taken over the European theater. Almost all the French authors were available for Russian readers in translation, and Akhundzadeh, a Russian citizen living in Tbilisi, had access to those works. I do not believe that Akhundzadeh would have produced his *Tamsilat* had he not lived in the Caucasus, and had he not read European authors. Akhundzadeh regrets that Iranian politicians such as Mirza Huseyn Khan, the Iranian Counsel in Istanbul, did not understand "drama and its rules [criticism, satire and lampoon]." Thus the named politician was behaving very unfriendly toward the author.

Then it became clear that the reason for his unfriendliness was my Turkish *Tamsilat* in which I had lampooned the manner and behaviors of the Iranians as a rule of drama writing. Since he does not know the rules of drama...thus he thought that I had done it because of my enmity toward Iranians.²⁵

The critics from former Soviet Union and those from Northern Azerbaijan, who wrote during the heyday of Communism, speak about the Azeri tradition of satire in terms such as their "struggle against social oppression, fanaticism and ignorance." They speak about the themes of their works as being "social struggle, progressive ideals and the needs of the people." They speak of the works of the period as "democratic literature." Here is Mirza Ibrahimov's comment on the Azeri authors of the period.

And that was the period [19th century] when revolutionary-democratic ideas were voiced most powerfully in Azerbaijanian literature. The realistic trend appeared and it was promoted by Mirza-Shafi Vazeh, A. Bakikhanov, Mirza Fathali Akhundov [Akhundzadeh], Najafbek Vezirov, Nariman Narimanov and other prominent authors. The central themes of their writings were social struggle, progressive ideals, and the needs of the people. Their cause was to bring enlightenment to the people, and they dedicated themselves to the struggle against social oppression, fanaticism and ignorance. They made translations of the classics of Russian and West-European literature, of humanist philosophers, enlighteners and revolutionary democrats, and disseminated their ideas in Azerbaijan. Naturally enough, this new, realistic and democratic literature encountered the vehement opposition of backward

and reactionary circles.²⁶

Akhundzadeh's ardent advocacy of criticism gave birth to a second generation of Azeri authors such as Saber for whom poetry came to mean nothing but satire. In fact during the final decade of the 19th century and the opening of the 20th century, Azeri literature became almost exclusively centered around social satire and criticism. In his poem called "Na Yazim?"²⁷ (What Should I Write?) Saber indicates that a poet's job is only writing social satire, and poetry should be a "mirror" to reflect people's vices and virtues. The followings are stanzas 1 and 3 of Saber's poem.

Sha'iram chunki vazifam bu dur asha'r yazam,
Gorduyum nik-o badi eyliyum izhar yazam,
Guni parlag, gunuzi ag, gejani tar yazam,
Kaji kaj, ayrini ayri, duzi hamvar yazam.
Niya bas beyla baraldirsan o gara gozuni?
Yogsa bu ayinada ayri gorursan ozuni?

.....
Hala man dorda birin yazmyuram karina bakh,
Uzuma gunda soyursan bu gadar a'rina bakh,
Ozun insaf ela afkarina atvarina bakh,
Istamazsan yazam, oz eybli kirdarina bakh,
Kishisan eybini gan banla abas jang elama,
Ozuni ham bani bu barada diltang elama.²⁸

.....
(A poet I am, my duty is writing poems,
I am to write whatever good and evil I see.
Shiny is the sun, bright is the day, and the night is dark I write;
crooked is crooked, curved is curved, smooth is smooth I say.
What is the reason for this angry look at me?
Do you behold your crooked features in this mirror?

.....
I have not written one fourth of what I should, mind your own behavior.
You curse me every day to my face, have a grain of shame.
Be fair, tame your thoughts and watch your own behavior,
if you don't want me to write, correct your defective manners;
if you are really a man, recognize the problem, do not fight with me,
pester me not, bother yourself neither.)

According to Saber, writing "poems" means writing "whatever good and evil" he sees around him. However, people do not like to hear about their own vices. We discussed this issue in Chapter I when we analyzed Mo'juz's brief autobiographical note in which he speaks of his writing poetry in terms of fighting: "yet with all my temerity, I fought; that is I wrote." For Saber also writing means fighting, and as long as vices and

evil deeds persist, writing (fighting) will also continue. Ironically, the end of fighting will mean the end of Saber's career as a poet: "If you don't want me to write, correct your defective manners, if you are really a man, recognize the problem, do not fight with me." In fact, the correction of "defective manners" from Saber's detractors' side will put an end to the poet's writing, which, ironically, the poet would not like to see. The poet's injunction, "do not fight with me" will come true through his opponents' recognition of the "problem," and his becoming "really a man." Saber also speaks of his poetry in terms of a metaphor such as the mirror. No rational man or woman would blame a mirror for what s/he might see in it. If a person blames Saber for what s/he reads in his poetry, it means that such a person lacks sound reasoning. Yet the defects of the detractors' mind and their crooked behaviors are too many to fit in the poet's mirror, he has written only a small portion of "what I [he] should" write. That is why Saber asks his opponents to be fair, "tame your thoughts and watch your own behavior," he advises them. Thus the poet indicates that the only way of reconciliation between his opponents and him is the correction of their "defective manners." According to Saber, the ball always remains in the court of his detractors, the fight will continue unless they "recognize the problem," and make a change in what they see in the mirror.

Thus we find that Akhundzadeh's earlier stand with respect to the introduction of satire became an established canon in the works of his succeeding generation. In Mamed Qoli-Zade, Saber and Mo'juz we find direct references that they employed writing as a way to fight against vices and evils. In fact, their works are made of satire and criticism without which they would cease to exist. Akhundzadeh's own works and his ideas deserve more elaborate studies; here I only tried to identify him as a pioneer in the tradition. I tried to elaborate on his stipulations for employing satire and criticism as tools for effecting changes in all aspects of his contemporary world. By his numerous references to the European philosophers, thinkers and writers, he advocated modernism to which, according to him, Europeans had subscribed. Besides his advocacy of social change and literary endeavors, Akhundzadeh tried hard to change the Persio-Arabic alphabet in which the Azeri language was also written.²⁹ He devised his own characters, and, sending them to both Iranian and Ottoman intellectuals of his time, he proposed to change the alphabet. He believed that the Persio-Arabic characters were inadequate in representing their respective sounds.

In the chronology of the five predecessors of Mo'juz named earlier in the chapter, Talibuf of Tabriz comes after Akhundzadeh who furthered his legacy of satire and social

criticism. Talibuf of Tabriz was born almost twenty three-years after Akhundzadeh. A more cynical man and rather pessimistic toward the political and social betterment in Iran, Talibuf was influenced by the same causes as Akhundzadeh, and he advocated the same views. He also ardently advocated the necessity of replacing the Arabic alphabet by a more effective system of characters.³⁰ We can imagine the depth of the change these Azeri thinkers were espousing, and how they had taken the lead in advocating subversions and multi-dimensional changes. Out of Talibuf's many prose works, I will only quote from his *Masaliku'l al-muhsinin --The Paths of the Righteous*. I will also select pieces from the other Azeri authors named earlier in the chapter and try to compare them with the poems selected from Mo'juz. Mo'juz's major topic of discussion, women's issue, does not occupy an urgent place in Akhundzadeh, nor does it have any place in Talibuf or Maraghe'i. However, we can find a number of poems in Saber's *divan* dealing with the issues pertaining women. Having a daughter only, Talibuf invents an imaginary son, Ahmad, to address the lectures of his prose work *Kitab-i-e Ahmad --Ahmad's Book*. Because of the limits of this work, I will choose a single example from each author to illustrate Talibuf, Maraghe'i and Mamed Qoli-Zade's part in establishing and canonizing the tradition of satire in Azeri literature. Saber's part will be dealt in an independent section of this chapter under "Mo'juz and Saber the Two Popular Satirists and Humorists." My selections from the mentioned authors only deal with their satire of the health and sanity issues. However, in their depiction of the problems of health and sanity, the authors do not present clean and innocent pictures of the ruling class, the people in the garb of the clerics and the wealthy. Among many targets of attacks concerning health and sanity, bath-houses have received special treatment by many Azeri authors of the period. In fact a bath-house becomes a metonymy standing for the whole society. The filthy and stinking bath-house stand for the unhealthy society and dcaying culture. In the following section, we will discuss how the authors of our choice have made the lack of sanitary conditions in the bath-houses as the objects of their satire and handed it down to Mo'juz and their younger generation.

The Bath-House as an Object of Satire³¹

All the authors named earlier have targeted the absence of basic health necessities. However, they have not isolated many other social problems from the issues of health and sanitation. Once the filthy condition of a bath-house is approached, other issues such as people's illiteracy, ignorance of sciences, the ruling class tyranny, the irresponsibility of the rich and indifference of the religious authorities appear to be present at the scene. Thus

I believe that a small segment of the authors' works on an issue such as bath-house will provide us ample chances to approach many different issues.

The Bath-House in Talibuf: Muhsin, Talibuf's mouthpiece in his *Masalku'l al-muhsinin*, is a foreign-educated engineer who has been assigned to carry out a five-man scientific expedition to the summit of Damavand mountain. Muhsin gives full details of their itinerary, the places they visit, and the people they meet. He speaks about the nonexistence of roads, lack of sanity, illiteracy and the tyranny of the ruling class. On their way to their destination, Muhsin and his group stay in towns and villages and talk to people. In one of the towns they decide to go to the bath-house and change their clothing. When they walk to the door of the bath-house, they are driven back by the filth and terrible odor of the place. They prefer to go out of the town and bathe in a river.³² Later, they try to get their clothes washed; the laundry person brings them back "dirtier" than before. At this point Talibuf speaks about how the people are dirty and how "pollution and purity" like "paganism and Islam" have been reversed. Muhsin complains that in his country "a white sock is not replaced unless it turns black and rots, and a shirt is not changed unless it is dirtied beyond recognition."³³ Talibuf's reference to the binaries such as pollution/purity and paganism/Islam and the reversal of their meanings is quite interesting. After Muhsin finishes his mission and returns with his scientific data to Tehran, he finds out that the expedition was not really needed by any one in Tehran. It was only the British ambassador's desire to carry on the mission "with our (Iranians') expenses" as a service "to the Geographic Society of the Queen of England." When Muhsin gets to Tehran, he goes to the bath-house in order to prepare for his visit to the government authorities the next day. Here is what he says:

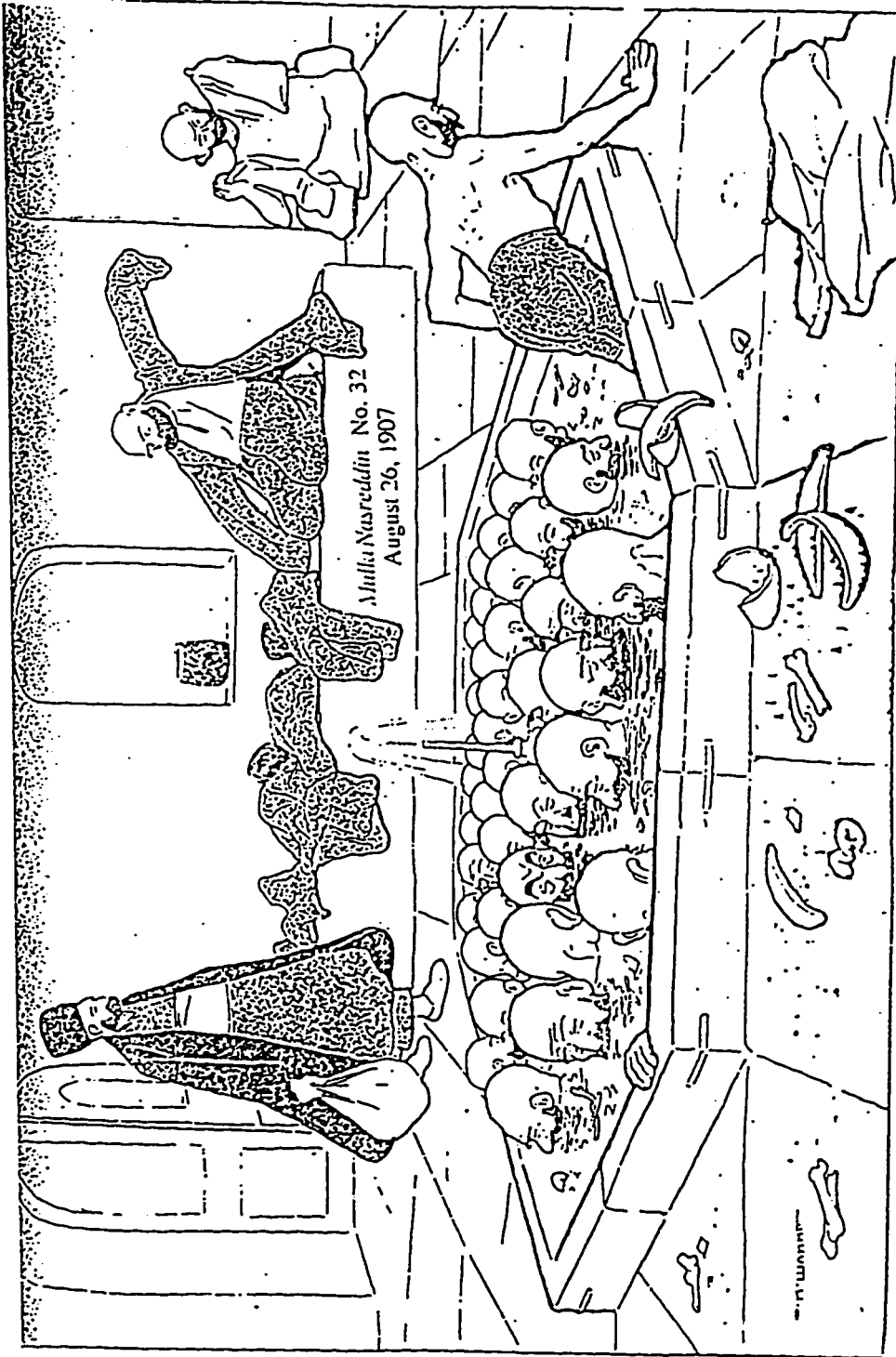
I busied myself with tomorrow's work. Then I went to the bath-house, that is I polluted myself. After I came out, I applied one ounce of rose perfume to stop the stinking odor from my body pores, I could not get relieved from the stink of the hair-remover.³⁴ Happy those uncivilized Africans that they do not have such means of purification and sanity, and they have the gorgeous Nile as their *kor*³⁵ for their obligatory washing of their body.³⁶

According to Talibuf's semantics, going to the bath-house means to get "polluted." As paganism and Islam have changed their positions, a bath-house originally designed to be a place for sanitation has turned into the place of pollution. Reading Talibuf's works will prove that he is one of the Azeri authors who tries to deal with correct statistics and figures. The lines depict him to be considerate and somewhat realistic even in his overstatements. He says that *yek misgal* (nearly an ounce) of perfume he uses to fight and

off-set the bad odor. Whereas, others might speak in terms of liters or gallons. As mentioned earlier the issues discussed by Talibuf are also dealt with by other Azeri authors, however, with greater humor and less cynicism.

The Bath-House in Maraghe'i: Ebrahim Beg, the protagonist in Maraghe'i's *The Travelogue of Ebrahim Beg*, is the only son of an Iranian merchant who has settled in Egypt. Brought up in an alien land, he has a pining desire to travel to Iran and see the land of his fore-fathers. The young Ebrahim Beg has read many books about the glorious past of his country, and he is infatuated by the heroic characters of Iranian history such as Nader Shah. Ebrahim Beg's father has allotted a sum of money for his son's travel to Iran. The father has advised him to make such a trip in the company of Yusuf Amu, his servant and *confidante*, after his father's death. Probably, the father knew that his son's travel to Iran and his exposure to the reality of the miserable conditions of Iranians would cause his disillusionment. Like Don Quixote, Ebrahim Beg could only survive with his illusions -- disillusionment meant death to him. After his father's death, Ebrahim Beg sets out toward Iran. He sails from Alexandria to Istanbul in order to continue his journey via Black Sea, the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea to Eshq Abad in Turkmenistan. From Eshq Abad he travels to Mashhad in the North Eastern province of Iran in order to pay a visit to the holy shrine of the eighth Imam there. During his travel, the young man hears many bad stories about the miserable living conditions of Iran, and he confronts many Iranians who have left their countries and are engaged in menial works in the Caucasus; or he learns that many hundreds of them are in prisons of Batum and Tbilisi. Yet the illusioned young man either tries to evade facing the reality of the events, or he tries to give his own illusory versions of the episodes. Like Don Quixote, he also saw windmills as giants at first; after he was knocked down by them, they were seen as windmills which were originally giants. Ebrahim Beg cannot free himself of illusions. When he and Yusuf Amu get to Mashhad, Aga Seyyid, a pilgrimage guide to the holy shrine, approaches them outside the gates of the city and insistingly offers his service. Aga Seyyid takes them to a lodging. After resting for a while they decide to go to the bath-house in order to get ready for their visit to the holy shrine:

When we got in the bath-house, the odor of the stinking water, virtually, started to chocke me --a pit filled with stinking water called cistern or *kor* water! The greasy water was the color of a peacock feather, its odor was nauseating. Without a doubt, this filthy water was the source of all kinds of contagious diseases. All the blind and bald people in the whole city with all their rankles, men and women, day and night immersed themselves in the three-month old filthy water. In fact, I was shocked to learn that neither the city authorities nor the *ulama* cared about



Адамлар
Plate 8: A Depiction of the Bath-House
Mulla Nasreddin No. 32 August 26, 1907

contagious diseases and contaminations of which this stinking water was the source. By naming it *kor*, they thought that it could eliminate all those diseases. I think attributing any kind of cleansing quality to such a water would be a desecration toward our holy religion which observes sanity as one of its principal tenets. How could such a water, which is a blend of so many people's filth and excretions and has taken a color which would repulse any viewer, be cleansing? In the bath-houses of other Islamic lands such as Egypt and the Ottoman Empire, water runs through taps, and it is absolutely clear and clean. Anyway, we entered the bath-house unpolluted and came out polluted. Aqa Seyyid [the guide to the holy shrine in their company] advised us to leave our bath-house bundles in the bath-house and head directly to the holy shrine. I rejected the idea and said that I needed to go back to the lodging and had some work to do there. After we got to the lodging, I asked Aqa Seyyid to light the samovar. He said, "it is not time for tea." I responded that I wanted to wash the filth of the bath-house off my body. He said, "the cistern water is *kor* sir, and it is cleansing." "No problem, but it is filthy and stinking," I replied. Anyhow, the warm water was ready. I washed my body again, changed my clothing and decided that I would never go to a bath-house in Iran again. ³⁷

The odor of "the stinking water" is the first thing in Maraghe'i's depiction of the scene which strikes associations with Talibuf's story about the bath-house. Then Maraghe'i offers his definition of the bath-reservoir -- "a pit filled with stinking water called a cistern or *kor* water!"³⁸ According to religious standards, *kor* water remains to be cleansing unless its color and smell alter. Thus the water mentioned in the stories of both authors not only is not cleansing, but it is polluting. It is anything but *kor* water. Maraghe'i's reference to the color and smell of the bath-house reservoir is directed to the religious provisions of the *kor* water. He tries to say that the color and smell of the water are altered, and as a result, it cannot meet the religious provisions. He expresses his shock about the fact that "neither the city authorities nor the *ulama* [religious leaders] could think" that such a water is the source all contagious diseases. According to the author, they imagine that "by naming it *kor*" it can eliminate all the infectious diseases. We will further discuss Maraghe'i's depiction of bath-house when we study Mo'juz.

The Bath-House in Mo'juz: I had a reference to Mo'juz's poem entitled "The Bath-Reservoir" in Chapter I. I explained that the poem is the only poem which we can document its publication during the poet's life time. As mentioned, the poem was published in the fifth issue of *Mulla Nasreddin* when the paper was being published in Tabriz. On November 15, 1921 the poem was published under the title of "Hamamlarimiz" (Our Bath-Houses).³⁹ Here is the transliteration of the poem and its English translation in its entirety.

Khoruzlar bannadi, burgi chalindi vaqt-e hajatdur,
Gozun ach dilbarim, itdar hurur gor na Qiyamatdur.

Golakh ver buy-e gandaba, achildi bab-e garmaba,
 Dema vaqt olmiyub hala bu pis iy bir alamatdur.
 Bu san san dilbarim, ya aydi yatmish rakhtkhabinda,
 Ta'alallah, badandur bu va ya shakl-e nazafatdur.
 Bu agh chag peykara ver shutstoshu ab golabila,
 Sana ey golbadan kanduda ghosl edmak khayamatdur.
 Morakkabdur najisdan tar-o pudi ab-e hammamon,
 Bu soz bohtan dayer, hashha, chirk-o shahvatdan ebaratdur.
 Yaqinan bu suda ghysl eyliyan bichara pak olmaz,
 Khilas olmaz janabatdan gena mutlaq janabatdur.
 Tabia't sahibi burnun dutar buy-e kasafatdan,
 Asar yokhdur nazafatdan, ajab jay-e taharatdur.
 Yuzunda bir garish galinneghenda roghan-e dunba,
 Revayat eyliri ravi ichi yeksar najasatdur.
 Zi baski qil faravandur takinda ip tokhur bitdar
 Agar almakh khiyalin var, buyur gal nerkhi babatdur.
 Sahih-o na salamat, nik-o bad, sowdali sowdasiz,
 Hami bir yerda yetganson, yuyunson gor na halatdur.
 Ofunat nashr edir atrafina pusida jandaktak,
 Kechal bashlar haqiqan ma'dan-e cherk-o kasafatdur.
 Kechallar bashini baghlar, giranda khszniya aghlar,
 Tokanda su bashin daghlar, nachun ? chunki jarahatdur.
 Iki alli gashur bashin, guzun girpar ayar gashin,
 Khamir etmak ayakhdashin amu zann etma rahatdur.
 Giranda khazniya bihal olur ishal olan nakhosh,
 Bu soz sharh istamaz, hushyara bir ima kifaytdur.
 Diyur va'iz bu aba mazmaza et ghysl edan vaqtda,
 Mazajun chakmasa gus, gusaghun eyn-e sa'adatdur.
 Ajab taklif edirsan bandagan-e haqqa ey va'iz,
 Magar ab-e muzafi aghza doldurmakh zarafatdur.
 Mabaligh kharj edir dolatlilar bihuda yerlarda,
 Nazafat barasinda pullilar ahl-e qana'atdur.
 Gezi oghlani mahbub eyliyan zulf-e musalsaldur,
 Bu ne'matdan bashi mahrum olan dayim khajaltdur.
 Hala kohna gafa chokhdur Shabutarda ajul olma,
 Ozun bihuda yorma, Mo'juz ayyam-e jahalatdur.⁴⁰

(The roosters are crowing. It is the time, the trumpet of the bath-house is being blown.

Open your eyes my beloved, the dogs are barking, a new day is breaking.
 Smell the odor of the stinking water, the door of the bath-house has opened.
 Do not say it's too early this bad odor is a good sign.
 Is it you or has the moon set in your bed?
 O the Great Creator! Is this a human body or the depiction of an ethereal beauty?
 Wash this beautiful and delicate body with rose water,
 O my love! It's a sacrilege to dip this body for *ghysl* ⁴¹ in the stinking water.
 The wharf and woof of the bath-house are made of feces,
 very truly, it is made of semen, and human excretions.
 Any wretched one who washes his body in this water will never be clean,
 he will certainly remain *junub*,⁴² never discharged from his religious obligation,
ghysl.

By nature any one would block his nose from such nauseating odor,
 no signs of sanity, what a place for cleansing and obligatory purification?
 On its surface, you can see filth and fat as thick as a hand-span,
 at the bottom, I have been told there is excrement all over.
 So abundant are bristles and hairs in the bottom, the lice have a textile factory,
 should you want to do business, you could make a good deal.
 Sick and healthy, good and bad, people of every condition,
 rinsed and soaked in the same pot! Guess what happens!
 It disseminates the bad odor all around like a decomposing carcass.
 The sore and festering heads are really the sources of filth.
 Those with rankling heads wrap and cover their skulls,
 because of the rankles, the bath-house water will scald their head.
 Scratching their sores with both hands, they squint their eyes and contract their
 eyebrows,
 kneading a foot-stone!⁴³ O dear, do not take an easy task!
 Walking in the bath-reservoir, the sick with diarrhea lose control,
 This needs no further comment, you will guess what happens next.
 The preacher orders you to rinse your mouth while performing a *ghusl*,
 If your nature fails the performance, you might vomit --vomiting is a natural
 reaction.
 O preacher, you're charging god's creatures with a difficult task,
 to hold *mudzaf*⁴⁴ water such as this in your mouth, is by no means a joke.
 The rich squander their money on useless issues urged by their whims,
 but they choose to be frugal in the matters of sanity.
 Girls and boys become adorable because of their well-attended locks,
 their loss is a continuous embarrassment for every one.
 Mo'juz you are trudging your way through the days of ignorance, do not get
 exhausted,
 be patient still, there are many reactionaries in Shabustar.)

Using a different genre, Mo'juz speaks almost the same words as Maraghe'i, yet he
 gives a more wholesome and detailed picture. Mo'juz creates the atmosphere in which
 people used to take their bath-house bundles and rushed to the bath-house at the break of
 dawn. The roosters' crowing, the dogs' barking and the breaking dawn orchestrated with
 the trumpet of the bath-house going off all depict a real picture. Yet the addition of "the
 odor of the stinking water" spewing out by the opening of the bath-house door, an
 exaggeration though, becomes part of the natural atmosphere. The overstatement about the
 odor is as real as other elements in the scene. However, a reader's response to the picture
 is a mixed one. Its dominating element of humor is combined with an arduous task of
 getting up at day break and the disgusting act of dipping body in the stinking water. Right
 in the middle of such a picture, Mo'juz places his lady love. "Is this you or has the moon
 set in your bed?" he asks. The poet's question and his employment of classical imagery
 tend to invoke their familiar significations which, at the same time, clash with the
 difficulties of real life and its prevailing farcical atmosphere as well. After giving the

picture of his lady's "ethereal beauty," the poet provides his reader with further farcical pictures and presses the classical tone and imagery to the verge of collapse. This is an aspect of Mo'juz's poetry which we discussed in previous chapters.

