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## The Western Reception of Forugh Farrokhzad: New Orientalism and Confessional Poetry

**Abstract:** The following study proposes to deconstruct the mythologising of Forugh Farrokhzad (1934/5-1967), a poet known mostly as Iran's Sylvia Plath. This kind of analogy is based on interpretative and cultural preconceptions that connect women's poetry with personal experience and amount the poetic voice to the empirical reality. Beyond that biographical obsession, reified through the export of confessionalism, comparing the two writers also implies appropriation of Forugh Farrokhzad to a Western cultural and literary field. By analysing a few poems, taking a close look at her interviews, and examining the historical context, I shall try to demonstrate that Farrokhzad is actually split between two worlds. Therefore, to associate her with Sylvia Plath can be read as an example of what Fatemeh Keshavarz, a researcher on Persian literature, calls the New Orientalist narrative.

**Keywords:** Confessionalism; Poetry; World Literature; New Orientalism; Western Reception; Literary Canon.

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Literary studies have often been objects of critique for their inherent Euro-<sup>1</sup> or Americentrism<sup>2</sup>. This approach to a dominant and apparently superior literary tradition is visible also in the analogies made with Sylvia Plath on an international scale, within the sphere of poetry. The author has become famous for her confessional<sup>3</sup> poetics and is representative of the anglo-american centre. Trying to explain the "Plathian" globalisation, Rhian Saseen raises, although in an ironic tone, a very pertinent question: *Does Every Country Need to Have Its Own Sylvia Plath?* According to Saseen, an archetype has been created of the poetess obsessed with death, who writes about personal experience and dies tragically, preferably by suicide and this archetype is afterwards perpetuated usually by marketing strategies. Thus, Forugh Farrokhzad has been popularised as *Iran's Sylvia Plath*<sup>4</sup>, an appellation created only through similarity, without a textual and cultural analysis and without an influence network (most of the poets who have been compared to Sylvia Plath have not even read her).

The issue I would like to raise concerns the legitimacy of such a comparison,

especially if we take into consideration that Farrokhzad belongs to a semiperipheral<sup>5</sup> literature and the parallelism with a poet integrated into a literary centre may revive a stereotypical thinking about the so-called superiority of the initial culture. I am aware, however, of the linguistic constraints of this approach and I will try to foreground the particularities of Farrokhzad's poetry. I should also mention that I have hesitated before choosing this poet, aware of the limits of a mediated analysis, without access to the original Persian texts. I did not want to bring the perspective of the Westerner who tries to appropriate the figure of the Other (Gayatri Spivak) to this paper, so to avoid this risk, I mainly consulted studies by researchers specialising in Persian.

Gheorghe Iorga has translated Farrokhzad's poetry into Romanian in the last few years, but her poetry did not receive enough visibility. In fact, the translator himself presents these poems in an essentialist manner, talking about the refugee Farrokhzad finds in poetry or about "female-specific experiences"<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, given the occidental literary preconceptions about her poetry, it seemed to me that a re-examination of those texts is necessary. However, because my approach is based on following the intersection between literature and ethics and because I know that alterity cannot be truly represented, for the parts where I try to present Farrokhzad's vision of poetry, I will make several references to her letters and interviews. In this way her voice is the one who can emerge and communicate itself. I will likewise comment on a few poems, which will not remain within the framework of a close reading, because they are emblematic for her entire oeuvre. My paper also aims

to interrogate the relationship between poetry and social life, thus deconstructing the reductionist interpretations that equate women's poetry with personal experience. All the above serves as a study on the circulation of *confessionalism*, through which I intend to dismantle the canonization of a poet through a pattern of similarity and a biographical reception.

*Where Do I Come from?*<sup>7</sup>  
**Between Two Worlds,**  
*It Is Only the Voice That Remains*<sup>8</sup>

What remains of Forugh Farrokhzad now, after five poetry collections (*The Captive Asir* – 1955, *The Wall / Divār* – 1956, *Rebellion / Osyān* – 1958, *Another Birth / Tavallodi Dīgar* – 1964, *Let Us Believe in the Beginning of a Cold Season / Īmān Bīāvarīm Beh Āghāz-e Fasl-e Sard* – 1974) and an early death? The popularity around this poet has been built on a biographical basis: she was a divorced woman, with occidentalist dreams, who wrote sentimental poetry and died in a car accident which has only intensified the force of the mythology that seems to define her<sup>9</sup>. Trying to answer to the question *who was Forugh Farrokhzad?* seems infructuous and unethical, that is why, from my perspective, biographies cannot be reconstructed, and poetry does not anyway provide the necessary instruments for accomplishing such a process, as it does not directly reflect life. Farrokhzad herself, when asked during an interview if she could describe her life, answered:

Talking about it is in my opinion really very futile and boring. Well, it's a fact that everyone who is born has a date of birth, is related to the people

of some city or village, is educated in a school, and a number of very common and ordinary events will have occurred in his life, which ultimately happen to everyone"<sup>10</sup>.