After advising his lady to wash her body with "rose-water," Mo'juz gives a graphic picture of the bath reservoir which we find in Maraghe'i as well. "The wharf and woof of the bath-house are made of feces,/very truly, it is made of semen, and human excretions," Mo'juz says. Obviously, any person who washes his/her body in such a filthy water "will never be clean," --*pak olmaz*. The poet's employment of *pak* meaning "clean" is significant because the word in Azeri is only used to mean clean for things which are clean ceremonially, and they are recognized to be clean according to religious standards. A disinfected and sterilized object may be *tamiz* (clean) from clinical point of view, but it is not *pak* from religious point of view unless it is washed in *kor* water. In fact, any "clean" thing cannot be considered as *pak*, but anything *pak* is clean. That is why the poet says that any "unfortunate" person who is forced to wash his body in such a water not only will not become *pak* or purified, he "will certainly remain *junub*, never discharged from his religious obligation, *ghusl*."⁴⁵ The poet stipulates that water, which cannot be cleansing, cannot discharge a person from a religious obligation such as *ghusl*. Quite appropriately, we find the same question raised by Maraghe'i when he asks: "How can such a water, which is a blend of so many people's filth and excretions and has taken a color that repulses any viewer, be cleansing?"

Mo'juz continues to provide a very detailed picture of the scene; he gives a full description of what is on the surface and in the bottom of a bath-reservoir, then he asks his rhetorical question to make his audience have a new look at the situation. "Sick and healthy, good and bad, people of every walk,/all rinsed and soaked in the same pot! Guess what happens?" he asks. He compares the so-called water to a "decomposing carcass" which spreads a terrible odor around itself. Later Mo'juz refers to one of the most common contagious diseases prevalent among the people of his time. He speaks about "festering" and "rankling heads" which usually left many with bald heads. The poet has other poems dealing with many other prevalent diseases of his time such as chicken-pox which usually killed many children, made them blind or left them deformed.⁴⁶ Mo'juz continues to depict more graphic pictures of the bath-house where the people wash and scrub their bodies, or they rub their feet with "foot-stone[s]." To wrap up his depiction of the scene the poet adds: "Walking in the bath-reservoir, the sick with diarrhea lose their control,/this needs no further comment, you will guess what happens next."

It had almost become a standard procedure or a convention with Azeri authors of the period such as Talibuf, Maraghe'i, Mamed Qoli-Zade, Saber and Mo'juz to make a connection between the undesirable conditions of life and the preachers, the wealthy and the ruling class and implicate them all as responsible for people's miseries. Therefore, after Mo'juz wraps up his detailed depiction of the bath-house, he refers to the preacher who, while "performing a *ghusl*" recommends people to rinse their mouth with the water that its "wharf and woof" are made of "feces." "O preacher, you're charging the God's creatures with a difficult task, to hold a *muzaf* water such as this in your mouth, by no means is a joke," the poet protests. The obligatory performances such as ablution and *ghusl*, usually, carry their attached strings and recommended ancillary acts like *istinshaq* (taking water in the nose) or *mazmaza* (rinsing mouth). The poet objects to the idea and says that holding "muzaf water such as" depicted in the poem "by no means is a joke." According to Shi'a teachings only *mutlaq* (pure) water has cleansing quality, otherwise, *muzaf* (impure or blended with some thing else) water cannot be cleansing. Using the preacher's jargon, the poet rejects his idea of rinsing mouth with a *muzaf* water like that of bath-reservoir in the quoted line.

After expressing his conflict of thought with that of the preacher, Mo'juz makes the wealthy the target of his satire by saying that they "squander their money on useless issues by the urge of their whims, but they choose to be frugal in matters of sanity." Like many other authors of the Iranian Constitutional era, Mo'juz tries to depict a society in which cultural and historical values are degenerated and the religious teachings are being misinterpreted. In order to do so, the poet employs the bath-house as a metaphor for the whole society. No aspect of the depicted bath-house is capable of serving its designated purpose. No cleansing quality can be seen in the place. The place of sanity has been turned into a place of filth and contagious diseases. Therefore, the poet speaks about the community in which spend thrifty and frugality have lost their real meanings. Similar to the reversal of senses in the paganism/Islam binary of Talibuf, mentioned earlier, spend thrifty and frugality also have undergone a reversal of meanings. The rich spend lavishly on useless things, but when it comes to important issues such as health and community well-being, they want to be frugal. We also saw Maraghe'i complaining that he "was shocked to learn that neither the city authorities nor the *ulama* could think of contagious diseases and contaminations of which this stinking water [bath-reservoir] was their source, and by naming it *kor*, they think that it can eliminate all those infectious and contagious diseases." By "city authorities" Maraghe'i means the ruling class and the wealthy, and by

ulama, he means any one in the garb of clerics.

Before closing the issue, Mo'juz makes reference to the "well-attended locks" which are mentioned as principal means in making "girls and boys" adorable. I believe the poet speaks of the "well-attended locks" for different reasons. Well-attended locks are mentioned to contrast the baldness left after healing the sores of the "rankling heads," it is also stipulated in defiance of the heretical banning of boys from growing their hair. Thus the poet stipulates that the "well-attended locks" are fundamental elements in making a person to look beautiful irrespective of his or her gender. In the very last lines, as usual, the poet addresses himself and says : "Mo'juz you are trudging your way through the days of ignorance, do not tire yourself, /be patient, still there are many reactionaries in Shabustar." Besides the literal meaning of the word *jahalat*, ignorance, the poet also establishes an association between his own life time with the pre-Islamic days of Arabia known as *Jahiliyyah* time. The reader finds the poet "trudging" his way through the pre-Islamic *Jahiliyyah* days. The poem ends on an ambivalent note, firstly, the poet advises himself not to tire himself and be "patient" because "there are many reactionaries in Shabustar." Secondly, with the patience and perseverance of the prophet of Islam, the Arabs of *Jahiliyyah* time became the conquerors and masters of the world. Thus the poet as a prophet and a teacher will succeed in mannering and educating the people should he have the patience.

The Bath-House in Mamed Qoli-Zade: In one of his short articles entitled "The Smoke" which appeared in *Mulla Nasreddin* on May 8th, 1921, Mamed Qoli-Zade looks at the bath-houses of Nakhjavan and Tabriz from outside. Unlike Talibuf, Maraghe'i and Mo'juz who walk into the filthy water of the bath-reservoir, Mamed Qoli-Zade speaks about the pollution caused by the unsuitable and polluting fuel used to warm the water of the bath-houses. The author banteringly argues that if "I am not destined to die, and my time has not arrived yet," no one would think that "the odor of this stinking cow-dung [used as fuel] and its suffocating smoke" would kill me. According to Mamed Qoli-Zade, his people think that life means a precarious survival from "the stinking cow-dung and its smoke" a day or two. Thus the author says that as far as the people think that the smoke will not kill them instantly, they do not care about it. Later Mamed Qoli-Zade employs the smoke and fog from the unsuitable fuel of the bath-house as metaphors for tyranny, despotism and superstition. "The people are being strangled, smoke of all variety is besieging the nation. Should you not rise up for your own sake, no trace of this nation will be left on earth," the author concludes.⁴⁷ In his social criticism and satire, Mamed Qoli-

Zade usually deals with moral and behavioral aspects of people. His readers can seldom find an elaborate physical depiction of a person or a thing. He fails to give a comprehensive and effective picture of people or places. While speaking about the physical appearances of people or places, he switches to dealing with moral characters and behaviors. He deals more with ideas and concepts rather than facts and objects, and he sounds like a traditional preacher --manifesting a distance and class difference between himself and the ordinary people. In this respect, Mamed Qoli- Zade differs from Mo'juz drastically. Mo'juz neither considers himself different from the common people and illiterate masses nor does he assume the position of preaching and admonishing others. As I stipulated earlier, I selected only small examples in my comparison of Mo'juz and his preceding Azeri authors who established satire and social criticism as the predominant feature in Azeri literature. However, I would like to end our study of Talibuf, Maraghe'i, Mamed Qoli-Zade here and give a comparative examination of Mo'juz and Saber.

Mo'juz and Saber: Two Popular Satirists and Humorists

Mo'juz has often been compared with Saber, and he has been considered to be an ardent follower of him. "Mo'juz's war against ignorance and fanaticism makes him join the rank of the vanguards of the front, *Mulla Nasreddin* circle, M.A. Saber in the first place by whose works he was greatly influenced," says L. Omarova.⁴⁸ G. Memmedli also referring to Saber's role in shaping Mo'juz's epistemology and the influence of his works which appeared in *Mulla Nasreddin* writes:

Passing the political borders, the powerful voice of the fiery and revolutionary satirist, Mirza Ali Akbar Saber, spread all over Iran, and it had touched the ears of Mirza Ali Mo'juz in Shabustar. This voice had influenced him [Mo'juz] so deeply that he remained faithful to Saber's school, Saber's ideas to the very last day of his life, and he never left his [Saber's] ways.⁴⁹

Writing during the peak days of the Soviet Union, Memmedli, himself, sounds "fiery and revolutionary." However, Saber's influence in Mo'juz's works is out of the question. Not only did the two poets carry out the same mission, their themes, diction and tools are also the same. In fact, Mo'juz has direct references to Saber exclaiming that "I will wake my people up like Saber."⁵⁰ No matter to what extent Mo'juz was influenced by his fore-runner, I agree with the scholars such as Y. Hajiyev who find Mo'juz to be a superior poet. A close study of Mo'juz will prove that his language is more refined and direct, his humor is more effective and his satire more constructive. Addressing the issue, Berengian writes:

Such studies of Mo'juz usually elaborate on his [Mo'juz's] indebtedness to Saber.

Y. Hajiyev, for example, asserts that in the poems where Mo'juz adopts the subject matter of Saber, he demonstrates his originality by developing these themes on a more profound level and by giving the humor of Saber a deeper social and political significance. A. Mir-Ahmadoff dwells specially on the humor of Mo'juz, stating that among the Azeri poets of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries only certain poems of Seyyed 'Azim Shirvani approach those of Mo'juz in effectiveness. Mehdi Mojtehed of Tabriz maintains that in regard to technique and artistic achievement the poems of Mo'juz at times excel those of his literary master, Saber.⁵¹

At times, Saber's lines sound erratic and lacking an outward unity --like many non-narrative poetry works written in the Iranian tradition. On the contrary, each poem of Mo'juz functions like a short story in which a reader can see a beginning and the progression of thought leading to an end. In each poem of Mo'juz, one can notice a succession of episodes orchestrating toward a unified goal. However, many critics have been dazzled by Saber's fame, his vital contributions to *Mulla Nasreddin*, and his close associations with the able editor of the paper, J. Mamed Qoli-Zade. Authors such as Omerova and Memmedli have exaggerated Mo'juz's indebtedness to Saber and have depicted the former as a mere follower of the latter without delving into Mo'juz's originality. Not only they have not dared to place Mo'juz against Saber in a critical contrast, but they have also failed to draw a critical parallel between the two. In the following pages, I will quote similar poems and passages from the two poets, and I will try to compare and contrast the two authors by my detailed approach to their works. I would like to begin my comparison of the two poets by quoting a poem from Saber known as "A Shirvannilar" (O The People of Shirvan) which I will compare with a poem from Mo'juz entitled "Ey Shabustarli Dadashlar Siza Man Neynamisham" (O The Brethren of Shabustar! Have I wronged You?). Here is Saber's "A Shirvannilar" in transliteration followed by its English translation.

Ashhaddo billahil-'alliyol-'azim,
 Sahib-e imanam a Shirvannilar.
 Yog yeni bir dina yaqinim manim,
 Kohna Musalmanam a Shirvannilar.
 Shi'a-yam amma na bu ashkaldan,
 Sunni-yam amma na bu amsaldan.
 Sufi-yam amma na bu abdaldan,
 Haq sevan insanam a Shirvannilar.
 Ummat-e marhuma-vo maghfurila
 Amr-deyam ta a't-e mazburila,
 Kufriya hokm eylamiyun zurila,
 Qayil-e Qur'anam a Shirvannilar.⁵²

(I attest to the oneness of God the Almighty

that I am a believer in the holy religion. O! The people of Shirvan!
 I do not believe in a new religion,
 I am a veteran Moslem. O! The people of Shirvan!
 I am a Shi'a but not from a category such as this,
 I am a Sunni but from a different type.
 I am a Sufi but not from such a school,
 I am a truth-loving human being. O! The people of Shirvan!
 I am in agreement with the blessed and honorable *umma*,
 I am obedient to all the dictated rules.
 Do not excommunicate me by force through rash judgments,
 I am a believer and reader of the Koran. O! The people of Shirvan!)

The poet's addressing his compatriots, "O The people of Shirvan," is one of his most famous poems which was memorized by many people during *Mulla Nasreddin's* peak days, and some lines of the poem have become traveling mottoes and proverbs among Azeri speaking people since that time. The poem also sounds to be one of the coherent pieces of Saber. Yet like a classical lyric written in the tradition of Persian poetry, each distich stands as an independent unit for itself, and it can be relocated without disturbing the content and meaning of the poem. The whole poem is written to defend the poet against his detractors and vilifiers who consider him an apostate because of his advocacy of change and support of modern views. The poem opens with the poet's affirmation of the Almighty's oneness --one of the two principal affirmations of faith (*shahada*). In order to be accommodated in the fold of Islam, a person needs to commit him/herself to a double affirmation --*shahadatayn*. The first is the affirmation of monotheism, and the second is the affirmation that the prophet of Islam is the last in the chain of prophethood. The poet utters his *shahada* loudly and clearly making his faithfulness to his religion known beyond any doubt. "I attest to the oneness of God the Almighty/that I am a believer in the holy religion. O! The people of Shirvan!" In lines three and four, the poet repeats the same idea in different words by saying that he believes in no new religion, and he is a "veteran Moslem." However, the poet is different from the majority of the people in many ways. He is a Shi'a but not from the "category" to which many others belong. He is a Sunni but from a different "type." He is a Sufi from an unconventional "school." "I am a truth-loving human being," the poet finally claims in line eight. In lines nine and ten, the poet affirms that he belongs to the blessed of Islam, and he is obedient to all the prescribed rules. Laying down all his premises, the poet gets to his conclusion that he should not be excluded from his community by "rash judgments." Yet in the very last line, Saber offers further evidences for his being a true believer, he is a "reader of the Koran," and he observes the due respect for the holy book as well.

Saber's "O The People of Shirvan" is structured on three components: the poet's affirmation of faith, his supporting evidence for his faithfulness and a request for his inclusion in the community of the believers. Yet the poet's request for his inclusion in the community of believers is ironic since he is a Shi'a who does not belong to the familiar "category" of his community. He is a Sunni yet his own "type" is not to be found among the known sects of Sunnism; he is a Sufi, but he does not belong to any one of the known schools. The poet is a new phenomenon, something with no recognized precedence --a modern man who belongs to no one. He is "a truth-loving human being" whose position yet to be defined in relation to the old beliefs, traditions and paradigms. However, the poet's stipulation that he does not "believe in a new religion" implies that his contemporary Moslems had deviated from the Islam of *ahde risalt* (Islam of prophet's time) to which we have had references before. In fact, the poet's detractors believe in a religion which is not compatible with the standards of *ahde risalet*. Here I would like to suspend our discussion on Saber's "O the People of Shirvan," and discuss on Mo'juz's "O Brethren of Shabustar! Have I wronged You?" and examine the two poets' treatment of the same theme and idea by putting them side-by-side. We will examine how the two poets address their compatriots differently, and how they talk to them. Here we have the transliteration and English translation of Mo'juz's poem in its entirety.

Bashima zulf goyub saggali gekhdirmamesham,
 Khalqdan rushvat alib kisami doldurmamisham.
 Jaddizin vaqf suyun mulkima achdimamisham,
 Ey Shabustarli dadashlar siza man neynamisham.

Bir gran pul aparir dowlat Iran daridan,
 Zulm edir firgey-e gassaba utanmir tridan,
 Mohr-e Zibhiyya alir, baj oludan ham dridan,
 Man bela zolm-o setam khalqa rava gormamisham.

Gorusuz man na ajanam, na kazak, ey kishilar,
 Gormiyub gondara hargiz bu daban, ey kishilar,
 Salmisham life-ye shalvarima bagh ey kishilar,
 Pantalun geymamaisham, bughlarimi burmamisham,
 Ey shabustarli dadashlar siza man neynamisham.

Kufurma hokm eladiz hansi gunahila manim?
 Jurmumi sabit edin birja guvahila manim,
 Na talaqila ishm var na nikahila manim,
 Gizizi hazir edib majlisa dindirmamisham,
 Ey shabustarli dadashlar siza man neynamisham.

Man filankas dayiram sighama irad edasan,
 Get kabin kasma diya ustuma faryad edasan,

Yikhasan khalqin evin, oz evin abad edasan,
 Man hala hich kasin qalbini sindirmamisham,
 Ey shabustarli dadashlar siza man neynamisham.

Ey amu chah giljun eyla morabbaya hujum,
 Shirbrinja, khamaya ham gara dolmaya hujum,
 Bijahat eylama chokh Mo'juz-e sheydaya hujum'
 Man magar ilda besh on yol sizi gulurmamaisham,
 Ey shabustarli dadashlar siza man neynamisham.⁵³

(Never have I grown my locks, never have I shaved my beard,
 never have I taken a bribe to fill my own pockets,
 never have I irrigated my land from your grand-father's spring.
 O Brethren of Shabustar! Have I wronged You?

The Iranian government is taxing a Gran⁵⁴ from each piece of hide,
 it feels no shame its extortions of the butchers guild,
 it gets money for a slaughter stamp⁵⁵, it taxes dead and alive.
 Never have I committed such extortions and tyrannies.
 O Brethren of Shabustar! Have I wronged You?

O men! You see I am neither a policeman nor a soldier.
 O men! These heels of mine have touched no *gondara*, [European shoes],
 I have fastened my pants with a piece of rope, [never using leather belt],
 never have I worn pantaloons, never have I braided⁵⁶ my moustache.
 O Brethren of Shabustar! Have I wronged You?

For what sin are you excommunicating me?
 Prove my sin with a single piece of evidence.
 Neither do I meddle with divorce, nor do I deal with marriage,
 never have I summoned your daughter to a public gathering, never have I made her
 talk.

O Brethren of Shabustar! Have I wronged You?

I am not such and such person to find fault with my recitation marriage bonds,⁵⁷
 or yell at me saying "go don't perform our marriage ceremony."
 Neither have I ruined people's home in order to build my own.
 I have never broken a heart in my life.

O Brethren of Shabustar! Have I wronged You?

O uncle unsheathe your sword and attack the jam,
 raid on *shirberenj*, *khama* and *gara dolma*.
 With no reason do not raid this enthralled Mo'juz.
 Have I not made you laugh at least a dozen times a year?
 O Brethren of Shabustar! Have I wronged You?)

Mo'juz starts his poem by speaking out his grievances about his people's treatment of him. He refers to the issues which sound apparently insignificant. "Never have I grown my locks, never have I shaved my beard," he says. The poet's reference to the petty and

personal issues such as growing “locks” or shaving “a beard” might shock someone who does not know how important those apparently petty issues were in Iran’s rural areas. In the communities such as Shabustar every part of life is firmly tied to the traditions and time honored value systems, and their violation can cause a person’s excommunication. The poet says that he still observes the traditional values, and he is still within the boundaries of the old value system. There is an ambivalence in the line because the poet is both serious and ironic about what he says. In chapter I, we discussed Mo’juz’s statement that “one’s faith dangles from a single bristle” in Shabustar. The relatedness of one’s shaving or not shaving to his faith is out of the question for the poet. There is also an implication that people’s private and natural rights are at stake. After his reference to very personal issues, the poet alludes to a number of unlawful acts which are practiced in his community on a daily basis, but they pass unnoticed, or their perpetrators do not pay the due price for their acts. “Never have I taken a bribe to fill my own pockets,/never have I irrigated my land from your grand-father’s spring,” the poet says. By the ironic equating his denial of growing locks, and shaving his beard with his denial of taking bribe and stealing water from other people, Mo’juz tries to imply that the trivial personal issues by no means are comparable with the heinous social felonies prevalent among the people. There is also an implication that the people who do not grow locks and do not shave their whiskers do get bribes, and they steal other people’s water in order to irrigate their own lands. After his ironic confirmation of the observance of not growing his locks and not shaving his beard in the first line, and confessing his avoidance from theft and taking bribe, Mo’juz asks his rhetorical question: “O Brethren of Shabustar! Have I wronged You?” The first stanza of the poem serves as the poet’s certification of good morals and behavior with an augmented effect of the rhetorical question of the refrain.

The second stanza refers to the acts of tyranny perpetrated by the government of Iran. It appears that taxing “each piece of hide” one Gran was considered to be an unfair taxation in Mo’juz’s time. That is why, the poet says that the government “feels no shame” for its “extortions.” Beside collecting taxes from hides, the Iranian government is also charging the butchers’ guild a “money for slaughter stamp.” Thus people are being taxed in every direction, and the government “taxes dead and alive.” Mo’juz contrasts his own civilized behavior with those of government’s tyrannic practices. “Never have I made such extortions and tyrannies./O Brethren of Shabustar! Have I wronged You?” the poet concludes his second stanza. As we have seen in different occasions, Mo’juz often blames the government administrators and religious leaders for the miseries of the people and

backwardness of the society. After he exonerates himself in the first stanza, he criticizes the government in the second.

In line one of stanza 3, again the poet distances himself from the government by saying that he is “neither a policeman nor a soldier.” Then he banteringly says that his heels “have touched no *gondaras*.” Both in rural and urban areas of Iran, people, traditionally, used to wear shoes with an open heel. These shoes were suitable for mosque going people, and wearing them did not interfere with the rituals of ablution and touching feet with a wet hand which is part of the ritual in Shi’a Islam. Unlike the traditional shoes, the rear part of *gondaras* were closed, and it was an encumbrance to perform the different rituals of ablution while having them on. That is why wearing *gondaras* was frowned upon, and it was believed that wearing them could cause a dislike toward ablution which is a prerequisite for the daily prayers. Moreover, wearing *gondaras* was a token of modernism, and it signified change --similar to the women’s high-heeled shoes which we discussed in Chapter II. Also in traditional Iranian attire, pants were fastened by a cotton lace around a man’s loin which looked like a piece of rope. Belts with buckles were never used, and wearing them was considered to be a Frankish sign. “I have fastened my pants with a piece of rope,/never have worn pantaloons,” the poet says. Wearing pantaloons would require wearing leather belts, the poet neither has worn pantaloons, nor has he worn belts. Again, violating the traditional dress code would end up with wearing European dress which was considered to be incompatible with the rituals of ablution, praying and prostration. In fact, stanza 3 speaks about the poet’s observance of the traditional dress code. The poet argues that by sticking with the traditional dress code, he has remained faithful to his community despite his advocacy of modernism and change. By this kind of argument, Mo’juz also tries to convince his opponents that his desired changes will not disturb the established equilibrium of the society, and that they will not be harmed by the changes. Changes will not affect their religion. The poet advocates modernism yet he is sticking with the traditional dress codes.

In stanza 4, there are allusions to the clerics and their works in the community. The first line of the stanza is a rhetorical question: “For which committed sin are you excommunicating me?” Then the poet adds “Neither I meddle with divorce, nor do I deal with marriage,/never have I summoned your daughter to a public gathering, never have I made her talk.” Ceremonies such as divorce and marriage were purely religious ones, and they were necessarily performed by the clergy. The poet’s affirmation about his avoidance of meddling with divorce and marriage as part of his innocence carries incriminating

overtone toward the clergy. According to Mo'juz, the clergy and the ruling class shared the blame of the people's ignorance and their miseries. The poet distances himself from the duties traditionally performed by the clergy in order to prove his innocence. Mo'juz's statement about summoning the people's daughter to the gathering of men and making her talk needs to be explained further here. During a traditional wedding ceremony in Azerbaijan as well as in other parts of Iran, men and women used to get together to celebrate the occasion usually in separate rooms. The bride was asked in person whether she accepted the terms of the marriage. Her "yes" response to question had to be loud and clear. She usually assigned her father or some other person of trust to represent her in the proceedings. The poet refers to this tradition which still continues to exist.

Stanza 5 also opens with a contrast drawn between the poet and the clergy. "I am not such a such person to find fault with my recitation of marriage bonds,/or yell at me saying 'go, don't perform our marriage ceremony,'" Mo'juz continues to say. All prayers, religious extracts and recitals of marriage and divorce are carried out in the Arabic language almost in all Islamic countries. Arabic being a non-native language to the Persian and Azeri speaking religious leaders in Iran, they try hard to emulate accurate Arabic pronunciations while reciting different Arabic extracts. In fact, a competition for being more accurate than the other is an ongoing process, and as a result, the variance of pronunciation among the religious leaders as well as ordinary people is inevitable. Many hard-core ordinary believers, who thought that their pronunciation of Arabic verses excelled that of a given clergyman, would frown at him and would "find fault" with his recitals. In these lines of stanza 5, Mo'juz is also cynical toward the those hard-core believers who deemed themselves to be in a higher place than that of the clergy. Such category of the believers usually used to be both literate and wealthy. In fact they were considered to be the elite of their time. That is why in the succeeding line, Mo'juz is sarcastic about the rich who, according to him, "ruin people's homes in order to build" their own mansions. Drawing a contrast between his own value system and those of the wealthy and men of power, Mo'juz ends stanza 5 with the affirmation that "I have never broken a heart in my life." Then he is in the position to repeat his refrain by asking "O Brethren of Shabustar! Have I wronged You?"

In stanza 6, the concluding stanza, Mo'juz continues to ironically and sarcastically contrast his own world with that of the wealthy. "O uncle unsheathe your sword and make an attack on the jam,/ raid on *shirberenj*, *khama* and *gara dolma*," he says sarcastically. Mo'juz gives a mock-heroic coloring to the gluttony and avarice of the

wealthy with respect to their indifference to the living conditions of less fortunate people in their community. Mentioning the names of familiar delicacies and dainties, the poet admonishes his opponents to busy themselves raiding them rather than resorting to rash judgments about the “enthralled Mo’juz.” Before repeating his refrain for the last time in the poem, Mo’juz refers to the most dominant aspect of his work --his humor which he believed to be the highest merit of his poetry. “Have I not made you laugh at least a dozen times a year?” he asks confidently. In fact, the poet tried to make his humorous words available to the people who knew no entertainment or luxury in their lives. Reading Mo’juz, makes us think that making people to laugh was his prime goal as a poet. We often find the poet emphasizing on the humorous aspect of his works. As we saw in the poet’s autobiographical note quoted in Chapter I, Mo’juz, modestly, recognizes humor as the only virtue of his work. “My poems all are full of humor, that is why people love them. Otherwise, there is no merit in them to deserve such fame,” the poet writes. In order to understand the degree of Mo’juz’s emphasis on laughter and to elucidate its relevance to the poet’s works, I would like to quote a brief hand written note from him which was left on a scrap of paper. Again this brief note of Mo’juz stipulates on humor as being the major aspect of his poetry. Omarova and Memmedli both have quoted the brief statement of the poet, and they have dealt only with the most direct and apparent meaning of it. Referring to the statement, they have tried to argue that Mo’juz belonged to the prevailing tradition of humor in Azeri literature.⁵⁸ I believe that Mo’juz’s message in those words is more wide ranging than what the two authors have observed. I would like to quote the lines at this point and give my comments on them.

I want to make the faithful brethren laugh and save the reward accrued from it for my Day of Judgment. I have never written against any one out of grudge, and I will never write thus *insha’allah* (God willing). Don’t misunderstand me.⁵⁹

Each word in this brief statement needs special consideration. There are important points which have been left out both by Memmedli and Omarova in their comments on the lines because of their life under the Bolsheviks and the severance of ties with the Islamic traditions. Making “brethren” laugh should be read in contrast to making brethren mourn and cry. Those scholars of Mo’juz, who have quoted the poet, have taken laughing in its direct and denotative sense. Mo’juz’s message has other wide-ranging ramifications. One must know about reward of each “drop of tear” shed for the martyrdom of saints and Imams in order to get Mo’juz’s message. One must share a Shi’a believer’s passion for crying in order to understand what Mo’juz means in this brief statement. Mourning in

مەن ایسترم که مؤمن تر شاری
 گویدم، اوندان حاصل اولان
 شوالب نه هیزم ایتم آخیر گونم
 لغتین ناحال به فرد یازمشم
 د یازمشم انشاء
 دنیا لواقره قره آکسون

M. D. Mo'juz's calligraphy.

Mo'juz's handwriting about making his "believer brethren" to laugh
Memmedli's 1982 edition of Mo'juz

Mo'juz İstambulda ikən gərdaşlarının jamiada kitab və məktəb dərsnamələri satmaqda kün keçirmiş, bəzi vaxtlarında və mütləq sərif etmişdir. Şair ilk şe'rlərinin də İstambulda jəzmağa bəslənmişdir.

16 il İstambulda jamiadından sonra birinci rus işğalı ərzində vətənə gəldən Mo'juz burada gətirib çəkilən dənizdə və üz-üzə kəlməmişdir.

- Чун јетимчим ватэнэ, «Алма дѳһанан»—дедилэр,
- «Динмэ, данымма вэ тарымма зѳбанан»—дедилэр.
- Дедим: «Аллаһа бахып, етмэјин ахыр, олдүм!»
- «Кѳр бу чүр етмэјесэн, чохлау эијанан»—дедилэр.

Müştə «Динмэ, данымма»—дејə шаирин ағзына багламаг ик-тэркэн бѳјүк Ленин дедји кими. Русиядаки 1965-чи ил вѳррѳкаты Ленин јухудан ѳјатмыш, Орта дѳр дургунуугу иѳраитиндѳ чѳһалѳт ичиндѳ бѳгулан јүз милјонларла мажлум ѳһали эјил-либ јени вѳјат угуула, инеани һууглар вѳ демократија угуула мүбаризѳје гошуламүшдү. Икмиш мүбаризѳје гошулан милјонлар-дан бири дѳ—Mo'juz иди. Биринчи рус ишғалы ошү шүүрлү олѳ-

Plate 9: Making "Believer Brethren" Laugh

Mo'juz's time, and to a great extent now, was and is a passion, pastime and pleasure. In order to get some sense about the privileges and virtues of wailing and the emotional discharge and purgation a believer may find, one needs to be part of the prevailing mind set.

The tradition of indulgence in the ecstasy of mourning and crying was mainly ushered and bolstered by the famous pseudo-epic, *Roudzatush-shuhada*, of Mulla Hoseyn Va'iz-e Kashifi (d. 1504). Kashifi's work starts with an emotional account of Man's Fall, the heart-rending episode of Adam and Eve's separation and ends with an unsurpassed graphic description of Karbala event in which Imam Huseyn and his seventy-one companions were martyred (680 A.D.) Without drawing sufficient quotations from the book, it will be difficult to understand how the love for mourning began, and how it was developed into an ecstatic pastime and rapturous hobby. Because of the limitations of our work I will only bring few short quotations. The first chapter of Kashifi's *Rowzatu-Shuhada*, that of Adam's story, opens with the following couplets:

An ruz ke Abo khak bar ham zade-and,
Bar tinat-e adam raqam-e gham zade-and.
Khali nabovad adami az dardo bala,
Kan Zarbat-e avvalin bar Adam zade-and.⁶⁰

(Since the day in which water and earth were blended,
grief was kneaded with the clay of Adam [man].
Man will never be relieved from pain and calamity,
because of the first catastrophe which struck Adam[him].)

According to the author, since the day in which "water and earth were blended" that is Adam was created, "grief" was another ingredient to be added to "the clay of Adam." Grief becomes the third element in the creation of man blending with the other two ingredients --water and earth. Kashifi ingeniously makes a pun out of the word *adam*. "Adam" means both human being and Adam in both Persian and Azeri languages. Then he proceeds to give an eloquent description of the story of the creation and the enviable life of the primordial couple. However, happiness does not last long; the catastrophe strikes, and they are ordered to leave the Garden of Eden. The couple are about to walk through the gates of Paradise hand in hand, the arch-angel, Gabriel, arrives and tells them that they cannot hold each other's hands. Then Adam and Eve relinquishing each other's hand,

each had to walk in a different direction, both crying copiously. "Fie to you strange lands!" Adam moaned, "fie to you! o separation!" Eve groaned. With their tearful eyes, all angels were watching the couple's separation. Then the couple were lost of sight.⁶¹

The Karbala episode is the most emotive part of Kashifi's work. Ironically, the author claims that "it is impossible" to narrate such a heart-rending story, and he is too "overwhelmed" with the magnitude of grief to write, and the words he writes are washed away by his tears,

Zi dast-e gerye ketabat nemitavanam kard,
Ke minevisamo maghsul mishavad filhal,
Zi ah-o naleh hekayat nemitavanam kard,
Ke sad gereh be zabazn mifetad bevaqt-e maqal.⁶²

(Because of my tears, I cannot write a word,
I do write, but it is washed away the very same moment.
Because of my sighs and moaning, I cannot say a word.
Hundreds of locks hold back my tongue the moment I decide to talk.)

After the detailed description of the painful martyrdom of Imam Huseyn's family members and his companions, the author talks about the rewards that a believer will receive should s/he cry to the sufferings of the martyrs. Now, let us compare the following lines from Kashifi's work with Mo'juz's brief hand written note about making his "believer brethren laugh." Kashifi quoting a tradition from the eighth Imam writes:

Whosoever recalls our catastrophe, that is the Karbala episode, then he mourns and makes others to cry, his eyes will not cry the day in which all the eyes will cry [Day of Judgment]. And whosoever organizes a gathering in which they keep living the accounts of our sufferings by mentioning them, his heart will not die when all the hearts will die because of the fears. Thus my dear try, in this life of sorrowful ending, drip a drop of tear. Think not that it is an idle tear, it is your treasure for *yawmun la yanfa'o malen wala banun*, the day in which neither riches nor children will help you [the Day of Judgment]. On that day only the tears of your eyes and the sighs of your flaming heart will be your support.⁶³

The people Mo'juz wants to make laugh are "*mo'min gardashlar*" meaning "faithful brethren". Obviously, the poet contrasts the rewards accrued from the brethren's shedding of tears with the same brethren's laughing and saving its reward for the Day of Judgment. Without that contrast in the minds of both author and his audience, the poet would speak of his people as "women and men" as he did in his autobiographical note quoted in Chapter I. In this context here, Mo'juz speaks of his people not as "women and men" but as "faithful brethren." The term "brethren" has religious significations. The poet wants to say that if crying and making "others to cry" can be rewarded, laughing and making them happy can well be rewarded. If we place Mo'juz's statement beside the lines quoted from *Rowzatush-Shuhada*, we will see how the poet's words do find their parallels. Mo'juz expressly proclaims that he has never written anything against anybody, and nobody "should misunderstand" him. There is an inference that although the poet does not mean to

discredit anybody directly, the people, who cause the “faithful brethren” to cry or make them unhappy, cannot be considered good Moslems. In fact no religion, including Shi’a Islam, would encourage its believers to make others unhappy. On the contrary, every *mo’men* (believer) is encouraged to make the other *mo’men* happy. In order to sum up the story how the cult of “weeping and wailing” was established and developed among many Iranians, I would like to quote from a different source as well:

Kamalu’-Din Huseyn, known as Wa’iz Kashifi (d. 910/ 1504), although a Sunni, had written a work called *Rawdat ash-Shuhada* which portrays the events of Karbala in an emotive manner in the Persian language. During the Safavid period it became popular to organise meetings at which this book was recited to the accompaniment of much weeping and wailing. These meetings became known as *Rawda-khani* (recital of the *Rawdat ash-Shuhada*) and the reciters became known as *Rawdat-khans* which soon became a profession in its own right.⁶⁴

Mo’juz did not like to see the “profession” of making people cry thrive. With his humor and parody, the poet started an antithetical profession of his own. His profession was to make people laugh. He implicated that the gruesome acts of self-flagellation and self-mutilation were created as a result of those frenzied and ecstatic weeping and wailings. No book of religion, Shi’a and Sunni alike, would advocate self-flagellation or self-mutilation. Yet the inhuman practices have thrived over many ages, and they continue to exist. Mo’juz implies that the organized weeping and wailing frenzy have ended up in self-mutilation and self-flagellation.

Mo’juz defines his mission and assigns himself the task of making people laugh. That is why at the end of his poem, “O Brethren of Shabustar! Have I wronged You?” he tries to remind the people, his friends and foes alike, that he has tried to make them laugh, whereas, his detractors have encouraged them to cry. After laying out the detailed differences between his own value system with those of the ruling class, the clergy and the miser wealthy, the poet reminds the people about his most valuable service. “Have I not made you laugh at least a dozen times a year?” he asks. With this rhetorical question, Mo’juz tries to emphasize that should the people fail to recognize the privileges of his value system over those of his opponents, they can still uphold the poet’s cause because he has made them laugh “at least a dozen times a year.”

Before I continue comparing Saber and Mo’juz by quoting a second poem from the poets, I would like to sum up our observation of “O The People of Shirvan” and “O Brethren of Shabustar! Have I wronged You?” Addressing their own people the two poets pour out their complaints about their alienation in the community because of their advocacy of change. Being poets and “antennas” of their society, Saber and Mo’juz have been

influenced by modern thought and world views. They have developed value systems of their own which they find to be in conflict with the prevailing archaic ones of their traditional societies. Both poets feel alienated and attacked by the supporters of the old value systems because they are moving against the prevailing outdated paradigms by their representation of change and modernism. Both Saber and Mo'juz argue that they are truth-loving human beings and good Moslems in the real meaning of Islam. "I am a truth-loving human being," Saber says; "I have never broken a heart in my life," Mo'juz exclaims. The two poets argue that they do not deserve excommunication, and thus they deserve a better treatment by their people.

However, the two poets vary in the manner they present their cases and the words they choose. In his argument, Saber speaks in general terms. In his affirmation of Islam, he uses statements such as "I am a believer in the holy religion," or "I do not believe in a new religion," or "I am a veteran Moslem." Concerning his belief in a different value system than those of others, he claims: "I am a Shi'a but not from a category such as this, / I am a Sunni but from a different type. / I am a Sufi but not from such a school." After providing his evidences, he comes to the conclusion by presenting his request -- "do not excommunicate me by force through rash judgments." Throughout Saber's presentation of his case, his opponents are reduced to mere passive listeners -- the poet being the sole speaker.

Mo'juz varies in his technique and treatment of his topic. From the very outset, Mo'juz asks for the participation of his opponents and audience. Unlike Saber who keeps addressing his people in an affirmative mood, Mo'juz keeps interrogating his people with his refrain at the end of his short stanzas whether he has wronged them. Mo'juz does not say "I am a believer in the holy religion," or "I am a veteran Moslem," in affirmation of his Islam. He shows what Islam meant in that petrified society. He says "never have I grown my locks, never have I shaved my beard." He depicts that shaving head and growing whiskers were the only aspects to be considered as tokens of Islam in his country. Mo'juz does not speak in general abstract terms. He digs into the core of his people's daily life and shows that their acts contradict their confession of Islam, and he depicts how his opponents were irreligious and inhuman, contrary to their claims. He says that, though excommunicated, he has never "taken a bribe," and he has never stolen other people's water to irrigate "my [his] land." Mo'juz does not pronounce his opposition to the government of Iran and the ruling class in general and with abstract statements. He depicts what the government of Iran does with the working class and different guilds. He details

out the government's unjustful and discriminatory taxation measures.

In order to demonstrate the frivolity of his opponents' reasons in his excommunication, Mo'juz mockingly says "O men! These heels of mine have touched no *gondara*," or "I have fastened my pants with a piece of rope." There are many comic associations and significations in the Azeri language with words such as *daban* (heels) and *bagh* (a piece rope with which the traditional pants were fastened) on which I do not need to elaborate here. Mo'juz cleverly refers to the words to call up all those associations on the one hand, and he establishes a link between them and the absurdity of his opponents' reasoning in their opposition to the poet on the other. Referring to his difference of values with those of the people wearing the cleric's garb, the poet highlights their works "neither I meddle with divorce, nor do I deal with marriage, never have summoned your daughter to a public gathering, never have made her talk." To highlight his difference with the wealthy, Mo'juz even does not mention the word "wealthy." He only refers to what an irresponsible wealthy person might do, he will "ruin people's homes in order to build" his own mansion. After giving a graphic depiction of life in relation to his opponents, Mo'juz again solicits his detractors' views by pricking their conscience asking "for which committed sin are you excommunicating me?"

There is an immediacy and intimacy in the words of Mo'juz. While others talk about life and its different problems, Mo'juz presents life to his audience and allows them to touch its different aspects. I think this kind of immediacy can only be noticed in the very opening line of Saber's "O The People of Shirvan." Ironically, the line is in Arabic, and translated into the Persian or the poet's native Azeri language the line loses its immediacy and intimacy with the reality of its occasion. *Ashhado billahil-a'lliyol-a'zim* signifies one's joining to the fold of believers, the line signifies an act of becoming and the acceptance some condition. It is part of the reality of life. It is a moment of closing the gap between language and reality in which words are turned into symbols. It is a moment in which words become things. That is why, as I claim, no matter in what language Saber's line is uttered, it creates the situation because the words lose their lexical denotations. It is a moment of primitivism in which everything stands for itself, or it is a sense of presence which can only be inferred through a symbol. This kind of monumental spontaneity and coincidence of words and act of becoming occur in Mo'juz quite often. In fact, they comprise major aspects of Mo'juz's technique. Saber wrote to be published, but Mo'juz wrote to be recited in an oral community and among the circle of his disciples. Mo'juz spoke in terms which could be recited in an oral community with the presence and

participation of his audience. As a story teller and singer of tales, Mo'juz solicits audience participation. There is a coincidence of life, action and movement in the lines of Mo'juz which stem from his folk orientation and popular base. Speaking on the poet's deep popular roots Berengian also writes:

Although his erudition in the Persian language and literature is directly manifested, he nevertheless relies heavily on the Azerbaijani local and popular tradition. Not only does he use Azerbaijani proverbs and expressions most effectively, but fragments of his poems have gained the status of popular quotations.⁶⁵

In our comparison of Saber and Mo'juz, I will discuss a second poem from each poet. From Mo'juz, I will quote his famous poem called "Saber-a Nazira," (A Response to Saber), and I think the title of the poem speaks to the validity of my reason for its selection. Before I proceed with our study of the poem, I need to say what *nazira* (Azeri) or *nazireh* (Persian) means in Azeri and Persian poetry. An Arabic word, *nazira* literally means "similar," but as a jargon, in the traditions influenced by the Persian literature, it meant "writing a poem in response to an earlier poem in the same meter and rhyme."⁶⁶ However, since Saber and Mo'juz's time marks the crumbling of classical values and rules of prosody, writing *naziras* could only mean an *imitatio* in the content and theme of an existing poem. In this part of our comparative study of Saber and Mo'juz, I will primarily quote and analyze parts of Saber's poem to which Mo'juz has written his *nazira* or response. The closest work in Saber's divan to Mo'juz's "A Response to Saber" is a poem called "Sabr Eyla"⁶⁷ (Make No Move) which might also be translated as "Care Not." The title is ironic because throughout the poem, the poet subjects his audience to all sorts of miseries with the injunction of "make no move" at the end of each stanza as a refrain. Thus the sarcastic injunction of "make no move" is designed to push the addressee in order to make a move. Here are the transliteration and English translation of the selected stanzas from Saber's "Make No Move."

Ma'ashin ta ki tang oldi, anis ol dardo mehnatla,
 Bosh ol, sust ol, omidin qat'a gil, yar ol 'atalatla,
 Buni tagdira nisbat ver yasha dayim razalatla,
 Havada seyr edan insana bakhma cheshm-e ebratla,
 Burag kasbi, unut sa'yi, yapishma kara sabr eyla.
 Balay-e faqra dushdun, razi ol bichara sabr eyla.

 Yetarkan Zalimin zulmi sana dowr-e gazadan bil,
 Chatarkan amirin zajri oni seyr-e samadan bil,
 Ozun oz 'ajzina ba'is olurkan masavadan bil,
 Bu mashu'miyyati biganadan gor ashinadan bil,
 Azil pamal ol, akhtarma buna bichara sabr eyla.
 Balay-e faqra dushdun, razi ol bichara sabr eyla.

Agar chokh tangdil olsan bu ishdan, gil faghan aghla,
 Grishma bashga bir tadbira, anjag har zaman aghla,
 Butun dunyadan al chak, ashikar aghla, nahan aghla,
 Gapansun gozlarun, fikrun, dushunma, gorma yan aghla,
 Tupur namusa, bagma nanga, galma ara sabr eyla,
 Balay-e faqra dushdun, razi ol bichara sabr eyla. (stanzas 3,4 &5)

(Put up with pains and sorrows, should your livelihood be curtailed.
 Be loose, decrepit, hopeless, and live in idleness.
 Attribute all your miseries to the destiny and put up with humiliation;
 never emulate the human being who is cruising in the sky;
 give up working, ignore trying, do not stick with any job, make no move,
 should you fall a victim to poverty, o wretched make no move.

Once a tyrant's tyranny strikes you, attribute it to fate;
 once an oppressor's oppression afflicts you, attribute it to the rolling wheel of
 heaven.

Yourself becoming the cause of your misery, relate it to preordination,
 condemn both your friends and foes for your own miseries,
 get trampled and beaten, do not search for the causes, make no move,
 should you fall a victim to poverty, o wretched make no move.

Should you feel too helpless because of the miseries, wail and lament,
 never look for a way out, keep on lamenting,
 Choose reclusion and continue wailing both overtly and covertly,
 let your eyes go blind and your mind shut, never understand, never see, keep
 wailing.

Discard honesty, observe no honor, put up with indignity,
 should you fall victim to poverty, o wretched, make no move.)

The whole idea of Saber's "Make No Move" is, in fact, expressed in the refrain of his poem. There are seven stanzas which come after the opening couplet, *Matla'a*, but they do not add much to what is expressed in the opening. They sound redundant and repetitive for the most part. That is why the three quoted stanzas will serve our purpose here. The first stanza repeats the idea of *matla'a* with a cynical allusion to the wailing and moaning cult in his people's version of Islam. Saber also refers to "despondency," a censured character in Islam and one of the seven deadly sins in Christianity, as a psychological affect of wailing cult. Thus he says that "give in to despondency and moan,/you can't help destiny." The second stanza reiterates the earlier notions with a sarcastic reference to his people's apathy and lack of zeal to emulate their other --the West. "Never emulate the human being who is cruising in the sky," he says. Stanza 3, again raises the same earlier issues with direct references "a tyrant's tyranny" and "oppressor's oppression" afflicting the people which they "relate to the fate." "Tyrant" and "oppressor" both in Saber and

Mo'juz stand for the government and the ruling class.

Stanza 4, repeating the theme of the preceding lines, refers to other crippling side-effects of the wailing. According to the poet the wailing cult will make the people's eyes "blind" and will "shut" their "mind," obstructing their thinking faculty. The highlight of stanza 5 is its reference to the Khans, the wealthy in the poet's contemporary feudal social structure. Saber is full of contempt toward the humbleness and docility of the illiterate masses who were exploited by the land owners and continued to work for them under quite inhuman conditions. According to Saber, to perform one's "duty like a [good] Moslem" to those inhuman Khans was to continue being honest toward dishonest people. That is why the poet sounds quite contemptuous and indignant when he writes: "Toil, till and harvest, let Khans take it, but your home will become like flour-mill./Never wake up, never recognize your rights, never understand like a human being." With consecutive short and abrupt verbs of action, Saber depicts the tasks of an Azeri peasant, and he adds that despite all that work his home will remain only a "flour-mill." The flour-mill metaphor is quite appropriate in a village life because grains keep coming to the mill and continue going out in the form of flour, none of which becomes part of the flour-mill property. Mill stones keep rolling around and changing grains to flour without benefitting from what comes in and goes out.

After our study of Saber's poem, which occasioned Mo'juz's "A Response to Saber," I would like to quote Mo'juz's response. Our study of Mo'juz will also entail further examination of Saber's poem as well. Mo'juz's "A Response to Saber" is a shorter poem compared to that of Saber, but it deals with the same issues in Mo'juz's typical technique. The poem, although shorter in length, is more detailed, objective and plausible. Ideas are conveyed in terms of metonymies and metaphors. Unlike Saber who addresses an unspecified audience with belittling injunctions such as "make not move" or "care not," Mo'juz addresses his audience with a familiar term of tribal affiliation, *amoghli* (cousin). As we have discussed earlier, Mo'juz usually asks for the participation of his audience in order to fill in the gaps between his images and language. He asks questions rather than making commands or injunctions. Here we have the entirety of Mo'juz's poem both in transliteration and English translation.

Besh gundi jahan dowlati neynirsan amoghli,
elm-o honar-o sana'ti neynirsan amoghli.
Olch kolgani gunduz, geja bakh ulduza, aya,
kafir gayeran sa'ati neynirsan amoghli.
Boz bash dedigin basha bala jana khatar dur,
yat dur sahar olsun ati neynirsan amoghli.

Oryan galajak mahshara makhluq tamamen,
 alma nisiya khala'ti neynirsan amoghli.
 Bighey rat edar aghlamag insani diyillar,
 kharj ey la geda ghey rati neynirsan amoghli.
 Baghla beluva ghey rati, namusi, hayani,
 sat gaddarani, hajati neynirsan amoghli.
 Arkha yarali, bash yarali, sina jarahat,
 bu zahmatila jannati neynirsan amoghli.
 San Rum gizini basla Bakoghlunda, danish gul,
 Irandaki aj kulfati neynirsan amoghli.
 Huri verajaklar sana kharmankimi zulfi,
 bir kallasi daz orati neynirsan amoghli.
 Va'ez ki satipdur sana jannat-e na'eimi,
 shahiddi khoda, hojjati neynirsan amoghli.
 Saggali uzun, kallasi kut, fikri darisgal,
 san surata bakh, sirati neynirsan amoghli.
 Mo'juz danishar bal kimi ach aghzivi dinla,
 gandi, rutabi, sharbati neynirsan amoghli.⁶⁸

(Life lasts but five days, Why do you need worldly assets, o cousin?
 You need no sciences, no arts and no industry, o cousin.
 Measure your shadow during the day and watch the stars and moon at night,
 why do you need the watch manufactured by the pagan, o cousin?
 The stew at the dinner table is hard earned and is a harm for your body,
 sleep, the day will break, why do you need meat on the table, o cousin?
 All the peoples will be resurrected naked on the Day of Judgment,
 why do you need to buy your shroud on credit, o cousin?
 I've heard that mourning makes a man shameless,
 throw it away, why do you need any shame, o cousin?
 Care not for shame, dignity and honor,
 sell your arms, why do you need to defend yourself, o cousin?
 Your back injured, the head cleft, and your chest wounded,
 why do you need the paradise with such ordeals, o cousin?
 You pamper the girl of Rum in Beyoghlu, and enjoy your life,
 why do you ever need that hungry maid servant in Iran, o cousin?
 They'll give you *huris* with tresses like the stack of harvested hyacinths,
 Why do you ever need the woman of the bald scalp, o cousin?
 The preacher has already sold you the eternal gardens of paradise,
 God has been the witness of transaction, why do you need a document, o cousin?
 His [preacher's] beard long, his head blunt, his mind narrow,
 you look at the appearance only, why do you care for intentions, o cousin?
 Mo'juz's words are like honey, open your mouth and taste them,
 why do you need sugar, dates; or sherbet, O cousin?)

In many traditional Azeri communities built on tribal affiliations, every man is called a "cousin" and a woman is referred to as a "niece." Mo'juz creates an atmosphere of intimacy and primitive kinsmanship by addressing his poem to a cousin. He refers to the shortness of life and transiency of this world in order to prepare his cousin for the effects of his rhetorical question when he asks "why do you need worldly assets, O cousin?"

Thus he moves to argue that the cousins (the poet being another cousin) “need no sciences, no arts and no industry.” In order to crystallize the concepts of science and industry, the poet introduces a metonymy such as a watch which is a product of sciences and industry. “Measure your shadow during the day and watch stars and moon at night./why do you need the watch manufactured by the pagan, o cousin?” In lines 5 and 6, Mo’juz refers to the difficulties of earning the daily bread and getting a food on the dinner table, thus he ironically asks “why do need meat on the table o cousin?” The day will break even if you sleep without having a supper. In lines 7 and 8 Mo’juz banteringly says that since his cousin “will be resurrected naked in the day of judgment,” he need not buy a shroud on credit. Speaking about the credit of some one who ceases to exist is both paradoxical and ironic, but the poet has more points to make. There were people who borrowed money to go on pilgrimages and visited the tombs of the Imams. Many a pilgrim made prolonged stays in the holy cities with the intention of dying in the holy precincts and being buried in the shrine cities. In some cases the dead passed the burden of their debts to their children. By his allusion to buying the shroud on credit, Mo’juz refers implicitly to such issues. However, in traditional societies such as Iran the ceremonies involving funerals and obituaries entailed --and still it does entail-- a great deal of expense. On many occasions the required things pertaining ceremonies of funeral and obituaries were prepared on credit which had to be paid by the dead’s next of kin.

In lines 9 and 10, The poet has a reference to the wailing cult of Shi’a Islam to which Saber had a reference as well. According to Mo’juz, excessive wailing makes a person “shameless.” The poet’s people have subscribed to the wailing cult at the expense of their shame and loss of their dignity. Lines 11 and 12 address the case in which honor and dignity have been violated by excessive mourning. If the poet’s cousin does not care for honor, he had better throw away his arms, and there is no need “to defend” himself against anyone. Lines 13 and 14 refer to the self-flagellation ceremonies of Moharram against which Mo’juz often expresses his resentment. “Your back injured, the head cleft, and your chest wounded./why do you need the paradise with such ordeals, o cousin?” the poet says sarcastically. Paradise is a place for healthy and sound people, it is an irony to entertain sickly and disabled people there.

Lines 15 and 16 address the cousin who has settled in Istanbul. Mo’juz says that you pamper “the girl of Rum in Beyoghlu,” you don’t need the “hungry maid servant” whom you have left behind in Iran. It is interesting to note that Mo’juz speaks of the legal wife of his cousin in terms of “hungry maid servant.” An Azeri villager married to a

partner of his own walk goes to Istanbul in order to find a job and earn some money. He settles there and becoming part of Istanbul life, he undergoes drastic changes and becomes a different person. He gets overwhelmed by the sight of tall buildings in the Beyoghlu district of Istanbul,⁶⁹ stores and fancy modern life. He is enthralled by the beautiful girls wearing colorful garments. Similar to his views and thoughts, the Iranian immigrant villager's appearance changes as well. His wife, staying back in her native village, remains the same as her early days of marriage. She looks like nothing more than a "hungry maid servant" to her husband who strolls the beautiful streets of Beyoghlu.⁷⁰ In such a juncture, Mo'juz's question becomes a vital one. "Why do you ever need that hungry maid servant in Iran, O cousin?" the poet doubts. Lines 17 and 18, again, refer to the promlematized and the shaken matrimonial ties of the poet's cousin and his wife. The lines have also an ironical reference to beautiful ladies, *huris*, in paradise. "They'll give you *huris* with tresses like the stack of harvested hyacinths,/why do you ever need the woman of the bald scalp, o cousin?" Mo'juz says. The "hungry maid servant" of line 16 is also mentioned as "the woman of the bald scalp" whom one can barely stand in contrast with the "*huris* with tresses like the stack of harvested hyacinths." Perhaps the picture of the *huris* with tresses "like stack of harvested hyacinths" was inspired by the unveiled beautiful girls of Beyoghlu district of Istanbul. The poet blends the imaginative picture of paradize and *huris* in its gardens with the real pictures of Beyoghlu and the beautiful girls in its streets, and he contrasts his depiction with the picture of a hungry maid or a bald woman who one was his wife, and she is supposedly waiting for his return home. The poet's depictions manifest how a person's paradigms shift and his outlooks change by being exposed to varying value systems. His wife, back in Shabustar appears to be a strange bald woman --no match for the poet any more after his Istanbul life. The satire of lines 19 to 22 is aimed at the preacher whom Mo'juz blames for people's ignorance quite often. The concluding lines, 23 and 24, function as the poet's signature. "Mo'juz's words are like honey, open your mouth and taste them,/why do you need sugar, dates, or sherbet, o cousin?" Mo'juz concludes by signing his name.

The points I raised in our earlier comparison of Saber and Mo'juz while analyzing Saber's "O The People of Shirvan" and Mo'juz's "O Brethren of Shabustar! Have I wronged You?" are pertinent here as well. Mo'juz's lines manifest stronger intimacy and immediacy with life and its plausible reality. The two poets' message to his audience is ironic and sarcastic "care not" yet they convey the very same message differently. While Saber addresses an unknown "wretched" man of his community, Mo'juz addresses a

cousin, someone to whom he belongs. He addresses another self. After all cousins are cousins, once the poet addresses another party as cousin, he becomes a cousin as well. In fact, Mo'juz tries to narrow audience/speaker gap. Another measure to narrow such a gap is that he makes his points through rhetorical questions. Whereas, Saber conveys the same message through injunctions and commands. Both poets present the pagan West as their object of emulation. "Never emulate the human being who is cruising in the sky," or "Never look at pagan with an emulating eye," Saber sarcastically says. Mo'juz makes the same point in a more tangible way and asks "Measure your shadow during the day and watch stars and moon at night,/ why do you need the watch manufactured by the pagan, o cousin?" He presents a metonymy for the pagan rather than being satisfied with an abstract reference to it. The word pagan employed by both Saber and Mo'juz is very functional in this context. Pagan means civilized, developed, industrious and progressive. In fact, it defies its denotative sense --standing for its opposite. On the contrary, the believer in the two poets' community and contemporary life signifies reactionary, backward and obsolete. The word "pagan" also calls for all its associative binaries such as believer/pagan, East/West, Christian/Moslem, and the most important of all, it signifies privileged and preferred paganism opposed to degenerated and unprivileged Islam. It stands for the reversal of values. As we have seen in Mo'juz's remarks Islam of *ahd-e risalat* is the unadulterated Islam of the prophet's time. There is an inference to the binary opposition of the Islam of *ahd-e risalat* and *bizim Islam*, our Islam, which naturally calls for another binary between old paganism of *Jahiliyyah* and modern paganism of the poet's contemporary. In the process of the reversal of values, the privileged Islam of the prophet's time has given its position to the modern preferred paganism. Thus the Islam practiced by the poets' contemporaries has become the paganism of *ahd-e risalat*. Both poets are sarcastic about the prevalence of wailing cult in their community which they believe will affect their feeling of honor and dignity." "Continue wailing both covertly and overtly,/discard honesty, observe no honor, put up with indignity," Saber says. Mo'juz claims that wailing makes a person "shameless." "Why do you need any shame, o cousin?/ Care not for shame, modesty and honor." Both poets criticize the people's submitting themselves to tyranny and victimization. "Toil, till and harvest, let Khans take it but your home will become like flour-mill," Sabir says with irony. "Sell your arms, why do you need to defend yourself, o cousin?" Mo'juz asks. Both the poets try to make the people to recognize and guard their rights.

Conclusion

I would like to end this chapter with my final notes on the tradition of satire and criticism in Azeri literature and Mo'juz's place in that tradition. As I argued satire and criticism are major trends in Azeri literature which received their conscious articulation early in 19th century by men like Akhundzadeh. The emergence of Akhundzadeh was not a coincidence. It was the result of social, political and economical changes which were shaping the Near East in the 19th century. Political borders underwent drastic changes, and the Qajar rule of Iran ceded almost half of what is considered to be Azerbaijan today to Tzarist Russia in 1828. In fact, men like Akhundzadeh and the mentioned factors were causes and effects interacting with each other. Akhundzadeh's views became a prevalent trend in Azeri literature and in the works of the younger generation of authors such as Talibuf and Maraghe'i. With authors of the *Mulla Nasreddin* circle, Mamed Qoli-Zade and Saber satire and criticism become recognized as the only mission of a poet and writer. I consider Mo'juz to be the culmination of the tradition, who complemented his predecessors' achievement with unparalleled humor. As we discussed earlier in a number of occasions, Mo'juz's works reveal him to be a humble and unpretentious man who observed humor as the only virtue of his poetry. "My poems all are full of humor, that is why people love them. Otherwise, there is no merit in them to deserve such fame," wrote Mo'juz in his autobiographical note which we analyzed it in Chapter I. By humor Mo'juz speaks of the satire which he wrote by his ingenious employment of parodies, lampoons and ironies. I also contended that Mo'juz's mastery of parody and humor are almost unsurpassed in the literature of the Iranian Constitutional era produced both in the Persian and Azeri languages. Besides the folk orientation of the Azeri language and culture, Mo'juz's achievement lies in his own popular base. Unlike other authors and poets, Mo'juz did not write to be published, he wrote to be recited and narrated.

Notes to Chapter IV

1. See Yahya Arianpur's *Az Saba ta Nima, Vols. I and II*. Arianpur studies Akhundzadeh, Talibuf, Maraghe'i, Mamed Qoli-Zade and Saber both as Iranian authors and the influence that they have effected in Persian literature of late 19th and early 20th centuries. Arianpur studies them irrespective of their cultural identity and lingual affiliations. Arianpur is an Azerbaijani author himself, but his work deals with Persian literature. There are other Azerbaijani biographers such as Muhammad Deyhimi and Dowlat-Abadi who only have concerned themselves with Azerbaijani authors only. Obviously, the five named authors of our study have been dealt with in detail in such works.

2. See Hamed Algar's "Akhundzadeh," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, P. 735. See also Fridun Bey Kocherli, *Azerbaijan Adabiyati, vol. I*, PP. 418-56. See Hasan Javadi's *Satire in Persian Literature*, PP. 257-8.

3. See Berengian, P. 50.

4. *Ibid*, P. 53.

5. Karimi-Hakkak, *Recasting Persian Poetry*, P. 33.

6. See Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashrut-ye Iran, Vol. I*, P. 45. According to Kasravi, Talibuf's "Masaliku'l-mohsinin was banned in Iran and its author was excommunicated by Sheikh Fazlullah-e Nuri," a famous clergyman who was hanged by the Constitutionalists. Talibuf, himself, in a letter to a friend sarcastically writes "if my works made any kind of sense, the reverend sheikhs would not excommunicate me off hand." See the author's *Azadi vo Siyasat* edited by Iraj Afshar, P. 17. See also Arianpur, *Az Saba ta Nima, vol. I*, P. 229.

7. See Arianpur, *Az Saba ta Nima, vol. I*, P. 228.

8. See the author's *Azadi vo Siyasat* edited by Iraj Afshar, P. 14.

9. See Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashrut-ye Iran, Vol. I*, P. 45. In order to escape persecution of fundamentalists and the ruling class, Maraghe'i's work was published anonymously outside Iran. Kasravi believes that "Publication of such a book would mean the perdition of its author in those days." According to Arianpur, "a number of people, being accused of the authorship of the book, were arrested and persecuted by Mirza Ali Asghar Khan Atabak [prime minister]." See *Az Saba ta Nima, vol. I*, P. 306. See also M.A. Sepanlu's introduction to *Siyahat-Name*, "The Historical Significance of *Ebrahim Beg*." See also Plate 7. The painting from *Mulla Nasreddin* depicts a group of clergies picnicing in an orchard. They have slaughtered a lam and are busy cooking their meal. For their fuel they are using books which they have pronounced to be *Zalleh* (misleading). Maraghe'i's *Siyahat-Name* is among the books being used as fuel.

10. See Arianpur's *Az Saba ta Nima, vol. II*, P. 41. As mentioned in case of Talibuf and Maraghe'i's works like many other progressive writings, *Mulla Nasreddin* was also termed as "*owraq-e mozelleh*" (misleading writings) by the clerics. See Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashrut-ye Iran, Vol. I*, P. 195. However, I would like to refer to an irony here. My father, Javad Sultan-Qurraie being a distinguished ayatullah, always used to quote from Saber's poetry published in *Mulla Nasreddin* when he was in good mood. I hope he still has kept that humor and jolly mood of *Mulla Nasreddin* although he is around 100 years now.

11. See Samad Sardari Niya, *Mulla Nasreddin In Tabriz*, P. 150

12. *Ibid*, PP. 249-53.

13. See Berengian, P. 57; Arianpur's *Az Saba ta Nima, vol. II*, PP. 46-50. See also *Azerbaijan Poetry* edited by Mirza Ibrohimov, P. 218.

14. Berengian, P. 57.

15. Almost all critics dealing with Azeri literature have pointed to the two authors' similar aspects, for an example see Masu'd Valiiev's "Mefkure Doslari" (The Friends of One Thought).

16. Ghulam Memmedli, *Mirza Ali Mo'juz Asarlai*, P. 8. See also L. Omarova, *M. A. Mo'juz*, P. 16.
17. The influence of *Mulla Nasreddin* authors on Mo'juz in general and Saber in particular is out of the question, and there is a great deal of literature produced on the issue in the former Soviet Azerbaijan. However, I find many of them exaggerating the issue. For an example see Masu'd Valiev's essay "Mafkure Doslar" (Friends of one thghout).
18. Akhuzzadeh, *Tamsilat*, P. 8.
19. See Berengian, P. 21.
20. Akhundzadeh, *Tamsilat*, PP. 8-9.
21. *Ibid*, *Tamsilat*, P. 8.
22. Sadi *Kulliyat*, P. 30.
23. *Ibid*
24. See Hamed Algar's "Akhundzada," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, P. 735.
25. See *Mirza Fathali Akhundov, Fars Dilida Yazilmish Maktublari*, edited by Hamid Arasli, P. 353.
26. *Azerbaijan Poetry*, edited by Mirza Ibrahimov, P. 25.
27. Mirza Ali Akbar Saber, *Hophop-Nameh*, PP. 213-5.
28. *Ibid*.
29. *Mirza Fathali Akhundov, Fars Dilida Yazilmish Maktublari*, edited by Hamid Arasli, PP. 3-62.
30. See Talibuf, *Masaleku'l-Muhsinin*, P. 280.
31. See plate 8 from *Mulla Nasreddin*.
32. *Ibid*, P. 174.
33. *Ibid*, P. 174.
34. Hair remover (*tanvir*) was and is a black-colored paste with a heavy blend of lime. It has a very unpleasant odor which stay with a person's hands or body after its application. The section of the bath-house where people apply hair-remover is the most stinky and dirty part of a bath-house.
35. *Kor* is a specific amount of water which is considered to be cleansing from religious point of view.
36. *Ibid*, P. 280.
37. Maraghe'i, *Siyahat-Name-ye Ebrahim Beg*, P. 27.
38. Further explanation on the word *kor*, which was also used by Talibuf, seems to be necessary here. Besides meaning an specific amount of water, the word has many religious significations as well as irony about it. *kor* water measures three and half spans of an average person's hand in its three dimensions -- width, length and height. According to the religious edicts any water with the mentioned properties is cleansing, and it will not be polluted while being touched by polluting factors.
39. See Samad Sardari Niya, *Mulla Nasreddin dar Tabriz*. Mr. Sardari-Niya speaks about *Mulla Nasreddin* in general, but in particular he gives information about the eight issues which were published in Tabriz while Mamed Qoli-Zade was living there during 1920-1.
40. Mo'juz, *Kulliyat*, vol. II, PP. 29-30.
41. *Ghusl* in Arabic language means washing, but as a religious term, it means a ceremonial washing of

the whole body. There are a number of occasions that a Moslem believer should perform a *ghusl*, for instance, in the event of touching a dead body. Woman should perform a *ghusl* after their periodic menstruation.

42. One of the occasions that a Moslem should perform a *ghusl* is *Janaba* (becoming *junub*). Any person who is engaged in a sexual intercourse becomes *junub*, and s/he has to perform a *janaba ghusl*.

43. A foot-stone used to be a piece of volcanic stone or lava with which people scrubbed their heels. While scrubbing feet by foot-stone accumulation of filth and dead skin resembled paste or dough.

44. Any liquid which looks like water, but it is not water is called *mudzaf* water. For example, all juices are *mudzaf* water. *Mudzaf* water is not cleansing.

45. As mentioned earlier, any one becomes *junub* with sexual intercourse; s/he only comes out of *junub* state after s/he performs a *ghusl*. It is obligatory for a Moslem to perform a *ghusl* soon after a sexual intercourse.

46. See *Kulliyat* for the poems such as "Chichak" (Chickenpox), 143-4, "Gizilja" (Measles) PP. 210-1.

47. Mamed Qoli-Zade, *Sechilmish Asarlari*, P. 644.

48. See L. Omarova, *M. A. Mo'juz*, P. 42.

49. Ghulam Memmedli, *Mirza Ali Mo'juz Asarlai*, P. 7. See also Berengian, P. 92.

50. *Ibid*, P. 7.

51. See Berengian, P. 93.

52. Ali Akbar Saber, *Hophop-Nama*, P. 7.

53. *Kulliyat*, PP. 55-6.

54. A small denomination of the Iranian currency. Ten grans make one toman.

55. Health Department and municipality would stamp the carcas and hide of the slaughtered animal in order to make their sale permissible. The sale of hide or carcas bearing no stamp would be considered illegal.

56. Men of fashion in Russia and lands under Russian rule used to grow and braid their moustache as a token of modernism.

57. Mo'juz refers to a specific clergyman in this line, but he does not want to refer to his name.

58. See Omarova, P. 15. On Page 6 of his work, Memmedli provides a photocopy of the handwriting which appears in this work as well.

59. See the poet's own hand-writing, plate No. 9.

60. Mulla Hoseyn Va'iz-e Kashifi, *Rowzatu-Shuhada*, P. 15.

61. *Ibid*, P. 18.

62. *Ibid*, P. 242.

63. *Ibid*, P. 357.

64. See Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'a Islam*, PP. 118-9. , P. 357.

65. See Berengian, P. 92.

66. See Paul Lozensky, (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago) P. 38. See also Safa's *Tarikh-e Adabiyat dar Iran*, Vol. V, P. 549.

67. Ali Akbar Saber, *Hophop-Namah*, PP. 78-80.

68. *Kulliyat*, P. 112.

69. Beyoghlu district of Istanbul was and is one of the beautiful parts of Istanbul with its high-rising buildings and fashionable stores.

70. See *Istanbul Ansiklopediasi*, Cilt 7, P. 112.

Chapter V **Mo'juz and the Question of Azeri Identity**

In Chapters I and II, we examined Mo'juz's life and the major aspects of his poetry. Chapter III tried to define a place for Mo'juz in the literature of the Iranian Constitutional era, comparing and contrasting him with non-Azeri Iranian poets of the period. Chapter IV attempted to examine Mo'juz with regard to the dominant trend of humor and satire in modern Azeri literature comparing him with five major Azeri authors. Chapter V will examine Mo'juz and his assertion of Azeri identity. This chapter will trace the genesis and development of Azeri identity, and its articulation by modern Azeri authors and define Mo'juz's locus in the trend.

As indicated in earlier chapters, the study of Azerbaijani authors in Iran has been subjected to special considerations and restrictions of a political nature. The misconception of attaining "national unity" through obliterating ethnic identities and suppressing the regional languages under the Pahlavi regime discouraged many Azerbaijanis from investing in writing and publishing in the Azeri language¹. As a result, no Azerbaijani writer has been studied as an Azeri author distinct from non-Azeri Iranians. Mo'juz's choice of the Azeri language virtually as the only medium for his poetry prompted me to read all Azeri Iranian authors of Constitutional and post-Constitutional Iran in the light of their Azerbaijani identity. In this chapter, I will look into the developmental trend of Azeri identity in some major Azeri authors before and after Mo'juz, and I will also define Mo'juz's position in the trend. However, before I proceed to talk about the individual authors I need to define some key words which will occur quite often while discussing the issues pertaining to identity crises. Identity, as I understand, implies a double meaning. It expresses both "a persistent sameness within oneself," which I will call inner identity, and "a persistent sharing of some kind of essential characters with others."² The latter I will term identification. However, in a mature environment of social mutuality, no clear line exists between one's inner identity and his or her outer identifications, in addition, there is a continuous cohabitation between them. The terms "inner identity" and "identification" employed here are from Erik Homburger Erikson. In his essay "The Problem of Ego Identity," Erikson observes that Freud once spoke of inner identity to formulate "his link to Judaism" which, paradoxically, was not based on religion, but on "a common readiness to live in opposition."³ To Freud, therefore, inner identity meant a set of values bequeathed to a people through many generations. That is, the traits that made them an ethnic minority living within a larger community --the values that provided a group of people with their

self-sameness. During 19th and 20th centuries, Azeri authors took pains to find grounds of compromise between their inner identity and outer identifications. Some authors in the Caucasus had to give in to Russian political and cultural intrusions yet the majority, both in the north and south of the Araxes, tried to establish a comfortable harmony between their inner Azeri identity and Iranian identifications. They tried to bridge the Turk/Fars dichotomy which could be easily detected in their works.⁴ However, the stability of the bridge depended on each individual author's relation to the governing power pole of Tehran and of the Persian Iranians.

I have discovered that each Azeri writer manifests his Azeri identity in a different and unique way. Akhundzadeh, playwright and one of the pioneers of modernism in the Islamic world, manifests his identity by his choice of his native language as the medium of his works --he discards the predominant Persian language. He selects Azerbaijani themes and characters for his stories and plays. Talibuf of Tabriz, the author of *Masaliku'l - mohsinin*, manifests his Azeri identity through his repeated references to his birth place, his "love of Tabriz" on the one hand, and on the other, his cynicism toward Persian Iranians and his gloomy pessimism about Iranians' being delivered from the "horns of despotism." Maraghe'i, the author of *Siyahat-Name-ye Ebrahim Beg*, repeatedly refers to the Turk/Fars dichotomy, blaming the people who make a big issue out of it. He tries to undermine the importance of the differences even though a naive clergyman, belonging to the dominant language camp --Persian-- expels him from his territory exclaiming that he is a Turk "from Azerbaijan" will "understand nothing." Taqizada, climbing up the political ladder and becoming part of the ruling apparatus, avoids bringing up the Turk/Fars dichotomy. Yet he never fails to pay tribute to his "native city, Tabriz," and he is full of admiration for "Azerbaijan and especially Tabriz," which were the "centers of modern thought before the Constitution and had an important share in beginning the reform movement."⁵ Kasravi manifests his Azeri identity by his denial of the Turkic attributes of the Azeri language, and he tries hard to prove that Azeri is the language "of Ancient Azerbaygan."⁶ Kasravi even tries to structure his own version of the Persian language, creating estrangement between the Persian language and its native speakers. However, his inner Azeri identity spares nothing in the glorification of "the heroic acts" performed by Azeris during the Constitutional struggles. His admiration of Sattar Khan borders on an epic narrative, and his "Sardar" becomes a virtual epic hero. In fact, many heroes of the siege of Tabriz might have been forgotten without *Kasravi's Tarikh-e Mashrute-ye Iran*. Mo'juz of Shabustar followed the path taken by his early precursors in the Caucasus, such as Akhundzadeh and

authors of *Mulla Nasreddin* paper. By choosing his native Azeri as the language of his poetry, Mo'juz addressed the Azeri masses, dealing with the problems indigenous to Azerbaijan.

The Pahlavi regime's full-scale Persianization of ethnic peoples and suppression of native languages, of course, invited mutinous articulation of ethnic identities. We notice some kind of rebellious stipulation on Azeri ethnicity in the works produced during Pahlavi reign. In one of his poems, Shahryar symbolizes the Turk/Fars dichotomy in Sahand/Damavand opposition. Envisioning the union of his "divided people," the poet mourns the separation of "the sons of the same mother." Bulut Qarachorli (1925-1979) dispatches a verse letter to Shahryar and admonishes him to be "kinder" to his own people, by writing in Azeri. "Enough of being oil in the lamp of the Others," he writes. Samad Behrangi's expression of his Azeri identity and his rebellious advocacy of the revival of the Azeri language in the schools of Azerbaijan caused his mysterious drowning in the Araxes.

As mentioned earlier, I will start my discussion on the Azeri identity of Azerbaijani authors with Akhundzadeh, the pioneer of modernism in the Islamic world, and come down to Mo'juz, the author of the major focus in this study, and to the later days of the Pahlavi era and dawn of the Islamic Revolution. My reference to Mo'juz's anterior and posterior authors is designed to enhance our understanding of the poet. It will manifest the genesis of the Azeri identity, its development, its assertion as well as its problems and complexities. However, the limits of this work, will not allow us to deal with all the authors in the mentioned time span. I will only examine some of the authors to whom I referred earlier in the chapter. Since the authors of our interest here have been the subject of our study in earlier chapters, there will be no need for re-introducing them at this stage.

Akhundzadeh: Before I begin to talk about Akhundzadeh and other Iranian Azeri authors, I would like to refer to a very important historical event which left an indelible scar on Iranian consciousness in general and on that of the Azeris in particular. The event, the Iranian defeat in the war with Russia, I believe, is a of paramount significance while we discuss identity. The prolonged Russo-Iranian Wars ended in 1828 with Russian acquisition of all the Caucasian khanates which were considered part of the Iranian territory by many Iranians. The majority of the people in the Caucasus were Moslems, and they had close cultural ties with Iran.⁷ Discussing the effects of the humiliating defeat is beyond the scope of this work. However, Azerbaijanis suffered the most since their home was the battle ground, they gave the most men and "most of the burden of financing the war fell on Azerbaijan."⁸ In fact, the reparation of 20 million rubles were paid from the Tabriz

treasury. To liquidate the payments, “Abbas [the prince stationed in Tabriz] had to empty his treasury and give up most of his valuables,...Fath ‘Ali [the king ruling from Tehran] did not contribute to these payments.”⁹ Obviously, no Azerbaijani could be immune from the economical, social and demographic effects of the war. The territory which is considered to be Azerbaijan today was divided into two parts –one part (Northern Azerbaijan) becoming part of the Russian territory, the other (Southern Azerbaijan) remaining part of Iran. Although the expansionist Russia of Catherine, Paul and Alexander was “regarded as a barbaric parvenu”¹⁰ by many west Europeans, it considered its encroachments on Iranian territories as “the advance of civilization in the face of opposition by a backward state oblivious to the common good.”¹¹ In a century of pervasive desire for territorial expansion, many Russian elites also saw their country as the equal of the great Western powers. They considered that “Russia was powerful not only militarily but also culturally and had a great civilizing mission to perform.”¹²

Akhundzadeh, and other Iranian Azeri authors such as Talibuf and Maraghe’i, who spent a good part of their lives in the lands taken over by Russia and who were considered Russian citizens could not be immune from the influence of the views held by the contemporary Russian elite. Their works demonstrate how the authors had internalized the colonizer’s view of the colonized and humiliated Iranians. Although their homeland became a pawn in the struggles between the two belligerent countries, through different gestures they tried to brush off the inflicted humiliation. Being Azerbaijanis, they tried to draw a line between being Azeris and Persian Iranians in order to lighten their burden of humiliation. They ironically tried to imagine themselves outside the Russo-Iranian conflict by finding themselves outside the political domain of Iran on the one hand, and their otherness from Christian Russia on the other. They grappled with a very complex identity crisis; being colonized and “civilized” as a result of Russian domination of their land, they became part of the colonizing apparatus. They carried out their own mission of civilizing their other compatriots. Through various ways they tried to articulate the fact that they were different from other non-Azeri Iranians; not so much that they were not Iranians, but, for sure, they did not share the prevailing decadence. Since they suffered humiliation more than non-Azeri compatriots, they became more critical of the Iranian decadence and decline. As mentioned in the earlier chapters, they became the standard bearers of revolutionary ideas and modernism.

Azeri Authors quite often articulate their identity in their reference to the Turk/Fars dichotomy and by contrasting their genuine tribal values with the decaying Persian culture

and traditions. The articulation of Azeri identity by men such as Akhundzadeh is always combined with the sense of a civilizing mission which, they deem, has been conferred upon them by their colonizers. On the other hand, the articulation of their Azeri identity can keep them out of the Russo-Iranian conflicts, and as a result, they stay out of the colonizer/colonized binary opposition governing Russo-Iranian relations. Akhundzadeh's articulation of Azeri identity finds its effective manifestation in his canonizing the Azeri language as a literary idiom. His *Tamsilat* not only establishes Azeri language as an efficient literary idiom, but according to Berengian, its translation into the Persian language is "considered to be among the earliest examples of wholesale modernization of Persian prose."¹³ Thus we can see how Akhundzadeh accentuates his identity through writing in his mother tongue, at the same time, he carries out his civilizing mission by modernizing the Persian language and contributing to the "emergence of a new prose style in Persian."¹⁴ The translator of *Tamsilat*, Ja'far Qarajadaghi, stipulates that "for the students of the Persian language no book has been written so fluently and clearly with no redundancy and unwanted embellishments." He later adds that "foreigners and Azeri Turks, who want to learn the Persian language, having such a text will be more useful than any other books written in Persian."¹⁵ Qarajadaghi falls short of mentioning the fact that the Persian language had virtually become non-functional to express the real ideas and genuine human feelings due to the excessive use of pedantic and overused cliches, and it was in need of a "fluent and clear" way of expression "with no redundancy and unwanted embellishments." In fact, Akhundzadeh is often studied as one of the major figures of 19th century Persian literature by many Iranian scholars with complete disregard for his ethnic origin and inner identity. My mentor and dear friend, Dr. Karimi-Hakkak, opens his *Recasting Persian Poetry*, with a discussion on Akhundzadeh and his influence in the evolution of literary modes and "scenarios of poetic modernity in Iran."¹⁶

In all his social criticism and innovative propositions, Akhundzadeh attacks the dominance of the decaying Iranian culture of his homeland yet he does not blame his Azeri brethren since they have no power to alter the situation. The Turk/Fars binary opposition does not exactly compare with the colonizer/colonized dichotomy, although they are similar in many aspects. The military might of a colonizer nation subdues a people before its cultural and religious missionaries invade the colonized land. The case of the Persians and the tribal Turks from whom the hybrid Azeris descend is different. The Turkic tribes invaded the lands settled by the sedentary people with the Persian culture and language, and they absorbed what they deemed to be lacking. They were overwhelmed by the efficiency

of the Persian language, rich poetry and culture. Thus Azeri authors' articulation of identity hinges on the language otherness and their criticism of the cultural decadence. In R. Tapper's words "Iranian society has been characterized for centuries by a cleavage between the Turks (dominant but 'uncouth' tribes, mainly from Azerbaijan) and the Persians (subordinate but 'civilized' townspeople and peasants of the central provinces)."¹⁷ In fact, the complexity of the Azeri authors' identity crisis can be explained in the sobriquet under which Akhundzadeh contributed to the *Akinchi* newspaper printed in Baku. He wrote under the name of *wakil-e mellat-e nama'lum* -- "the guardian of unknown nation."¹⁸ He neither belonged to the humiliated decaying Iran despite his attachment to the Iranians, nor did he belong to Russia despite his service in the Russian government administration. Although a Russian citizen, he did not have much to share with Christian Russia. Neither did he want to be identified with Iranian cultural decadence although he shared many traits with Iranians. He belonged to his inner identity of an "unknown nation" (Azerbaijan) which had no political entity then. Akhundzadeh's apologetic confessions that he was of "Persian descent," and his grandfather had migrated from Resht to Azerbaijan are attempts only to close the otherness gap.¹⁹ The author's argument clearly indicates that his nationality could be questioned, and he could not be considered an Iranian as a rule. In the passage quoted from Akhundzadeh in the previous chapter, we saw how the poet admonishes the Iranian elite to denounce the outmoded techniques of writing and their obsolete pedagogy. He denounces "exhortation or a piece of fatherly advice" as the means of moral edification. He says that Gulistan and Bustan of Sa'di "are full of exhortations and advice," yet they have been unsuccessful in edifying the people. "Tyranny and lawlessness are on the rise every moment --never declining," he says. Ironically, Akhundzadeh sounds like a preacher when advising the people to change the fabric of their lives, however, he discharges his civilizing mission. Along with his introduction of many changes, Akhundzadeh tries to introduce changes in the Persian language. He wants to subvert the structure of his contemporary Persian. This subversion of the language of power, as I will discuss, appears in the majority of the Iranian Azeri authors in many different ways.

Talibuf: Unlike Akhundzadeh, Talibuf wrote in the Persian language targeting the clergy and the ruling class with his scathing criticism. However, in an era of mass illiteracy, the clergy and the ruling operatives were the people who could read and write in the Persian language. Talibuf articulates his Azeri identity in a number of distinct ways: (1) He expressly pronounces his love to his birth place, Tabriz. He emotionalizes the idea in a

way which dominates other issues in a given context. (2) He manifests a very strong pessimism toward Iranians' improvement and their alleviation of their problems. (3) He subverts the Persian language, the language of power, through his copious injections of Azeri lexicon. In order to prove these points, I will need to quote relevant passages from the author. In a letter to Yusuf E'atesam al-Molk, Talibuf writes:

Concerning the establishment of a printing-house and a library, I do not want any name to be left from me any where except Tabriz. I am a lover of the world, then the lover of Iran and then the lover of the sacred earth of Tabriz. "My mentor never taught me any other word, blame me not." What ever you build in Tabriz, count on me as a partner, a slave, a servant and sweeper of the place.²⁰

It appears from the lines that the author has been asked to contribute for the establishment of a printing-house and/or a library, Talibuf pours out his emotions by saying that he does not want to have his name anywhere else in Iran except Tabriz. By saying that he only wants his name to survive him in the affairs pertaining Tabriz, Talibuf also implies that he does not want his name to appear any where else such as Tehran. Similar to the Turk/Fars dichotomy the Tabriz/Tehran binary opposition could be present in the mind of a Tabrizi especially in the days when Tabriz used to be the seat of the Qajar crown princes. Talibuf uses the opportunity to express his view about establishing a library to pour out his emotions and accentuate his identity. The passage serves more than its function of making the author's idea known about a fact. It becomes a poetic inset charged with emotion. "I am a lover of the world, then the lover of Iran and then the lover of the sacred earth of Tabriz, (*khak-e pak-e Tabriz*)" the author writes. In this statement, Talibuf exposes the layers of his identity. A widely traveled cosmopolitan man, the author cannot deny his attachment to places outside the political borders of Iran such as Tamir - Khan-Shura, where he had thrived as a writer and businessman and had acquired fame, yet he finds his real self in his inner identity in his native culture and Tabriz environment. Thus he starts by naming his outward identifications and moves to his inner identity of an Azeri Iranian. However, there is an inference in the statement that the author loves the world because he loves Iran, and he loves Iran because he loves Tabriz. His love of Tabriz is a motive for his love of Iran and the world. Tabriz is the core of the author's love and affection. The author quotes a half-verse from Hafiz and says that "my mentor never taught me any other word, blame me not." Again, this famous line from Hafiz establishes the point that Tabriz is the core and the source for the author's love of others. Hafiz's half-verse provides us with the inference that Talibuf refers to a native love and to an inner identity because the poet, Hafiz, makes reference to a native love or a single beloved. That

is why a tide of affection and love overflows the ordinary language of the author, and he keeps repeating synonymous words by saying “Whatever you build in Tabriz, count on me as a partner, a slave, a servant and a sweeper of the place.” In a different letter, Talibuf writes “O God! How sacred and dear is the name of Tabriz to this old servant!”²¹

As mentioned earlier, besides the expression of his profound love for his birth place, Talibuf accentuates his identity by his cynicism toward the Iranians’ social improvement. The author was deeply pessimistic about the Iranian Constitutional Revolution and the establishment of democracy, however, as an agent of the colonizer, he discharges his civilizing mission. In a letter to *Anjuman-e Melli* newspaper of Tabriz, Talibuf writes:

Iranians were captives of a two-horned bull of autocracy, if they fail to take control of their own affairs, they will be trampled by a thousand-horned bull of lackeys. The time will come that autocrats will mock our immaturity, and the enemies will celebrate their happiness. I say this openly, I am desecrating this issue quite definitely.²²

It appears that the author could see no sign of deliverance from the miseries in which Iranians were mired. Talibuf proves to be very pessimistic and skeptic about social changes in Iran and Iranians’ becoming familiar with the new codes of civilization. Perhaps it was for the very same reason that he declined to travel to Tehran to take his seat in the parliament to which he was elected by the people of Tabriz. Talibuf was elected to the first parliament after the Constitutional Revolution. Talibuf’s other newly elected colleagues traveled to the Caucasus in order to take him to Tehran in their company, but he never participated in the parliament despite the insistence of the people of Tabriz and despite his own promises. Perhaps he knew that the new parliament would not last long. Indeed, it was bombed and shut down by Mohammad Ali Shah and the Russian soldiers. In my study of the Azeri authors of the period, I find Talibuf’s pessimism to be an anomaly. Other Azeri authors appear to be easy-going and tempered by their own criticism, satire, lampoons and the underlying humor. In a different passage the author is very critical about the moral decadence of the Iranians. He speaks about their dishonesty and wretchedness, and he claims that a “famous Indian historian” defines the meaning of “*ahreman*,” devil, as contemporary Iranians, and he concludes:

Yes, all thinkers of the world need to get together and design new words for the ignorance, darkness, indignity and decline of [this] nation. Otherwise, with the existing vocabulary, it is impossible to express one per cent of this unbelievable situation so that a reader could read one tenth of it and understand. If we write justice is dead in Iran, they will think that the dispensers of justice have been victimized; if we say religion is dead, they will construe that the teachers of religion

have become apostates; if we say morality and decency are dead, they will think that hooligans and immoral people are occupying higher positions and places of distinction, if we say freedom is dead, obviously, it will mean that free men are put in shackles. But if we say that the essence of life and nature of dynamism are dead in Iran, which philosopher and thinker, in future, will understand that forty crore breathing bodies with their human souls and sensibilities are buried in the tombs of ignorance. Yet they deem themselves as being alive while the unshrivelled carcass of their nationality remains alongside their decayed civilization which has become a microscopic particle.²³

I think the author's scathing attacks on Iranians, and his gloomy pessimism about Iran's destiny stems from the conflict of his inner identity (being an Azeri Iranian) and outward identifications (his obligations and loyalty toward the corrupt government of Tehran and a decaying culture). According to Talibuf, there is no appropriate language to express the decadence of Iranian civilization. Any given language would fail to express the reality of "the ignorance, darkness, indignity and decline" in which a nation can fall.²⁴ The author wants to write down the degree of the decadence in which his contemporary Iranians were living. He wants to preserve his writing as a historical document for posterity and "future" generations. Yet he finds no language to convey his intentions. That is why he looks for symbols and tries to devise new signs. He tries a number of methods to write down his ideas. He employs conditional sentences giving examples about the difficulty of the task he is facing to express the reality of the situation with the existing words and tools of writing. All his examples fall short of what the author intends to convey. Finally, he makes his symbol and invents metaphors. I find the author's metaphor of "the unshrivelled carcass" used for the growing population of a nation alongside with its desiccating ancient civilization which has turned into a "microscopic" speck to be quite ingenious.

As mentioned earlier, Talibuf also manifests his Azeri identity through his rife use of Azeri words in his Persian writings –*patak* meaning bee-hive, *mo'arif* meaning department of education, *yerlekh* meaning rent paid for a place are not rare occurrences. Thus he effects his share of subversion in the language of power.

Maraghe'i: Talibuf's contemporary Azeri author, Maraghe'i, articulates his identity in his own unique way. He manifests his awareness of his inner identity, his otherness and distance from the power structure in his home country in two different ways: (1) His direct reference to the Turk/Fars binary opposition (2) His attempt to subvert the language of power by interjecting the Azeri words and expressions into it. In his *Siyahat-Name-ye Ebrahim Beg*, (*The Travelogue of Ebrahim Beg*), Maraghe'i makes numerous references to the Azeri/Persian (Turk/Fars) dichotomy. I would like to quote some

passages from the author's work. In Qazvin, Ebrahim Beg pays a visit to a mosque, after giving a detailed picture of the mosque, the narrator hears yelling and shouting from one of the theology students' lodgings while a clergy is performing ablution in the porch and is getting ready for prayer quite leisurely and indifferently.

On the porch of a lodging, I saw a clergyman was performing ablution, but inside the lodging, the yelling of two people was deafening the ears. I said to myself those two Moslems are fighting and this clergy is watching them so indifferently, and he is continuing with his own ablution. I was shocked at this scene, looking closely in the lodging, I noticed that two theology students were sitting against each other, each holding a book in his hand are engaged in a very loud argument. At times, each raised his book up as if he wanted to bang it on the other's head.

"Why are these guys fighting?" I asked the clergy who was about to finish his ablution. "There is no fighting," he answered.

"Don't you see these guys?" I said.

"They are involved in polemics, they are not fighting," he answered.

"What polemics?" I said.

"Philosophical polemics," he replied.

"Why don't they say their words to each other in a lenient and mild manner?" I questioned.

"Can anyone acquire any learning with laughter and leniency?" he said

"I don't mean they should laugh at each other, but they can speak in a normal manner as I am talking to you." I replied.

The clergy watched me from top to toe angrily and asked "are you a Turk?"

"Yes I am from Azerbaijan," I replied.

"That is why you understand nothing. Get out, get out of here; this is no place for watching." He shouted.

I had to leave the place, but the yells from the lodging were getting even louder.

Addressing Yusuf Amu, I said: "anywhere you look in this country, you'll find a sad scene. I had never known unto that point that you have to yell in order to learn something. You have to scream, shout and rack your throat."²⁵

As reflected in the passage, the difference between being an Azerbaijani or non-Azerbaijani is openly pronounced, and the rupture in the Turk/Fars binary is clearly visible. Maraghe'i does not ruminate on the *differance* and the rupture of the binary. He narrates the story for a different purpose; he deplores the fact that for the acquisition of a knowledge one needs to yell, rack his throat and behave like beasts. He tries to attack whatever is considered to be old as opposed to modern. Learning by yelling was an obsolete pedagogical technique, and it had to be changed. The Turk/Fars rupture flows from the author's unconscious although he wants to prove a different point, yet he cannot live without an awareness of his inner identity. However, the passage establishes a very important point with respect to power displacements. Since Ebrahim Beg belongs to the subjugated ethnicity, his logical and wise remark will not be taken. On the other hand, a naive clergyman, belonging to the camp of the dominating language and power will prevail,

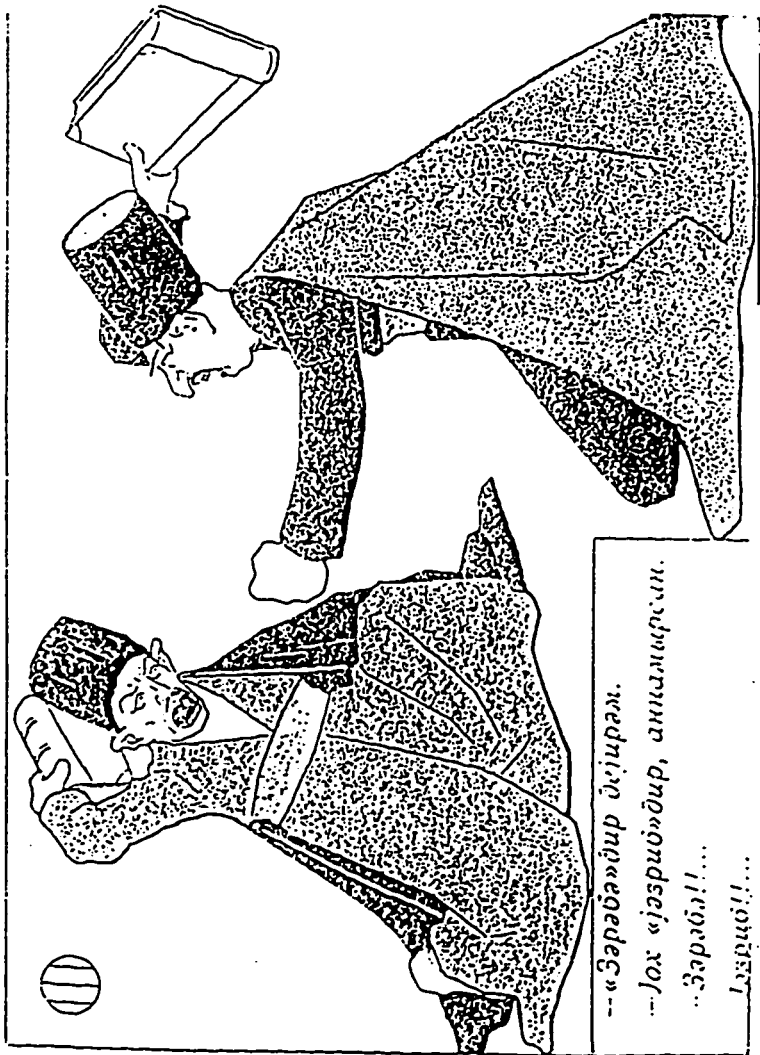


Plate 10: An Outdated Pedagogy
"Can anyone acquire any knowledge with laughter and Leinency?"
Mulla Nasreddin No. 7 May 19, 1906

and he will expel the wise visitor from the precinct of his territory.

on a different occasion, Maraghe'i, again, hints at the presence of rupture in the Turk/Fars binary. At this point also he keeps himself out of the conflict, pretending that he is not an interested party in the opposition. After Naseraddin Shah's assassination, Mozaffariddin Mirza sets out from Tabriz toward Tehran to take over the throne. Unlike his father Naseraddin Shah, his son, Mozaffariddin Shah was known to be a docile, gentle and well-mannered person. His ascendance to the throne was considered to be an auspicious occasion, and people had developed great expectations about his reign. Maraghe'i is happy that the new king will repair all the destructions that his father had created in the country during his long reign, yet he is not very happy about what might happen in the future because the people in the entourage of Mozaffariddin Mirza are from Azerbaijan, and they are on their way to Tehran to take positions in the Royal Court, an idea which is not welcome by the old courtesans. Maraghe'i has misgivings that a conflict will erupt over the personal interests, and the Turk/Fars difference will be used as pretext:

...because the old self-serving individuals are in the Court. Moreover, there are younger people in the entourage of the new king that have been waiting for such an auspicious day --most of them being stooges and hooligans. Thus they will not allow the affairs continue into the interests of the people in the old court. The fighting between these hungry new men and the greedy over-stuffed old ones will erupt soon --not for a right cause and in the interest of the people, but for the satisfaction of their own avarice. Especially, the language dichotomy that is Persian and Turkish [Azeri] will become a major issue of dispute. I can foresee that the court-play will become so brisk at this period that it has never been in any other period. This one will call that one "the dumb Turk," (*Turk-e khar*) and that one will call this one "the bastard such and such," (*pedar sukhte-ye folan*).²⁶

As mentioned earlier, in this scene also, Maraghe'i looks at the Azeri/Persian binary from an angle through which he can minimize the effects of the rupture and difference. He presents the story in a way in which the language difference and Azeri/Persian dichotomy are subordinated to personal interests. Thus the parties motivated by their thirst for power or the "satisfaction of their own avarice" will make the Turk/Fars rupture an excuse for fighting. Unlike Talibof who is usually overpowered by his emotions while ruminating on his inner identity and speaking about his native city Tabriz, Maraghe'i's dominating trend of humor never leaves him at any time. Quite passively, Maraghe'i narrates his story while trying to minimize the effects of the rupture. It appears that Maraghe'i interjects the Turk/Fars dichotomy not so much as identity conflict, but to show its disadvantages and detrimental outcomes if the ethnic diversity is not ennobled or respected in order to be employed for the good of a multi-ethnic nation such as Iran. This is exactly the point that a

modern civilized society takes into consideration and acknowledges the cultural and ethnic diversity, and by ennobling the very same differences they are diverted to be utilized for the good of a society. They become advantages rather than becoming disadvantages, they become privileges rather than causes of miseries. In Levic Jessel's words "genuine humanity does not deny man his ethnic roots; instead, it ennobles them and reinforces them in the interest of all men."²⁷ Maraghe'i only translates the otherness of language and culture into the disadvantage by saying that one group is so greedy and wants to remain in power in order to plunder the miserable people further more, and the other group is so thirsty of power that they have been waiting for such a day to take their turn at "court play." Yet deep at the bottom of all these struggles for power lie the difference and Otherness --no matter from which angle the author pretends to see. Maraghe'i, in fact, hints that making a big issue of the ethnic differences and widening the ruptures are acts of barbarism and uncivilized behavior. The author also implies that although he belongs to an ethnic minority, yet he is not involved in those kinds of uncivilized acts.

I would like to mention a third episode in which Maraghe'i articulates the Turk/Fars dichotomy, still keeping a disinterested posture. In Tehran, Ebrahim Beg tries to find a "key" or person who can arrange a meeting between him and some government ministers. By chance he is introduced to an old acquaintance of his father, Mulla Muhammad Ali. The man is an impostor who has become a *confidante* to a man of high position in the court, and he has acquired the title of Khan through his charlatanism. When Ebrahim Beg asks about his life and how he got to his position, he answers:

"I am doing very well. I earn five to six tumans through brokering people's affairs. Last year His Excellency, the Prime Minister, told me that the governor of Semnan was fired, and asked me if I wanted to take the governorship of that place."

"No problem Your Excellency," I said.

Then I came home and told the good news to Qasem's, your slave's son's, mother [my wife] that the Prime Minister has offered me the governorship of Semnan.

"What are your whims?" she asked.

"Nothing. It is the governorship of a town. Sure, we'll go." I responded.

"You are a Turk! You have no common sense. I will not go there," Qasem's mother said.

This woman is originally from Isfahan, she is very clever. In response to her I said: "women's locks are long and their wisdom short" is a truth. O woman! People try to pay six to seven thousand tomans as a bribe in order to get such a position. Now you are being offered for free, and you are not accepting it?"

"You have got to think the end of every thing from the beginning," she answered.

"One needs to be prudent. Your governorship cannot be practical for a number of reasons: firstly, you are a Turk, and the people of Semnan are zealous Persian speakers. They will produce thousands of problems for your administration, they will create hurdles. They will revolt and kick you out finally. Secondly, be honest

between you and God, there is no a grain of competence in you for that kind of a job. Take a mirror and look at your own appearance, you don't look like a governor. Thirdly, your health is poor, the place is considered to be hot, and the climate may not be good for the children either. Fourthly, suppose none of what I say is a problem. Six or seven months later, someone will pay a seven or eight thousand toman bribe and will take the job from you..."²⁸

The dialogue between Mulla Mohammad Ali who is an Azeri with his wife who is a Persian from Isfahan is very interesting. The woman's response to her husband's "good news" is very definite and decisive from the very beginning. "You are a Turk! You have no common sense. I will not go there, (*to torki, sho'aur nadari. man razi nemishavam*)" she says. In fact, in the woman's semantics, being a Turk (Azeri) means being an idiot and having no common sense. In the argument between a Turk (the husband) and a Persian speaking woman (the wife), the woman proves to be absolutely strong and invincible. She is wise and rational, whereas, her husband is naive and short-sighted. It is interesting to note that in the time and place that almost all the women were illiterate and had no place in society, a Persian speaking woman proves to have a stronger status than her literate Azeri husband. Another interesting point in the passage is the fact that the people who consider themselves part of the power structure will not obey someone who belongs to a minority or a subjugated ethnicity. "Firstly, you are a Turk, and the people of Semnan are zealous Persian speakers. They will produce thousands of problems for your administration, they will create hurdles. They will revolt and kick you out finally," the wife says.

As mentioned earlier, the second way in which Maraghe'i articulates his Azeri identity is unrestrained interjection of Azeri diction and expressions into the Persian language. In fact, the author creates his own version of the Persian language which I call Azerbaijani Persian. Taqizada and a number of Azeris who were closer to the power pole, derisively, called it *Farsi-ye Valide Khan*.²⁹ I find Maraghe'i's subversion of the Persian language a more effective way of articulating his Azeri identity, a more interesting point about Maraghe'i's awareness of his inner identity, his distance and otherness from the power structure in his home country --the fact that can be generalized to include many other Azeri authors. Both consciously and unconsciously, Maraghe'i attempts to subvert the language of power. It is as if he takes his revenge on the language which has been imposed upon him. He interjects Azeri words into the Persian language at his leisure, wherever and whenever he likes. While reading Maraghe'i, quite often, I wonder how can the people, who do not understand Azeri, fully appreciate the author. I cannot help laughing when I find that the editor of Maraghe'i tries hard to make his supposed corrections of the text without awareness of the intentions of the author. For example, in

Azeri *amin* means “sure” and “ascertained,” not knowing the author's intended meaning of the word, the editor corrects the word to *iman* to mean “secure.”³⁰ There is no comparative ending for adjectives in Azari, Maraghe'i frequently uses the comparative adjectives without comparative endings which also is laboriously corrected by the editor.

In the scenes charged with emotions, Maraghe'i uses Azeri Turkish if the characters are Azerbaijani. When Ebrahim Beg finds his old acquaintance, Mulla Muhammad Ali in Tehran, overwhelmed by surprise, he shouts *gada Malla san hara bura hara?*³¹ (what are you doing here man?) Also at Ebrahim Beg's death bed, his mother moans in Azeri, *na kam oghul vay, javan balam vay* (woe my son of thwarted desires! woe my young son!). The limits of this work does not allow us to quote further examples. Maraghe'i's use of the Azeri words and expressions in the Persian language knows no limit. However, by interjecting Azeri words into the language of power, Maraghe'i tries to imply that we can only express our real feelings in our mother tongue; to speak in the language of the other is only occasioned by periodic necessities.

Kasravi: Kasravi manifests his awareness of the *differance* and his Azeri identity in three different ways. Firstly, through his attempts to deny the Turk/Fars rupture and undermine Turkic features of Azeri language and culture. I do believe that Kasravi's book, *Azeri: The Ancient Language of Azerbaijan*, is a good example of his denial of the Turk/Fars dichotomy and a way to overcome his otherness from the power pole. He tries to undermine the Turkic aspects of Azerbaijan in order to close the Turk/Fars rupture. In his *Tarikh-e Mashrute-ye Iran*, as well as in his other works, Kasravi tries to cover up the Turk/Fars binary opposition on a very conscious level, although on unconscious level he proves the opposite, which will be discussed duly with reference to the episodes discussed by the author.

After the representatives of the first Majlis were elected, and they were sent to Tehran, the people of Tabriz insisted upon the speedy writing and passing of the constitution. The telegrams exchanged between Anjuman of Tabriz and the representatives of the first Majlis clearly accentuate Turk/Fars and Tabriz/Tehran ruptures, yet Kasravi, ironically though, tries to undermine the differences under the heading “Suspensions Concerning Tabriz” in his *Tarikh-e Mashrute-ye Iran*:

...during these days a lie was disseminated in Tehran about Tabriz, and it was this: since the people of Tabriz were disappointed with Mohammad Ali Mirza, they want to secede from Tehran and establish a republic. That is why they have called their representatives back from Parliament. Such an idea never existed in Tabriz, and no one had spoken about such a thing. This was fabricated in Tehran and disseminated from there.³²

Kasravi tries to cover up otherness, although on a different occasion he quotes one of the telegrams of Anjuman-e Tabriz in which the people of Tabriz openly spell out that “we are going to opt for Azerbaijan’s secession should the governance of constitution be affected” by the representatives’ bungling of the situation and their delay in passing the principles of the constitution.³³

Secondly, on an unconscious plane, he glamorizes and over-glorifies every aspect of Azerbaijanis and Azerbaijan which he thinks to be admirable, although consciously he tries to deny the existence of the Turk/Fars rupture. The author’s *Tarikh-e Mashrute-ye Iran* is full of such instances. When he speaks of his birth place, the Hokmavar district of Tabriz, he gives a romantic picture of the place during spring time. And when he is to contrast the characteristics of the people of Tabriz with those of the people of Tehran he says:

In Tabriz, since ambitions were higher, the awareness of the concept of constitution and law was augmented, and the people’s morale was stronger, and since they had enthusiastic leaders among them, their movement was built on strong bases. They performed many valuable feats...On the other hand, in Tehran and many other cities the movement took a different form. Because of people’s laxity, paucity of information and lack of enthusiastic leaders, there were disorders and show off in Tehran among the people. Although Tehran took the first step in the movement, it was not able to nurture it. The laxity of the people of Tehran turned the moment into a show, people were interested in ostentation and opportunism.³⁴

The author contrasts the high “morale” of Tabrizis and their “enthusiastic leaders” with the “disorders and show off” of the people of Tehran. He speaks about “ostentation and opportunism” of Tehranis which, quite often, is contrasted with their own sincerity and spontaneity by many Azerbaijanis. Kasravi also creates a supernatural epic hero out of his Sardar, Sattar Khan, while speaking on the siege of Tabriz. As a hero aided by supernatural powers, Kasravi’s Sardar moves from front to front and bunker to bunker so that he miraculously stops the advances of the enemies. Writing about Sattar Khan’s heroism and speedy move from one front to the other, Kasravi writes:

This was a wonder in itself that Sattar Khan could get to that front [Khatib] in such a time. Haji Mohammad Badamchi says: “I was with Sattar Khan that day. When the war erupted, he was watching Khatib with his binnacles. All of a sudden, I heard him shouting ‘the guys are being massacred (*ushaglari girdilar*).’ Saying this he screamed ‘Rashid! Hurry up, fetch the horse.’ I asked what had happened. He said ‘Mujahids are beaten, and they are fleeing. The government army is following them and showering them with bullets.’ This he said and set out. At this point, Rashid, the groomer, brought the horse. Sattar Khan mounted, and making Rashid sit on another horse, he galloped.” As we have seen, in the most difficult hour, he

got to the front line. He stopped the enemy's raid, he made the government army retreat in disgrace.³⁵

Thirdly, like many other Azerbaijani authors, Kasravi also subverts the Persian language, but his subversion is quite different from that of Talibuf and Maraghe'i. While the previously mentioned authors subvert the Persian language by interjecting Azeri elements into it, Kasravi tries to create an estrangement between the Persian language and its speakers by his invention of new and unfamiliar Persian words and expressions. I would like to give an example of the two different ways of subversions by comparing Kasravi's coining new Persian lexicon with Maraghe'i's interjecting Azeri words into the Persian language. Maraghe'i introduces the word *gol kashidan* for signing, whereas, Kasravi uses *dastine gozashtan* for the same purpose. Both expressions are unfamiliar for an average Persian speaking Iranian who usually uses *emza'a kardan*. Maraghe'i's *gol kashidan* is a combination of an Azeri word *gol* meaning arm and a Persian word *kashidan* meaning to pull --the whole expression is the literal translation of its Azeri equivalent *gol chakmakh*. Kasravi's *dastine gozashtan* is a new coinage. Both components of the expression are Persian and the author's invention --*dastine* or *dastinaj* meaning bracelet and things related to hand (*dast*) and *gozashtan* meaning to put.³⁶ The inclusion of a glossary to Kasravi's works becomes a necessity in order to make them understandable for average Persian readers. Kasravi's *Tarikh-e Mashrute-ye Iran* opens with a glossary page whose title reads "The Words That Their Meaning Should be Made Clear."

Mamed Qoli-Zade: Jalil Mamed Qoli-Zade, the editor of the renowned *Mulla Nasreddin*, and his talented friends and contributors to the paper such as 'Abdu'l-Rahim Haq-Verdiev, Najaf Beik Vazirli, Mohammad Sa'id Ordbadi (writers), Saber (the famous poet), and 'Azim Azim-Zade (caricaturist) were among many Azerbaijanis who followed Akhundzadeh's path by opting to write solely in the Azeri language.³⁷ Mamed Qoli-Zade picks up the very same issues raised by Akhundzadeh such as the necessity of changing script, prevailing superstitions and outmoded approaches to life. Like Akhundzadeh, he is a prolific playwright and an essayist. Yet he is one of the Azeri intellectuals of his time who expressly speaks of Azerbaijan as a "homeland" and Azeris as "a nation." However, a gradual development in Mamed Qoli-Zade's assertion of identity is noticeable in his career as a writer. During the first decade of the 20th century, he often refers to the Moslem /Christian dichotomy. In fact, "the Turks of Azerbaijan were classified as Tartars or Muslims in the imperial period and as Turks until 1937."³⁸ Living in an environment of cultural multicplicity such as the Caucasus, it appears that Mamed Qoli-zade observed that

his identity and value system were being invaded by a conquering and colonizing Christian world. Azeris and other Moslems in the Caucasus usually felt themselves attached to the Islamic and Iranian cultural heritages and value systems, while Armenians and Georgians in the region felt affinity with Russians and the Christian world. In *Mulla Nasreddin*, issue 31 dated november 3, 1906, Mamed Qoli-Zade has an article entitled *Meymunlar* --“The Monkeys.” In this essay he criticizes the Azeris, who after “one week” of staying in Tbilisi, “mount” the *ov* suffix to the end of their names. The author complains about the “Moslem intellectuals” who speak Russian at the expense of neglecting their native Azeri tongue. Their excuse for speaking in Russian is that the “government does not allow us to teach our mother tongue in the schools.” Then he continues to say:

Suppose the government does not let us to learn our mother tongue in the schools, suppose the government does not allow this. Then who prevents us from respecting and loving our native language. I have never seen two intellectual Moslems speak in a Moslem language [Azeri] to each other. There is no rule regulated by the government to bar two Moslems from speaking to each other in a Moslem language. Then who does prevent us from speaking in our native tongue? Let us suppose that the government does not allow us to learn our mother tongue in our schools, but what does make us feel embarrassment for speaking in our native language or make us feel shame in using our own language!³⁹

Mamed Qoli-Zade fails to see the “benumbing” effects of a dominating culture over a colonized people. He fails to note that the colonized tends to see him/herself through the eyes of a colonizer, and s/he internalizes the colonizer’s views of her/himself. Since Russia’s military prowess had proved its superiority in the battle-field, its Christian religion and Russian language also were to prove their superiority over the “Moslem language,” religion, value system and epistemology. The author continues to complain about his people’s discarding their mother tongue at the expense of Russian or Persian. It is only during WWI and after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia that Mamed Qoli-Zade expressly speaks his desire to see the Azerbaijani “homeland” as a sovereign nation. In the November 27, 1917 issue of *Mulla Nasreddin*, in an article entitled “Azerbaijan,” he writes:

O my neglected homeland! O my victimized home! The world is shaken, it is turned over, all nations woke up from their slumber. All the dispersed brothers found each other, they began to rebuild their destroyed homes. Where are you? O my poor homeland! The whole world was changed! All concepts found new meanings! To put it in our own words, things that had lost their meanings returned to their origin, *inna lillah wa inna ilayhi raji’un*. Everyone came to the conclusion: homeland, homeland and homeland, language language and language, nation, nation and nation, without them there is no salvation for human beings.⁴⁰

Mamed Qoli-Zade opens his essay with an apostrophe calling upon his “neglected

homeland” in an attempt to startle his compatriots from their “slumber.” He speaks about the world which “is shaken” and has taken a new form. Since “all nations woke up from their slumber,” and all the “dispersed” and displaced brothers found each other it becomes an urgency for his brethren to get together as well. They need to “rebuild their destroyed homes.” Later in the article the author calls different people from the different regions of Azerbaijan by the name of their places and asks them to come together. With the humor which is a prevailing trend in the Azeri literature of the period, he addresses his “Tabrizi brethren who eat sandy and soily bread,” he calls upon the people of “Khoy, Meshgin, Sarab,... and lousy (*bitly*) people of Maraghe and Marand,” he also asks “the barbarian brethren from Ardabil and Khalkhal” to come together in order “to find out where is really our homeland.”⁴¹ Unlike Akhuzadeh who did not have a clear idea of an Azeri homeland, the generation after him expressly speaks of an independent homeland for the Azeris. It appears that the creation of an Azeri homeland becomes a definite issue for Mamed Qoli-Zade and his friends by the events preceding WWI. In fact, Mamed Qoli-Zade’s call of “lousy” and “barbarian” brethren for the demarkation of his homeland’s borders heralds the establishment of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1920 in the northern territories of Araxes River.

Mo’juz: Since Mo’juz of Shabustar is an author of main focus in this study, I will deal with him in a wider scope here as I did in the previous chapters. In fact, Mo’juz belongs to the *Mulla Nasreddin* circle, but we have no clue if anyone in the circle knew the poet. Although Mo’juz is an Azeri Iranian, he has more in common with non-Iranian Azeris. Mo’juz’s work is a continuation and the climax of what *Mulla Nasreddin* people were doing. Unlike his other precursors, Azeri Iranians, who wrote in the Persian language, writing in the Persian medium was out of the question for Mo’juz. Like Akhuzadeh and his followers in the *Mulla Nasreddin* circle, Mo’juz wrote in the Azeri language. However, like many Iranian Azeris he not only expressly refers to the Turk/Fars dichotomy, he also petitions for the restoration of his violated rights by the wielders of power and the ruling class.

By choosing to write his poetry in the Azeri language and discarding the language of power, the Persian language, Mo’juz firmly asserts who he is, and to whom he wants to write. Mo’juz’s appearance in the literature produced by Iranian Azeris is a new phenomenon. It is an assertion of an identity which finds its indirect, implied and antithetical manifestations in Talibuf, Maraghe’i and Kasravi. Thus Mo’juz’s assertion of identity is both manifold and sophisticated: (1) practical assertion of identity through opting

the native language to convey his message (2) his direct statements about his Azeri identity and his otherness from the power structure (3) petitioning to restore his violated rights and his claims for reparation.

Mo'juz's choice of the Azeri language as his medium is a practical assertion of his identity. He moves against the prevailing trend and practically exposes the difference, and he aligns himself with the authors in Northern Azerbaijan such as Mamed Qoli-Zade and Saber. Perhaps Mo'juz is one of the few Iranian Azeris of the period who finds that other Iranians cannot speak for Azeris, and that speaking for Azeris requires the Azeri language. Mo'juz tries to prove that the Persian speaking Iranians have no authority to speak for all Iranians.

Mo'juz makes direct references to his Azeri identity both in his hand-written prose notes and in his poetry. As we have noted in Chapter I, in a short autobiographical note left from Mo'juz, he apologetically tries to argue that his mission was to speak to his own Azeri people, and he wanted "to wake" them up from their slumber. He speaks of his mission to fight against all the problems which kept his people from moving toward modernism and change. He speaks about his return from Istanbul and his witnessing of "the deplorable situation of the homeland." He decides to wage war against all the impediments which kept the people miserable and backward. He speaks of his writing in terms of war against the impediments.⁴² Mo'juz defines his audience as "people of Azerbaijan," and he wants "all women and men" to get his message. He wants to be excused for not writing in "the sweet Persian language." In fact, Mo'juz has written a few poems in the Persian language, but by his mislocated and inappropriate use of Azeri words in such poems they become only parodies of the Persian language. They become some kind of *Tarzilik*⁴³ which was designed to produce comic effect.

In a poem called "Write in the Language Your Mother Taught You," besides his direct reference to his Azeri identity and his otherness from the power pole, Mo'juz petitions his case, expresses a desire for avenging his afflicted state and asks for the restoration of his violated rights. In his "Write in the Language Your Mother Taught You," Mo'juz complains about power displacement and the predominance of the Persian language. The following is the transliteration and English translation of the lines which concern us here,

Dilim Tuki, sozum sada, ozum sahbaya dildada
 Manim tak sha'irin albat olar kasad bazari.
 Dunan she'rila bir nama apardim shahi Irana,
 Dedi "Turki nemidanam, mara to bachche pendari?"

Ozi Turk oghli Turk amma deyir Turki jahalat dur,
 Khudaya muzmahal gil takhtdan bu al-e Qajari.
 Umidin kasma Mo'juz yaz anan ta'lim edan dilda,
 Gazar bir armaghn tak daftarin bil Chin-o Tatari.⁴⁴

(My language is Turkish, my words are plain, I am in love with the red wine,
 a poet like me, of course, will meet a slack market.
 I sent a verse letter to the King of Iran yesterday,
 he said "I don't know Turkish, do you think I am a kid?"
 Himself a Turk, son of a Turk, yet he says "Turkish is ignorance."
 O God! Annihilate Qajar kings from their thrones.
 O Mo'juz don't lose your hope, write in the language your mother taught you,
 like a souvenir, your poetry book will travel all over China and the land of Tartars.)

The first couplet depicts the dilemma in which the poet finds himself. The lines echo an ongoing struggle between the poet's inner identity and his outer identifications such as loyalty to the corrupt government of Tehran, power operatives and meddling pietists. The poet is a native speaker of Turkish (Azeri), therefore, he is an outcast in a community in which the language of the Other is a tool for the enforcement of power. Being "in love with the red wine" also is a problem of no little importance, it equals a person's excommunication. In the hemistich "my language is Turkish, my words are plain, I am in love with the red wine" the poet's selection of each word has a manifold significance. Mo'juz stipulates on his language as being Azeri Turkish. He tries to draw a distinct line between the Azeri masses, himself being conceived as their advocate, and the Persian speaking people associated with the power pole. The poet's choice of "*sozum sada*" is also highly significant. *Soz* in Azeri not only denotes "word," but it also connotes concepts like speech, idea, thought and desire. The word *sada*, the second part of the phrase, means simple, informal, candid, unembellished and unadulterated. The poet argues that because his language is Azeri Turkish, and because it is the language of illiterate masses so his words are plain and unembellished. At the same time, he implies that his words are the unadulterated echo of a simple human being who is not tainted by the politics of power. Establishing a cause and effect relationship between his plain words and his Turkish language and the resulting "slack market," the poet also implies that not only has he no share in the power wielding apparatus, but like the majority of Azerbaijanis, he has fallen a prey to the tricks of power politics. Mo'juz's reference to his "plain" and unembellished words may also allude to an association with Kasravi's contrasting the spontaneity and enthusiasm of the people of Tabriz with the "ostentation and opportunism" of the people of Tehran.

In line three, Mo'juz claims that he "sent a verse letter to the king of Iran." The

poet does not say what was the content of the letter, but we know that it was written in the Azeri Turkish. It was written to serve a single purpose --to emphasize the poet's identity. It was written to petition the case of a people who were subjected to unfair treatments. It petitioned the case of a language which was kept only in an oral plane by being stripped of privileges of being printed and written. By writing his letter in Azeri, Mo'juz tries to claim that the Azeri language is a language like any other. However, the king's two-sentence response to the letter is quite abrupt and clear. "I don't know Turkish, do you think I am a kid?" he says. By devising the rhetorical question of "do you think I am a kid?" Mo'juz implies that in the king's view Azeri is not a medium to be taken seriously. If Azeri Turkish is a language at all, it only deserves to be used by the children. It is noteworthy that the king's answer to Mo'juz's Azeri letter is in the Persian language -- "*Turki nemidanam, mara to bachche pendari?*" The implication is that the poet's supposed letter deserves no response, and his language cannot function as little as two short sentences. In fact, the king finds receiving a letter in the Azeri language derogatory to his position, and his two-sentence response in the Persian language also implies that the Azeri Turkish of the poet could only be functional when spoken to the pre-literate Azerbaijanis who could only afford to understand or express "plain" ideas. The king would find it below his dignity to write in Azeri.

It appears that the poet is angered by the king's rough response, that is why he speaks of him as "a Turk, son of a Turk." Although being a Turk and being son of a Turk do not denote any dirty meaning, the structure and format of the phrase are made to convey an obscene sense. Any positive idea placed in the frame of "himself a ..., son of ..." will have obscene connotations. However, there is an irony in the assault on the king through the employment of such a phrase. The poet will not be excluded from the derogatory implications of the phrase. In fact, the phrase also manifests what we have earlier mentioned as an internalization of the colonizer's view of the colonized. The poet's phrase "himself a Turk son of a Turk" implies that being a Turk by no means could be something of which one would be proud of. However, the poet not only fails to uphold his case, he is subjected to further abuse and victimization. "A Turk, son of a Turk," serves as a curse which targets the poet himself as well as the king. Thus he lets his inward feelings out by calling upon the Almighty's help. "O God! Annihilate the Qajar kings from their thrones," he asks in a state of imprecation. Despite all the odds, the poet nurtures good hopes for a better future. He admonishes himself to fight against tyrannies and write in the language taught by his mother, and he is hopeful that the difficulties will be surmounted, and his

fame will recognize no limits or boundaries. "O Mo'juz don't lose your hope, write in the language your mother taught you, like a souvenir, your poetry book will travel all over China and the land of Tartars," he says. Mo'juz's advice about writing "in the language your mother taught you" is also significant in a different sense. A language taught by one's mother rings associations with a mother's breast-feeding and lactating her child. In the idea of mother's teaching her child a native language, lactating her infant is also implied which establishes both gifts of the mother as the natural rights of a human being. Any authority or a person violating those rights or challenging their legitimacy will be considered an object of hatred and condemnation. Violation of the rights established as the gifts of a mother to her children is a sacrilege and defilement of the sanctity of motherhood.

Identity, essentially, develops from a sense of "mutual recognition"⁴⁵ between the self and others. It spells out what the self is, and what it is not. Yet Mo'juz's articulation of his Others does not define a self, it uncovers a non-existent self --an "absent insider" in Alfred Arteaga's terms.⁴⁶ Akhundzadeh termed the very non-existent self as *mellat-e nama'lum* (the unknown nation," and Mamed Qoli-Zade called upon "lousy" and "barbarian" brethren from different corners of Azerbaijan to get together in order "to find out where is really our homeland." Although Mo'juz accentuates his distance and difference from the "corrupt" power wielders of Tehran and the "ignorant" pietists, yet he tries to emulate his preferred others --the West. Thus the identity crisis of Azeri authors is manifold and complex.

As mentioned earlier, Mo'juz points at the otherness of language both by his practice of discarding the Persian language as the medium of authority and his direct references to the Azeri language as an idiom to be taken more seriously. In fact, the Otherness of language has been considered to be the basis of the *differances* by many modern scholars. The human capacity for acquisition of language differentiated him from his animal ancestors. Through the dispersion of human race in different regions, different languages and ethnicities were born, and through the development of languages, the human mind developed and attained its due complexity. Speaking on the importance of language in shaping human mind Levic Jessel stipulates:

From the moment a capacity for acquisition of language and expansion of intellect differentiated man from his animal ancestor, man and language have been inseparable companions...As groups separated, each tended to fashion its already specifically adopted tongue out of the reciprocal experience, and each carved out its characteristic forms of group life. Thus evolved a people and its language. Peoples multiplied along with their corresponding languages and habits as they established more sedentary modes of existence. Growth and development added anatomical,

physiological, psychological, and social complexity.⁴⁷

Language is thus seen as an underpinning factor in the process of human evolution, and its growth directly effects human mentality, psychological and social complexity. Therefore, any unwarranted interference with the due course of its evolution will result in the retardation, deviation, or even complete cessation of a people's growth. Perhaps Mo'juz does not link his "Turkish" language with his simple ideas by chance when he writes "my language Turkish, my words plain" since he was witnessing a growing Persian nationalism at the expense of annihilating regional languages and ethnic identities. As discussed earlier Mo'juz picked up the legacy left behind by Akhundzadeh in canonizing the Azeri language as a literary idiom. In fact, he was the climax of the move toward modernization, awakening and identity formation process. He was deeply influenced by the authors of *Mulla Nasreddin*. The paper's 38th issue, December 22, 1906 (plate No. 11), depicts an Azeri Turk being restrained and kept down by three men while each one is holding a hefty tongue in his hand. The three tongues (Arabic, Persian and Russian) are simultaneously, being foisted in the victim's overstretched mouth. Ironically, the victim is still able to utter some words saying: "Oh! My brothers I was not created without a tongue, don't force these tongues into my mouth." The victim uses *dil* to mean "tongue" which also means "language" in Azeri. However, there is another irony in the victim's addressing his victimizers by the terms such as "Oh! My brothers" because a brother would not suppress the language which is "taught" by his own mother.

Mo'juz stipulates that his "language" is Azeri Turkish. He tries to draw a distinct line between the Azeri masses, conceiving himself as their advocate, and those Iranian intellectuals who propagated the notion that Azeri was not a language, but it was an illegitimate breed born as a result of "marauding and the raids of Genghis Khan and Tamburlane."⁴⁸ Mo'juz speaks of his language as Azeri Turkish at a time when many Iranian nationalists and intellectuals were looking for different ways and means to eradicate regional languages. In order to distance ethnic minorities such as Azeris and Kurds from their identity and cultural heritages, Mahmud Afshar proposes that

thousands of low-priced attractive books and treatises in the Persian language must be distributed throughout the country, especially in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan.

Мулланасреддин

Ғијрати 12 гәһик

22 декабр

Цена 12 к.

Э. ШИРАК



Ај гардашлар кәи ки дилсиз хәлг олунмамышак, бу дилләри
ағзыма сохурсуныз...

Plate 11: "O brothers! I haven't been created without a tongue."

Mulla Nasreddin No. 38 December 22, 1906

...Certain Persian speaking tribes could be sent to the region where a foreign language is spoken, and settled there, while the tribes of that region which speaks a foreign language could be transferred and settled in Persian speaking areas.⁴⁹

Many Iranian elites --Azerbaijanis and non-Azerbaijanis alike-- were lecturing, writing, publishing and trying hard in order to eliminate "a foreign language" which was spoken by millions of people for hundreds of years. They advised the authorities to relocate the tribes who spoke in Azeri or Kurdish and settle them among Persian speaking people. They also wanted to move Persian speaking tribes to the regions where the alleged "foreign" languages were spoken.

Mo'juz's time saw the birth of modern educational establishments and the revamping of education in which there was no place for the Azeri language in Iranian Azerbaijan. Mo'juz could see his mother tongue falling into disgrace which meant illiteracy of masses, educational and commercial decline, and migration of the elite from Azerbaijan to Tehran and to other Persian speaking regions of Iran. So it happened that many Azeri children "were humiliated,"⁵⁰ and they had to pay fines or suffer corporal punishment for talking in their mother tongue during the school hours with the advent of Pahlavi regime. Samad Behrangi, who was a school master in the rural areas of Azerbaijan, criticizes Iranian government's strict and unfair rules about forcing Azeri children to speak Persian. He especially speaks about the difficulty of teaching different subject matters such as history in the language in which the student could not communicate.

Myself, when I was teaching history in the seventh grade, I used to write the words on the blackboard just the way I did while teaching the Persian language. The students had to copy my hand-writing, and then they memorized what they had copied in order to enable them to read out of their history books. They tried hard, and they memorized them. Well, how did they memorize even Satan has no knowledge of. Azeri children were humiliated because of their inability to speak in the Persian language which was a tremendous defeat for them, especially when they encountered a Persian speaking kid as their classmates. Don't you think that the scar of such psychological setback will remain with them for the whole of their lives?⁵¹

Behrangi speaks about the plight that Azeri children doomed to face in the educational system of Iran. That is, they had to memorize a text which was barely comprehensible for them. Here, I would like to elaborate on Behrangi's statement "how did they memorize even Satan has no knowledge of." In Iranian culture, some one encountering a formidable task would usually say "God knows" how s/he will perform the task. Behrangi transposes God's place with that of Satan by saying that "even Satan has no knowledge" how Azeri children memorize history texts in the Persian language. By

planting Satan in the place of God, the author implies that forcing the innocent children to such an unfair and unjust task is a Satanic act, and God would not be pleased by the rules and regulations promulgated and administered by the Iranian Department of Education. Thus Satan cannot compete with the Iranian Education Department in its evilness and detrimental actions. Prior to the quoted passage, Behrangi speaks to the repetitive directives issued by the Department of Education in connection with “the correct ways of teaching the Persian language in Azerbaijan”⁵² and their emphasis on children’s speaking in the Persian language during school hours. He explains how raising the minimum passing grade from seven to ten points out of twenty in “reading Persian” caused in the mass drop out and humiliation of many children.⁵³

The paradigms set during Pahlavi era and minds shaped by the rules Behrangi mentions still continue in the post-Revolutionary Iran, and Azeri accent bashing continue to linger in many minds. I would like to quote few lines from the introduction to publication by Association Culturle Azeribajanaise of France. The publication has put together a number of essays by modern Iranian intellectuals both in support as well as denouncing the ideas in regard with mistreatment of Azeri lanuage and culture and unfair regulations affecting the education of Azerbaijani children. Referring to the continuance of Pahlavi era paradigms and modes mind, the editor writes:

In 1366 [1987] a teacher was sent from Tehran to replace the one who was purged [fired] from his job in Tabriz. He re-established the obsolete tradition of subjecting the students to cash fines whenever they spoke in their mother tongue [Azeri]. But the teacher’s action met very serious protest of the people, as a result, the Department of Education of Eastern Azerbaijan was forced to transfer the mentioned teacher to a different place. The issue was published in *Forugh-e Azadi*, and it will be included in this publication.⁵⁴

Mo’juz joined Akhundzadeh and the authors of *Mulla Nasreddin* in prioritizing their mother tongue as a defining factor of a people’s identity. He is one of the few Iranian Azeris who wrote in the Azerbaijani language. Behrangi complained about the Iranian government’s rigorous policies in forcing the Azeri children to speak in the Persian language, yet he wrote his complaints in the Persian language. On the contrary, Mo’juz wrote in his mother tongue; his few Persian pieces comprise a few doggerels conveying no serious message, and they are negligible in comparison to his Azeri works. With his erratic jestfulness and lack of serious message in his Persian verses, it seems the poet suggests that for conveying any serious message some one in his position has got to use her/his mother tongue. Speaking in a language other than one’s native tongue is usually conditioned by some kind of necessity in which an incorrect pronunciation or even a wrong

syntax would not affect the purport. A transaction between two businessmen will not be affected by mispronunciation, mis-spelling or a wrong syntax, and once the necessity is overcome the language ceases to exist in the mental preparedness. Conversely, the most real and sincere words are uttered in the mother tongue, and they seldom escape one's spontaneity. However, Mo'juz uses the Persian language in his Azeri poems on occasions such as speaking to a Persian speaking individual or while quoting him.

The conflict between Mo'juz's inner identity, the religious practices of his time and Iranian identifications appears mostly related to the situation in his contemporary Iran. He concerns himself with the here and the now. In his references to the dawn of Islam, "*ahdi risalat*," the life time of prophet Muhammad, or the most admired early Islamic character, the first Shi'a *Imam* "*shahi mardan*," Mo'juz appears to be respectful, and he tries to contrast the degenerate manners and life of his contemporary Moslems with the early days of Islam and the first *Imam*. Thus he distinguishes between an abstract ideal notion of Islam and many superstitious practices of his own age. Similarly, ruminating on the pre-Islamic glories of Iran, the poet does not position his Azerbaijani identity against the ancient myths and heroes of the ancient Persian Empire. According to Mo'juz, the government in Tehran stood for degenerate Iran from which he would like to see his homeland secede. With his articulation of the language otherness and deliberation on his contemporary differences, the poet tries to fashion an Azerbaijani identity different from the Persian speaking one of the "other" Iranians. Mo'juz would be happy to have a share in the glory and honor of the ancient Persian civilization. Taking pride in the pre-Islamic myths or early Islamic culture would not conflict with his efforts to fashion an Azeri identity propped by the articulation of his contemporary language otherness. Mo'juz's homeland had played its part in making ancient history, and he wanted to build a modern Azerbaijani national identity as a way of recognizing the heroic deeds of his ancestors. As mentioned earlier while speaking on Mamed Qoli-Zade, the stipulation on an Azeri identity was on its way to pronounce itself in an independent Azerbaijani nationhood. In the poet's references to the pre-Islamic days, mythical kings and heroes, the reader will find no sense of otherness or difference. On the contrary, the poet brags about the ancient mythical heroes in order to motivate his people who were humiliated by continued Anglo-Russian intrusions. In a poem entitled "Hymn to the Homeland," the poet brags about sacrificing "ourselves for the cause of the homeland," and he speaks about the "unshaken loyalty" of "Kiyani's progeny."⁵⁵ The invocation of past glories allows Mo'juz to forget the miseries of the present, and for a moment, all the dream of chivalrous sacrifice and vanquishing the enemy

appear to be attainable. The poet creates an imaginary Iran compatible with his value system.

Azerbaijani intellectuals and leaders had played fundamental roles in the success of the Constitutional Revolution, but they, like many other Iranians, were unhappy with the outcome of their struggles because the inept government had taken no steps to change the situation for the better, and so-called “constitutional” rule had proved to be as oppressive and corrupt as the old despotic monarchy. Moreover, any imagined positive measure taken in establishing law and order would mean centralization of power in Tehran, obliterating ethnic characters and muffling any discordant noise. Therefore, there was a sense of betrayal with many Azerbaijanis which ultimately resulted in repeated abortive attempts for political autonomy. In one of his poems called “We Are Relieved,” Mo’juz celebrates the fall of the Qajars arguing that the dynasty paid the price of ruining the country and victimizing the people. Here we have the transliteration of the pertaining lines of the poem and their English translation.

.....
 Vatanda galmadi bir yer ki viran edmasin Qajar,
 Farar etdi vatannan millati khunin jigar akhar.
 Min uch yuz girkh iki il geshdi chun tarikhi hijraydan,
 Qaza saslandi “zalim dur gorak basdur yetir akhar.”
 O qasri ki edardi sajda millat astaninda,
 O qasra galdi hasrat zade-ye bidadgar akhar.
 Khilas oldi vatan, ahli vatan Mo’juz bihamdillah,
 O taakhti bada verdi padshahi bihunar akhar.

(.....
 No part of the homeland escaped the Qajar’s destruction,
 the people escaped the homeland with bleeding hearts.
 One thousand three hundred forty two years passed from Hijra,
 destiny ordained “o tyrant enough is enough!”
 Loosing the palace the people prostrated at its threshold,
 the son of the tyrant with his ruses was abandoned.
 The homeland was relieved and the people were freed,
 Thanks God Mo’juz, the incompetent king lost the throne.)⁵⁶

Mo’juz is happy to see the “incompetent” king lose his throne, “no part of the homeland escaped the Qajar’s destruction,” the poet says. In fact, Mo’juz was one of the people who had left his homeland with a “bleeding heart” because of the “destruction.” With the downfall of the Qajars, the poet expresses his thankfulness to God since the “homeland was relieved and the people were freed.” There is a sense of revenge in Mo’juz’s reference to the destiny and putting an end to the tyrant’s tyranny. There is an implication that the victimization of the oppressed will not go unpunished, and the tyrants

will pay the price of their atrocities. The poet expresses his relief because of the fall of a king who had slighted him by saying "I don't know Turkish, do you think I am a kid?" The poet was denied a due response to the letter which was written in his mother tongue.

Although the downfall of the Qajars and Reza Shah's coming to power in 1921 is celebrated in a number of Mo'juz's poems, the poet manifests an ambivalent attitude toward his rigorous measures of modernization of the country. Mo'juz's poetry is rife with sarcasm and cynicism when he talks about Reza Shah's forceful measures in order "to standardize and Europeanize the appearance" of the people. In Houchang Chehabi's words, such policies "had a deep, and at times traumatizing, effect on the everyday lives of Iranians."⁵⁷ In his poem called "The Story of My Hat," Mo'juz makes a mockery of the state's instituting the "Pahlavi hat," a hat similar to French *kepi*, "as the official hat for Iranians."⁵⁸ The poet complains about policemen's snatching the traditional "old fashioned" caps in "market places." Although all Iranians were subjected to the "traumatizing" effects of the state's sartorial Westernization and modernization rules, yet the scars of the trauma could be much deeper among ethnic minorities. Persian speaking people were a part of the power wielding stratum, and they belonged to the language which promulgated and dictated the policies. Their association with the language of power could ease the effects of the dress change trauma and other changes. On the contrary, the distance of the ethnic groups from the power pole would make the effects of the trauma much more devastating --a situation in which the Otherness of language highlights and articulates many other *differances*. Perhaps one of the most traumatizing components in Reza Shah's "nation- building" efforts was the promulgation of mandatory military service for any male who reached his 18 years of age. Parents used to hide their male children or deny their existence in order to evade conscription. In the primitive village life that a family was a production unit, a young lad played a major role in the productivity of a family. His loss would shatter the family's thriving or even its survival. Taking a young lad away from the family would almost mean his loss or death because the young lad, after being exposed to the values outside the traditional village and family life, quite often did not return to the family.

The effects of the trauma became further devastating when a Persian speaking gendarmerie officer lead his men on order into the countryside or villages in order to round up the youth fleeing and hiding from conscription. As a result, in situations such as these the whole process is taken over by linguistic hierarchy and is governed by colonizer/colonized rules. Each party tries to define its own image in relation to the other.

In order to define some version of self in such a tense situation and the push and pull process, linguistic factors play the most important role. Commenting on such a juncture of tense struggle governing the linguistic hierarchy and discursive relationships Alfred Arteaga says:

Similarly, it is a common contention that these linguistic and discursive relationships manifest active displacement of power, that must be reinforced continually to maintain a particular image of world and hierarchy of relationships. In extreme human relationships, such as slavery or colonialism it is absolutely clear that those so skewed relationships have to be maintained by tremendous displacement of physical and discursive power. This has been noted in the discussions of colonialism, in distinguishing the period of domination, when an army of soldiers kills bodies of natives, from the subsequent period of hegemony, when the armies of English teachers and religious leaders kill their minds.⁵⁹

In maintaining an image of himself, “of the world and hierarchy of relationship,” a tongue-tied Azerbaijani farmer’s feelings in the presence of a Persian speaking gendarmerie officer whose men have nabbed his son while winnowing the harvest would be no different than a native standing in the presence of a colonial officer. Even the degree of self-expression or speaking through interpreter will determine the hierarchy of power in a single incident. The lines such as “My language Turkish, my words plain and myself in love of the red wine/ a poet like me, of course, will meet a slack market” are the echoes of a vanquished self and displaced power. In other words, Mo’juz conveys the message that had he opted the Persian language in writing his poetry, or had he been born as a native speaker of the Persian language, he would have had a different destiny –a brisk market at least. Bereft of any kind of physical or discursive power, the speaker finds no alternative way other than consoling himself by saying “do not be disappointed, write in the language your mother taught you, o Mo’juz/the day will come that your poetry book will travel to China and the land of Tartars.” The poet’s alleged letter to the king and its symbolic response are significant in relation to the power structure. The Persian response to a letter written in Azeri signifies that the poet’s language has no room in the power wielding apparatus of the country, and the only medium to clamp the power is the Persian language. Thus the employment of any other medium is an encroachment on the prerogatives of the power pole and doomed to be suppressed.

In his many poems, like all colonized thinkers, Mo’juz tries to find a way in order to repair his battered dignity. He manifests a yearning to break down the power structure and reconstruct the “hierarchy of relationships” in order to change the existing adverse environment into a friendly one. In one of his poems the poet envisions a total reversal of

power; “boys and girls go to school together, the farmer plows the land with machines, the shepherds buy newspapers when they go home,” after the homeland opts for its “mother tongue” in full measures. Thus the poet’s dreams come true, and the society finds its stable equilibrium if the Azeri mother tongue is restored to its due position:

.....
 Millatin dardi jahl-o ghaflatdur,
 Charasi e’lmi’ela sana’tdur,
 Khalqimiz mardi bakayasatdur,
 Galar akhar zabana inshallah.

Okhudar nowjavan insani,
 A’alim eytar gizi va oghlani,
 Olar hamrah zamani tulani,
 Omri ham shadyana inshallah.

Olar ayriplanlar amada,
 Gazarik bizda charkhi minada,
 Damnarik chayi a’rshi a’alada,
 Tokarik istikana inshallah.

Yeri mashinila sokar zare’a,
 Kharmani e’lmila doyar zare’a,
 Gazanar kheyli simo zar zare’a,
 Ishlamaz mufda khana inshallah.

Fa’la-vo ranjibar gedar darsa,
 Ruznama alip choban galsa,
 Olar ham Karbalaye Tohfe-ye Nisa,
 Ashina har zabana inshallah.

Chun olar e’mo fazl unasa anis,
 Yikhilar khandan-e nafnevis,
 Dakhi getmaz tukkazibani khabis,
 Janib-e Vayigana inshallah.

O zaman khalq shadman olajakh,
 Ki vatan madari zaban olajakh,
 Onda Tehranli nagiran olajakh,
 Ahli Azerbaijana inshallah.

O zaman khalq ghussadan Azad,
 Olar ham goz ishikh, konul abad,
 Kasilar bangi nala-vo faryad,
 Duzalar bu zamana Inshallah.⁶⁰

(The people’s malady is ignorance and indolence,
 the remedy is education and industry,
 our people are of an intelligent race,
 their tongue will be unlocked, God willing.

They'll send their youth to schools,
they'll educate their daughters and sons;
they'll let them accompany each other
in a happy life, God willing.

We'll make airplanes ready,
we'll span the Azure dome of the cosmos,
we'll fix our tea in the seventh heaven,
we'll pour it in our cups, God willing.

Using machines, a farmer will plow the land,
he'll harvest, employing sciences,
he'll earn gold and silver plentifully,
he'll never work for khans, God willing.

Laborer and tiller will attend schools;
going home the shepherd will buy his newspaper;
then Karbalayi Tohfa Nisa will be
familiar with every language, God willing.

If women get the benefits of sciences and knowledge,
the house of the navel scribe will be ruined;
the wicked Tukazziban will never tend to go
toward Vayegan any more, God willing.

Our people will be happy only when
the homeland will adopt the mother tongue,
Tehran's worries will grow then
about Azerbaijanis, God willing.

Then the people will be relieved from woes;
then the hearts happy and the eyes lit will be,
then the noise of moaning and mourning will stop,
then a new order will have our life, God willing.)

The quoted stanzas are from a rather long poem which echoes the poet's aspirations for the reversal of power. The fast moving short lines, repetitive words and the refrain, *inshallah* (God willing), all speak of an oppressed condition and an impatient yearning for the reversal of relationships. However, a vanquished self will invoke God's power to reverse the existing plight and change the relationships for better. Aspiring for "a new order" in the life of his people and to stop "the noise of moaning and mourning," the poet refers to a number of conditions which must be met and tools to be acquired: knowledge through learning and education, sciences through employment of scientific rules and machines, and the last and most important on which the other conditions are contingent is the adoption of the mother tongue as the language of the homeland. In the quoted stanzas,

Mo'juz ties the illiteracy and ignorance of his people to the network of relations created by the Other tongue of power. The annihilation of ignorance and liberation of Azerbaijanis would mean the removal of the Other tongue and its transposition with the mother tongue -- reversal of power.

In the first stanza a diagnosis of the people's situation is given. "Ignorance and indolence" are the people's maladies which can be remedied by knowledge and sciences provided their tied tongue is "unlocked." Before his reference to unlocking of the tied tongue, Mo'juz speaks about the intelligence of his people's breed. The poet is optimistic about the fulfillment of his aspirations since he believes that his people are "intelligent" and capable of acquiring knowledge and science --the tools of progress and change. However, the empowerment of the mother tongue and unlocking the tied tongues are conditions to be met. To be more exact, the poet says: *galar akhar zabana inshallah*, literally translated it means that the people "will come back to their tongue finally, God willing." Ironically, the poet uses a Persian word, *zaban*, meaning tongue or language. The people, "finally," will get to their "*zaban*, tongue, God willing," the poet aspires. By his use of the Persian word *zaban* for tongue, perhaps the poet wants to imply that any tongue is a *zaban*. The Persian language is not the only *zaban*.

In the second stanza, Mo'juz pursues the idea of acquiring knowledge and indicates that his "intelligent" people will encourage their "daughters and sons" for schooling. The barriers between genders will be removed, boys and girls will equally share "a happy life, God willing." An ardent advocate of women's education, Mo'juz emphasizes the urgency of girls' education in the new order in which the mother tongue has replaced the tongue of the Other. The poet speaks of daughters and sons on equal terms and says that his people will educate their "daughters and sons," and they will let them "accompany each other" in schooling and in their social life as well. In stanza three, the poet moves to reap the benefits of knowledge and sciences. It appears that the poet envisions his dreams fulfilled, and he speculates on privileges of knowledge and sciences acquired through the employment of the mother tongue. One of the benefits of knowledge is spanning "the azure dome of the cosmos." Thus they will "make the airplanes ready" for the purpose. As mentioned in earlier chapters, Mo'juz's poetry is rife with the echoes of thwarted desires and unfulfilled dreams. The poet's prolonged stay in Istanbul, his knowledge about the achievements of European countries and witnessing the rapid change of life made him to think about the disadvantages of his people. His poetry reflects an earnest desire to see his people attain all the privileges that Europe had acquired. Perhaps, the poet had

been told how traveling by a plane could be enjoyable. That is why, Mo'juz aspires for an air travel which is the privilege of acquiring scientific knowledge. He joins his people in the flight by saying "We'll make airplanes ready;/we'll span the azure dome of the cosmos." Reading Mo'juz, we find that the poet was specially found of tea, and he enjoyed its drinking. In many occasions in his poetry, we find the poet speaks of tea as a refreshment which plays a great role in the quality of life. Therefore, when he speaks about a human achievement such as cruising in the air, he complements and qualifies it with a cup of tea as well. "We'll fix our tea in the seventh heaven;/we'll pour it in our cups God willing," Mo'juz says. This is the only stanza in the whole poem in which the poet speaks in the first person --we. He joins his people in cruising the sky and drinking tea in "the seventh heaven."

Continuing the same theme, the acquisition of sciences through the empowerment of the mother tongue, Mo'juz thinks of a farmer who will plow the land through the employment of machines. "Using machines, the farmer will plow the land;/he'll harvest in accordance with science," the poet envisions. Since his efficiency will be enhanced, the idealized farmer will earn "lots of gold and silver," and he'll not be a serf or a cheap labor for khans "God willing." In the stanza that follows above, Mo'juz deals with the literacy and knowledge theme again. He envisions that laborers and agricultural workers will attend schools, the shepherd "will buy a newspaper while going home," and even the most naive woman "Karbalai Tohfa Nisa will be familiar with all the languages." It is interesting to note that in this poem, Mo'juz hinges over words such as tongue and language. He tries to make the language issue stand out in the poem. Although, he advocates the empowerment of the mother tongue and removal of the language of other, yet he wants even a naive woman like Karbalai Tohfa Nisa to learn other languages as well. Thus language becomes a key for entering in the new world.

Mo'juz's selection of names and their meanings are also significant, they express different conditions and social situations. Many names selected for the children by their parents stand for things that they are not, or in many cases they reflect the parents' wishes about their children. They even stand for the desires mostly unfulfilled. They represent what the parents want their children to be from which they have been deprived. For example, parents who lost many of their children to diseases such as chicken pox or whooping cough, would call their new-born female child Galdi meaning "will survive" in order to exorcise the thought of the impending threat. In the community where baldness was quite prevalent as a result of diseases like ringworm or favus people tended to name

their male children Zulfali meaning the one who has got locks. By the same token Karbalai Tohfa Nisa depicts an ugly, blunt and naive peasant woman. The poet's Tohfa Nisa means the elite of women --Tohfa meaning gift or the elite and Nisa meaning women. Thus the poet emphasizes that in his envisioned and idealized homeland even a Tohfa Nisa, a blunt and ugly peasant woman, will be equipped with the necessary tools to enter the modern world through knowing languages --the mother tongue being given its primary role.

In stanza six, Mo'juz continues speaking on literacy and learning. As we have discussed throughout this work Mo'juz spares no time in demonstrating that the women in his time and place were abused beyond any conceivable measure, and they were desperately in need of education and schooling. He argues that if women are educated, and their knowledge and understanding enhance, "the house of the navel scribe will be ruined," and as a result, the "wicked Tukazziban" will never uncover her navel in front of a vicious man in a private room. After the maladies of the community --ignorance and indolence-- are diagnosed, and the acquisition of knowledge and science was prescribed for their alleviation along with the invocation of God's power, Mo'juz reiterates that the fulfillment of all those aspirations will be possible only when "the homeland will adopt the mother tongue." The suggested remedies will not work by themselves; the adoption of the mother tongue is a catalyst to facilitate the actions, and it will effect the reversal of the power structure. In fact, the poet sums up his talk by highlighting the importance of the mother tongue and says that "Our people will be happy only when/the homeland adopts the mother tongue." Adoption of the mother tongue is mentioned as a key to the happiness of the people. However, the adoption of the mother tongue will not go quite smoothly. It will rouse the wrath and unhappiness of the power pole. "Tehran's worries will grow then/about Azerbaijanis, God willing," the poet concludes. It is interesting to note that Mo'juz keeps repeating *inshallah* (God willing) in positive and rational demands throughout the poem except the stanza in which he says that the suspicions and "worries" of Tehran will grow --a bad omen which does not require *inshallah*. The ominous portents about Tehran's growing "worries" because of Azerbaijan's adoption of the mother tongue does not look a positive sign viewed from Tehran's vantage point. Tehran's "worries" positioned against the Azerbaijani people's deliverance from their miseries and maladies clearly accentuates colonizer/colonized and Turk/Fars dichotomies, and it pronounces the existence of interest conflicts between them. The poet implies that his people's aspirations will not be fulfilled without paying a due price. Although the payment of a price may sound undesirable in itself, it should be taken as another positive part in the whole package

of people's prosperity, deliverance from maladies, acquisition of sciences and knowledge and empowerment of the mother tongue.

The last stanza of the poem is the completion of the reversal process and the total restoration of power, it is a moment in which no condition is left unfulfilled. "Then [after the adoption of the mother tongue] the people will be relieved from woes, then the hearts happy and the eyes lit will be," the poet expresses. Under such conditions "the noise of moaning and mourning" will cease to exist, and life will have "a new order *inshallah*," he concludes. The way Mo'juz speaks about people's maladies and his desires for their removal manifest that the poet finds no reason to blame his people. He tries to demonstrate that his "intelligent" people are wrongly subjected to a "displacement of power" as if they were in the wrong place in the wrong time of history. The poet depicts the ignorance, indolence and other miseries of the people as the result of two major causes: "the inapt government" and "ignorant clergy."⁶¹ The idea of an Azerbaijani homeland appears to be an alternative to break away from the inapt and corrupt government of Tehran. Living in an age of nationalistic awakening and assertion of ethnic affiliations, Mo'juz tries to explore the causes of the miseries with which he witnessed his people struggling. Loving his people, his hearth and home, he tries to put the blame of the miseries on the superimposed identifications –loyalty to his nominal Iranian citizenship associated with the corrupt government in Tehran and his allegiance to Shi'a Islam advocated by the "ignorant clergy" of his time. In Mo'juz's view, the Tehran government stood for decadence, degeneration of ancient Persian honors and suppression of ethnic qualifications;⁶² contemporary clergy stood for ignorance, illiteracy, the frenzy of self-flagellation and self-mutilation and deviation from the Islam of *ahd-e risalat* –the prophet's time. The battered Azerbaijani inner identity of the poet had difficulty to reconcile with the identifications which he observed to be the causes of the people's miseries.

In the two poems quoted from Mo'juz in this chapter, there is an echo of a suppressed inner identity yearning for the reversal of the imposed hierarchy of relationships. The poet articulates his inner Azeri identity through highlighting his affiliations to his homeland, his people and his mother tongue. The poet suggests that his people's prosperity and success can only be maintained through the elimination of the language of other and its replacement with the mother tongue. In fact the quoted fragment starting with "my language Turkish, my words plain, myself in love with the red wine" may be thought of as Mo'juz's thesis about who he is, and where he is positioned with respect to the Others. The poet's stipulation of "my language is Turkish, my words are

plain, I am in love with the red wine” indicates his difference and distance from the Others. The otherness of language excludes him from the main stream of the people who want to get ahead by holding to the power pole and employing the Persian language as the medium of their writing and formal communications. The price of being in love with the red wine in his excommunication by the religious pietists and the clergy. Yet Mo’juz’s articulation of the differences and his fetishizing the acquisition of sciences and knowledge do not define a self, but they only spell out a yearning for an absent insider -- an idealized self capable of reversing the imposed relationships and building a perfect community. Neither preferred Other --the West-- nor his detested one --Iranian and contemporary Shi’a identifications-- are nailed in a fixed and static position. Like Mo’juz’s people, they, too, are subjects to time and flux of history. However, Mo’juz heralds the rebellious poets and writers of the Pahlavi era. His works belong to the body of literature which I call the literature of mutiny. In order to have some idea about the mentioned literature, I have selected few passages from Qarachorli and Shahryar.

Pahlavi Era (1925-1977) Shahryar, Qarachorli: Reza Shah had himself proclaimed a king (shah) in 1925, thus starting the Pahlavi dynasty and its nearly 54 year rule.⁶³ No sooner was Reza Shah firmly in power than he started his modernizing measures.⁶⁴ As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the sartorial law was passed in 1928 abandoning the traditional dress in favor of Western attire. The state school system was expanded promoting the Persian language as the only medium of learning as well as communication. Power, and all its privileges, were centralized in Tehran at the expense of declining provincial cities especially those of Azerbaijan. The Azeri language was suppressed “except for a brief period from 1941 to 1946 when the country was occupied by the Allied forces. The ban on Azeri publications was in effect and the official use of the language discouraged in Iran.”⁶⁵ H. Javadi considers “the case of Mo’juz, who ended his days in self exile in Sahrud,” as a “good example of the restrictions imposed upon Azeri poets and writers under Pahlavi rule.”⁶⁶ After Reza Shah’s forced abdication in 1941, when the central government had virtually lost its control over the country, Azerbaijanis took the opportunity to write and publish newspapers in their native Azeri language. An autonomous local government was established in 1945 under Seyyed Ja’far Pishavari, only to be overthrown by the forces from Tehran in 1946. The brief National Government under Pishavari’s leadership produced an unprecedented occasion for the flourishing Azeri language and literature and enormous developmental and constructional activities. In fact, Mo’juz’s manuscripts were discovered during this time, and they were published the same

year. Mohammad Reza Shah succeeded to the throne after his father's abdication who, in turn, was dethroned by the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Mohammad Reza Shah's reign saw perhaps the most strict ban on the publication of Azeri works, in the years following 1946. In M. T. Zehtabi's words "Azerbaijan was subjected to the most strict autocracy, tyranny, and oppression unprecedented in Iranian history."⁶⁷

The Pahlavi regime's systematic suppression of the Azeri language and its anti-Azerbaijani policies were conducive to a rebellious attitude of Azerbaijanis toward the power structure in Iran, and they naturally invited a mutinous articulation of Azeri identity from the Azeri authors. It is beyond the scope of this work to talk on all the Azeri authors of the period, however, as mentioned earlier, I will make a brief reference to Shahryar and Qarachorli here. Disregarding chronological order, I will discuss Qarachorli before Shahryar because I mainly will talk about the poem of Shahryar which was written in response to Qarachorli's verse letter to Shahryar, "Sharyara Maktub." Bulut Qarachorli (1927-79) dispatchs his verse letter to the celebrated Azeri poet, Muhammad Huseyn Shahryar (1907-86), on February 22, 1968, most probably.⁶⁸ In this poem Qarachorli expressly speaks about the "oppression" to which his "people" are being subjected. He refers to their "locked" mouths and "tied" tongues. Then he admonishes him to be "kinder" to his people by writing in his own mother tongue. Qarachorli's poem is written during the years Shahryar had almost confined himself in his home in Tabriz, and he declined to receive any visitors except few close relatives. Therefore, Qarachorli sends his verse letter through a relative of Shahryar.⁶⁹ After paying due homage to his senior and more celebrated poet, in stanza 15, Qarachorli requests:

Achilun! Achilun! baghli gapilar,
Mahabbat namina, istak namina.
Ariyun, tokulon damir qifillar,
Konul khatirina, orak namina.

Achilun! Achilun! baghli gapilar,
Mahabbat namina, istak namina.
Ariyun, tokulon damir qifillar,
Konul khatirina, orak namina.

(Open up! Open up! O the barred doors,
in the name of love, in the name of affection.
Melt down and pour down! O iron locks!
in the name of desire, in the name of heart.)

Qarachorli's language is, quite often, rich with symbolism, metaphors and other rhetorical devices. He calls for "the barred doors" to "open up." By the barred doors, the

poet refers to both Shahryar's self-imposed confinement, his lack of access to the poet and the declining status and oppressed state of the people of Azerbaijan. Thus "in the name of love," he expects to be allowed to visit his beloved poet that can be considered part of the greater relief and freedom which will come to his people. He asks the iron locks to "melt down" and hurdles to be removed not only from his way in order to visit Shahryar, but from the way of his people toward improvement and better situation:

Sanki tufan gopur, goy guruldayer,
 Buludlar chakhnashir, shimshaklar shakhir.
 Od alow alanir yerin yuzuna,
 Damir darvazalar su olub akhir.

.....
 Chakilun! Chakilun! Yol verun gechim,
 Uragim alishib, alow sachiram!
 Shahryar boynuna zanjir vurallar?
 Cheynaram, gamirram, dartip acharam.

(Watch hurricane is building up! Thunder is roaring!
 Clouds are in tumult! Lightening is flashing!
 Fire is showering the earth all over!
 Iron gates are smelted and are flowing all over!

.....
 Out of the way! Out of the away! Let me pass.
 My heart is a flame! It's spewing incandescent sparks over the world.
 Can any one put chains on Shahryar's neck?
 I'll chew them, apart with my teeth I'll break them, I'll grind them, I'll set him
 free.)

The quoted apocalyptic and prophetic lines are the echoes of a tumultuous and rebellious poet who desires to reverse all the governing conditions in order to find an alternative and a different world order. It appears that the poet views the world of being as reflections of his flaming "heart" which "is spewing incandescent sparks over the world." He describes the hurricane picking up, "Thunder is roaring! Clouds are in tumult! Lightening is flashing!" The commotion in the surrounding world and showering fire have turned the world into a fire ball, and "iron gates are smelted" and are turned into the rivers of fire. That is why the poet warns anyone who might stand in his way. The poet is a flaming body and a fire-ball which will turn into ashes anything which might stop him from moving. In such an incandescent world "can any one put chains on Shahryar's neck?" the poet asks rhetorically. If any power dares to put chains to the poet's respected guru, Shahryar, he is there to "chew them," grind them and break them with his "teeth." By chains, the poet refers to the paradigms and values set by the power structure which have

caused him (Shahryar) to write in Persian. After further complaints and venting his wrath out, the poet says:

Elimiza na gun aghlamishukh biz?
 Baghin shakhta vurub bostani yanib.
 El biza neynasin na gun aghlasin?
 Aghzi qifillanib, dili baghlanib.

Ozga chiraghina yagh olmakh basdir,
 Doghma ellarimiz garannigdadir.
 Yanib yandirmiyag yadin ojaghin,
 Evmiz soyugdir, gishdir shakhdadir.⁷⁰

(What good have we done to our people?
 Their orchards are blasted by blizzards and their farms torched.
 What can our people do for us, they are powerless,
 their mouths are locked and their tongues tied.

Enough of being oil in the lamps of the Other,
 our born and blood relatives are in darkness.
 Enough burning ourselves and warming the hearth of the Others,
 our own home is frozen, it is winter, it is cold.)

The lines are quite direct and self-evident. They are charged with bitterness, a sense of betrayal and the resulting mutiny. The limited scope of this work does not allow us to discuss Qarachorli's whole verse letter. Throughout the 42-stanza poem, the poet speaks about his people's oppression, their mouths "locked," their tongues "tied," their orchards "blasted by blizzards" and their homes "frozen." He cries out to his fellow poets to stop "being oil in the lamps of the Other" and put an end to burning themselves in order to warm "the hearth of the Others." Qarachorli advises his fellow poet to mind what he is doing and re-evaluate the paradigms within which he works and writes. In the concluding stanzas of Qarachorli, there are signs of optimism that his fellow poet will listen to him, and they both will serve their tongue "tied" people hand in hand. Thus he adds that in their home and with his own people there are lots of "poetical scenes" to write about; they need not look for themes in the community of others. Under such a newly established order, the poet invites his fellow poet to help each other by saying

Chaylara sad vurakh, daralar dolsun,
 Dashgin akhan sular hadar akhmasin.
 Yasharsin gurumush kollarin koki,
 Zamilar susuzdan goya bakhmasin.⁷¹

(Let's build dams to fill the valleys,

the overflowing waters may not be wasted.
 The dried roots of the bushes may get a new life,
 the parched farms may not look for heaven's mercy.)

The poem ends on positive notes that the arrival a new social and political order is almost inevitable. Commotions in nature and the burning flames of earlier stanzas purify and purge the environment. A new world order is born in which the poet's people gain their ground and due respect. Their home receives a new life; the parched valleys overflow with water, and "the dried roots of the bushes" are watered, and "get a new life."

Shahryar's response to Qarachorli's letter, also fueled by a sense of betrayal toward the homeland and his people, is his "Sahandim"⁷² which is considered to be the climax of Azeri poetry by many Azerbaijani critics and men of erudition.⁷³ The poem, "Sahandim" (My Sahand) is charged with the poet's love to Azerbaijan and its people. There are numerous direct and indirect references to the Azeri/Persian dichotomy and betrayal of the Azerbaijani people by the power pole. The poem opens with an apostrophe addressing Sahand --both the name of a mountain in Azerbaijan and Qararachorli's pen name. The mountain becomes a metonymy throughout the poem symbolizing Azerbaijan, its people and whatever is associated with the land. From the very outset the poem spells out "we" as opposed to "they," "ours" as opposed to "theirs" and "self" as opposed to "other." The very title of the poem "My Sahand" opens the dichotomy of the other's mountain. The poet restricts the mountain's name by the possessive Azeri suffix "*im*" meaning "my" as opposed to the other's. "My gorgeous mountain! O my mountain of majestic cap! O my people's support! O my gorgeous Sahand," the poet addresses with his apostrophes. Shahryar provides his audience with a new dichotomy in relation with Turk/Fars and Azeri/Persian binaries. His glorification of Sahand mountain is conducive to his challenge of Damavand --a mountain in the north of Tehran glorified by Persian poets such as Bahar.⁷⁴ By articulating Sahand/Damavand opposition, Shahryar asks Sahand to rise higher and higher and "charge Damavand with taxes." In fact, taxation of Damavand by Sahand will mean the reversal of the governing situation. Later in the poem, the poet is carried away by the urges of his inner identity. Once Shahryar finds himself spanning the mountains and crossing the Araxes river, he joins the people on the other side of the river. It sounds as if the day of victory has arrived. All mountains of Azerbaijan on both sides of Araxes --Baku mountains, Sahand, Savalan and Heydar Baba--echo the cries of victory; they rise up to support the poet in fulfilling his desires. I would like to quote some lines of the relevant passage here, and I do know that the original beauty and meaning of the lines will be

forfeited since a co-incident of sight and song makes the back-bone of Shahryar's poem.

Daghli Heydar Babanin arkhasi har yerda dagh oldi,
 Dagha daghlar dayagh oldi,
 Arazim ayna chiragh goymada aydin shafagh oldi,
 O Tayin naghmasi gozandi, uraklar gulagh oldi,
 Yena gardash diyarak gachmada bashlar ayagh oldi,
 Gashdigh, uzlashdik Arazda, yena gozlar bulagh oldi,
 Yena ghamlar galagh oldi,
 Yena gardash sayaghi-sozlarimiz bir sayagh oldi. (lines 180-7)

(The afflicted Heydar Baba's back turned into new mountains everywhere,
 mountains supported mountains,
 my Araxes lit many lights and was illuminated with many reflections.
 Melody from the other bank soared into the air, all our being turned into ears,
 running and calling our brothers, once more, all our being turned into feet,
 we ran and saw each other at Araxes eye to eye, our eyes turned into springs,
 our sorrows turned into mountains once more.
 Like all brothers our words became the same once more.)

Sharyar speaks of "*daghli* Heydar Baba" which proliferates timelessly and endlessly. In the Azeri language *daghli* means both afflicted as well as mountainous. Afflicted is used, perhaps, because of oppressive policies of Pahlavi regime toward Azerbaijanis; mountainous is implied because Heydar Baba is a mountain close to the poet's birth-place to which Shahryar has addressed his other masterpiece "Heydar Babaya Salam." Thus in every part of Azerbaijan a Heydar Baba rises up and becomes a gigantic wall which supports and protects Azerbaijan against its foes. Araxes river celebrates the occasion of the victory by its many lights and their reflections. The poet is able to hear the happy songs from "the other bank." The excess of happiness turns the poet's whole being into ears to listen to the happy melodies from the other side of the dividing river. In order to see his "brothers," the poet runs so fast as if all his being becomes feet only. The poet is able to see his "brothers" on the banks of the Araxes face to face and "eye to eye." His eyes turn into springs because of his tears. I believe that there is an allusion to the two abortive uprisings of Iranian Azerbaijan --Khyabani movement of 1921 and the autonomous government of 1945. The tri-fold repetition of "once more" in the passage bears witness to the mentioned fact. However, "once more" the poets dream proves to be a failure; his "sorrows" pile up again and "turn into mountains once more," although "like all brothers" their "words become the same once more." Shahryar uses the Azeri *soz* to mean words. Besides the meanings mentioned while quoting from Mo'juz, *soz* also means promises in the Azeri language. Once the poet joins his brethren on the banks of the Araxes their language becomes the same. Throwing away Russian and Persian languages,

they speak in their mother tongue; their words and promises become the same, and they enter a new covenant.

Conclusion

I tried to discuss the facts relevant to the genesis and development of Azeri identity, its complexities and problems. My discussion was designed to examine Mo'juz's assertion of his Azeri identity as it relates to his Azerbaijani precursors of late 19th and early 20th centuries as well as his posterity. As stipulated throughout the chapter, I tried to give only few examples from the named Azeri authors about the way they manifest their Azeri identity in their writings. We cannot exhaust our study of the topic in a work of limited scope such as this. This work is designed only to be a starting point for such an undertaking. I propose that a rereading of Iranian Azeri authors (including the pre-Communist Caucasus) will open new dimensions in our understanding of them should our study take into account their ethnic identity, their cultural and linguistic ties to their ecology. The Turk/Fars dichotomy and the otherness feeling find their expression from Nizami of Ganje's time down to modern days albeit in varying signs and forms. The authors named in this chapter belong to the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the present one during which social realism became almost the only dominant trend in the works of the authors. The chapter tried to trace the genesis of Azeri identity, its development and articulation by the Azeri authors of the mentioned time span.

Akhundzadeh, Talibuf and Maraghe'i who lived a good part of their lives in the lands taken by Russians are influenced by the views held by their contemporary Russian elite. Their works manifest how they had internalized the colonizer Russians' view of the colonized and humiliated Iranians. They virtually had become part of the civilizing apparatus of their colonizer since they, themselves, had been civilized by their acceptance of Russian citizenship or living outside the political borders of Iran. The articulation of their identity is often combined with a sense of civilizing mission which appears to be conferred upon them by their colonizers.

Akhundzadeh's articulation of identity finds its effective manifestation in his canonizing Azeri language as a literary idiom. At the same time, he carries out his civilizing mission by modernizing the Persian language and effecting social and cultural changes. Although a Russian citizen in legal terms and explicitly hostile to religion,⁷⁵ Akhundzadeh could not see himself detached from his Islamic and Iranian heritages, nor could he observe himself as an Iranian to be identified with decadence and backwardness. He was *wakil-e millat-e na ma'lum* (the guardian of an unknown nation) --the pen name he chose for

himself. He belonged to an era that creation of an Azerbaijani state had not been formulated in the minds of Azerbaijani intellectuals.

Talibuf and Maraghe'i both write in the Persian language, yet they manifest their Azeri identity through different ways. They expressly refer to the Azeri/Persian and Turk/Fars dichotomies; they both try to subvert the language of power (Persian) by interjecting Azeri lexicon into it at their volition. In fact, they create their own version of the Persian language which an average Persian speaker might not understand or appreciate. Talibuf sounds very pessimistic while speaking about Iranians' social reform and attaining a democratic rule. A strain of chagrin dominates his language while speaking about Iranians. Maraghe'i's humor controls his language. He manifests his otherness and distance from the power structure in his country through oblique and humorous ways. His employment of the Azeri words in the Persian language far exceeds that of Talibuf.

Kasravi manifests his Azeri identity through his denial of the Turk/Fars rupture on a conscious plane. However, unconsciously, he manifests his affiliation to Azerbaijan by glamorizing and over-glorifying of every aspect of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis which he thinks is admirable. He creates a super hero out of Sattar Khan while speaking about his feats. The Tabriz/Tehran binary opposition hardly escapes his mind; he continuously extols Tabrizis which spells out his censuring and criticism of the people of Tehran. Kasravi's subversion of the Persian language is a unique one. He creates estrangement between the Persian language and its native speakers by coining new and unfamiliar Persian words.

Mamed Qoli-Zade's assertion of Azeri identity can be read out of his works during his three decades of writing career. In his early years, he usually emphasizes the Moslim/non-Moslim binary opposition. He saw himself as an Azerbaijani feeling self-sameness with Moslim Iranians as opposed to Armenians and Georgians who identified themselves with the Christian Russians. However, in the later stages of his writing career, Mamed Qoli-Zade expressly calls upon Azerbaijanis to rise up and get together in order to define their homeland and recognize their own nationhood.

Mo'juz chooses the Azeri language as the only medium to convey his message. By choosing his native tongue, the poet defines his audience and mission of talking to the Azeri masses. Mo'juz heralds a new generation of Azeri authors who articulate their identity through rebellion and mutiny against the power-wielding class. He heralds the mutinous poets and writers of the Pahlavi period such as Qarachorli and Samad behrangi who expressly speak about the suppression of the Azeri language and the oppression of the

people of Azerbaijan. The authors of the Pahlavi period express their desire to see the subversion of the existing order and the reversal of the situation. They hanker after a new order in which the native Azeri language can be taught to the children of Azerbaijan and the discriminatory rules and policies can be removed in a multi-ethnic society such as Iran.

Notes to Chapter V

1. See *Encyclopedia Iranica*, V III. P. 251. "Azeri Literature in Iran" by H. Javadi and K. Burrill.
2. See Erik Erikson's essay "The Problem of Ego Identity" in *Identity and Anxiety* edited by Maurice R. Stein. PP. 37-87.
3. *Ibid* P. 38
4. See *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. III P. 235 Azerbaijan VI : "Population and Its Occupations and Culture" by R. Tapper.
5. See Taqi-Zada's speech delivered in April of 1959 at the National Library in Tabriz. Taqi-Zada was in his birth place to participate in the 50 th anniversary of Howard Baskerville's death. The speech translated into English by Nikki R. Kiddie appeared as "The Background of the Constitutional Movement in Azerbaijan" in *Middle East Journal*, Autumn 1960, 456-465.
6. Kasravi, Ahmad. *Azeri or The Language of Ancient Azerbaijan*. Bethesda: Iran Books, 1993.
7. See R. Tapper "Azerbaijan VI. Population and its Occupation and Culture" *Encyclopedia Iranica* Vol. III, P. 235.
8. Muriel Atkin, *Russia and Iran 1780-1828*, P. 157.
9. *Ibid*, P. 159.
10. *Ibid*, P. 22.
11. *Ibid*, P. IX.
12. *Ibid*, PP. 42-3.
13. Sakina Berengian, *Azeri and Persian Literary works in Twentieth Century Iranian Azerbaijan*, P. 50.
14. See Hamed Algar "Akundzada" in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. I, P. 737.
15. Mriza Fathali Akhundzadeh, *Tamsilat*, PP. 21-2.
16. See Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, *Recasting Persian Poetry: Scenarios of Poetic Modernity in Iran*. PP. 33-41.
17. R. Tapper "Azerbaijan VI. Population and its Occupation and Culture" *Encyclopedia Iranica* Vol. III, P. 235.
18. Algar *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. I, P. 737.
19. Akhundzadeh, *Alifba-ye Jadid va Maktubat*, PP. 249-51. In his letter to Manakji Sahib, the religious leader of Zoroastrians in Tehran, Akhundzadeh claims that he is from Persian descent, and his grandfather was originally from Resht, a city in the Caspian sea coast. I do believe that because he was talking to a person of authority who virtually was standing as a symbol of the ancient Persia, he could see no appropriate way other than his own identification with the person who was being addressed. He saw it as way of showing respect to a religious leader whose creed had been routed by the followers of a conquering religion to which he traditionally belonged. See also Algar, P. 739, *Encyclopedia Iranica*.
20. Talibof, *Azadi va Siyasat*, P. 45.
21. *Ibid*, P. 38.
22. *Ibid*, P. 18.
23. Talibof, *Masalik-al-Mohsinin*, PP. 276-7.

24. See *Masaliku'l-muhsinin*, P. 276-7.
25. Zeyn al-Abedin Maraghe'i, *Siyahat-Name-ye Ebrahim Beg*, PP.99-100.
26. *Ibid*, P. 317.
27. Levic Jessel, *The Ethnic Process: An Evolutionary Concept of Languages and Peoples*, PP. 29-30.
28. Zeyn-al-Abedin Maraghe'i, *Siyahat-Name-ye Ebrahim Beg*, P. 48.
29. See Berengian PP. 66-68.
30. See *Siyahat-Name-ye Ebrahim Beg*, P. 161
31. *Ibid*, P. 41.
32. Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashrute-ye Iran.*, P. 390.
33. *Ibid*, P. 519.
34. *Ibid*, PP. 262-4.
35. *Ibid*, PP. 850-1
36. For the meaning of *dastine* see also M. Mo'in's *The Persian Dictionary, Volume II*, P. 1536.
37. For further information on *Mulla Nasreddin* circle and its contributors see Samad Sardari Niya's *Mulla Nasreddin in Tabriz*, also see Hasan Javadi's *Satire in Persian Literature*. See also Aryanpur's *Az Saba ta Nima*, vol. II, PP. 40-58.
38. See Audery L. Altstadt, *The Azerbaijani Turks; Power and Identity under Russian Rule*, P. XIX.
39. Mamed Qoli-Zade, *Sechimish Asarlari*, PP. 512-3.
40. *Ibid*, P. 622.
41. *Ibid*, P. 624.
42. See the facsimile of the poet's hand-written note on page 23.
43. See Javadi and Burrell
44. *Mirza Ali Mo'juz-e Shabustari, Taza Tapilan She'rlar*, P. 4.
45. Kenneth Hoover, *A Politics of Identity: Liberalism and Community*, P. 116.
46. Alfred Arteaga, *An Other Tongue*, P. 201.
47. Levic Jessel, *The Ethnic Process: An Evolutionary Concept of Languages and Peoples*, P. 19.
48. Touraj Atabaki, *Azerbaijan: Ethnicity and Autonomy in Twentieth Century Iran*, P. 57.
49. *Ibid*, P. 57
50. Samad Behrangi, *Kando Kav dar Masayil-e Tarbiyati-ye Iran*, P. 58.
51. *Ibid*, PP. 57-8.
52. *Ibid*, P. 57.
53. The author of this work is a native of Tabriz, born, bred and educated there for the most part of his

education. He has taught in elementary schools, high-schools and the University of Tabriz. During his more than two decades of teaching career, the author has seen many teachers, who because of their unawareness from the issues pertaining otherness and language teaching, subjected their students to all sorts of humiliation such as corporal punishments. It was not uncommon to have a fine box installed in the classrooms for the students who, mistakenly though, spoke in the native azeri language. Students would drop a defined fine in the box should they fail to speak in Persian.

54. As stipulated by the named editor, the article of *Forugh-e Azadi* is included in the publication. I declined to quote from the original work and *Forugh-e Azadi* paper because it belongs to the literature of attacks and counter-attacks from which this work has tried to keep distance. See *Azerbaijan and ...* a publication of Association Culturelle Azerbaijanaise.

55. Mo'juz, *Taza Tapilan Sh'erlar*, P. 10

56. Mo'juz Sabustari, *The Divan*, P. 214

57. See Houchang E. Chehabi's "staging the Emperor's New Clothes: Dress Codes and Nation-Building under Reza Shah" printed in *Iranian Studies*, volume 26, number 3-4, Summer/Fall 1993.

58. *Ibid*, P. 212.

59. Alfred Arteaga, *An Other Tongue*, PP. 1-2

60. Mo'juz of Shabustar, *The Divan*, PP. 109-10.

61. Mo'juz usually finds his inner identity in conflict with his loyalty to the inept government of Tehran and irresponsible clergy. See the poet's poem opening with "Neither the clergy nor the government abide by their rights,/to whom from whom should complain! O my Tukaz." PP. 58-9 *Taza Tapilan She'arlar*.

62. See Javadi, A. A. *Azerbaijan va Zaban-e An*, PP. 3-38.

63. See H. Javadi and K. Burrill in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, "Azeri Literature in Iran" X, P. 251.

64. See Moojan Momen's *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, PP. 250-5.

65. H. Javadi and K. Burrill in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Azeri Literature in Iran X, P. 251.

66. *Ibid*, P. 254.

67. Mohammad Taqi Zehtabi, *Zaban-e Azeri-ye Adabi-ye Mo'aser (Contemporary Azeri Literary Language)* P. 87. See also A. A. Javadi, *Azerbaijan va Zaban-e An*, PP. 3-38.

68. The book of my reference has recorded the poem under the mentioned date. See *Kulliyat-e Ash'ar-e Torkiy-e Shahryar*, P. 241.

69. *Ibid*, PP. 281-2.

70. *Ibid*, PP. 237-8.

71. *Ibid*, PP. 240.

72. *Ibid*, PP. 69-81.

73. See *In Remembrance of Mirza Ja'afar Sultan-al-Qurraie*, Tabriz University publications. P. 96.

74. See Bahar, *Divan Vol. I*, P. 357.

75. See Hamed Algar "Akunzada" in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. I, P. 739.

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