Her concept of universality – which shall be discussed afterwards – is already taking form. As anticipated above, Forugh Farrokhzad's poetry has been generally analysed through the lens of confessionalism. Leila Rahimi Bahmany, for example, identifies a certain tenderness as her dominant characteristic and claims that "Presented from an autobiographical first-person point of view, her poetry flows in lyricism and deals with taboo desires and experiences over which the poet feels remorse and shame"<sup>11</sup>. She investigates the textualization of experience, feminine transgressions, and the folding of the real person over the literary *persona*. But beyond all these, I think that it is more valid to integrate Farrokhzad into the generation of engaged writers from 1950 till 1980<sup>12</sup>. They used literature as a political instrument and as a form of revolt against the state regime of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, a shah brought to power by the British who, with help from the USA, established a forced modernisation in Iran that will be named *westoxification* by Jalal Al-e Ahmad<sup>13</sup>. Women activists have benefited from rights imported from the West, but the writers of this generation have criticised the statal oppression and tried to represent, through their writing, those who were left behind by this forced modernisation. Furthermore, there have been ambivalent reactions to the *Kashf-e hijab* decree from 1936, that prohibited the veil, and many Iranian women perceived this brutal

rupture with tradition as a traumatic event, considering also that women who did not obey, went through different forms of violence, and a woman who did not wear a veil anymore was considered a symbol of cultural imperialism<sup>14</sup>. Farzaneh Milani has written the first extensive study on the Iranian veil, where she investigates the effects that the abolition of this practice had, and she rejects the Western perspective that sees in the veil only submission and exclusion: "To them, the veil was a source of respect, virtue, protection, and pride. It was a symbol of passage from childhood into adulthood. It was convenient, feminine, honourable"<sup>15</sup>. Given the present situation in Iran, it is interesting to notice how the connotation of the veil has undergone drastic mutations over time. During those years, women who still dared to wear it, had their garments torn in public and the *chador* was itself a form of protest against Western domination<sup>16</sup>.

Thus, Forugh Farrokhzad was born and raised *on the threshold*, between two worlds<sup>17</sup>, defining herself by Iranian customs, but at the same time following the emergence of a new lifestyle which defies the local norms. Such a perspective is visible in the poem *My Heart Grieves for the Garden*, which was published in the post-humous poetry collection *Let Us Believe in the Beginning of the Cold Season* from 1974. The texts in this collection were written long before Farrokhzad's death, during the White Revolution (1963-1977), a politically turbulent period, which took place after a militarisation campaign and after establishing the secret police SAVAK. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi affirmed that his country would develop an economic system that surpassed both communism and

capitalism and at that time Iran became the fifth most powerful state in the world. The land reform, the industrialisation, the progress in medicine, the growth of children enrolled in a school, giving women the right to vote, all these changes seemed, initially at least, to be beneficent, but they actually legitimated new inequalities.

Thus, the border between social classes has deepened since only those who already had privileges made the most of the effects of economic growth. This modernisation led to the instability that made possible the revolution from 1979, reaching its highest point in replacing Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's totalitarian monarchy with an Islamic-republican form of government which was actually a fundamentalist and tyrannical theocracy<sup>18</sup>. The poem *Someone Who Is Like No One* encapsulates the desire for redistribution of social goods so that there is no longer inequality:

Someone is coming / Someone in heart who is with us / Someone in breath who is with us / Someone in voice who is with us // He is spreading the cloth / and dividing the bread/ and dividing the Pepsi, / and the national park, / dividing the medicine for whooping cough, / dividing the registration day, / dividing the numbers in the hospital [...] He gives us our share<sup>19</sup>.

I found it necessary to provide the historical background in order to undergo a deeper analysis of the poem *My heart grieves for the garden*, that will be a point of reference for the examination of Farrokhzad's entire creation. Starting from this particular poem, I will interrogate the

principal interpretative directions already established in the reception of Forugh Farrokhzad and the possible colonising tendency that emerged in the hermeneutical process itself.

The poem begins with the description of a land that is not barren, but neglected, because of people's indifference: "No one is thinking of the flowers / No one is thinking of the fish"<sup>20</sup>. The poet emphasizes a change in people's concerns, who are not interested in fauna or vegetation anymore, but it is not explicit yet if her tone is eco-critical or romantic. The intention becomes clear in the next lines: "No one wants to believe / that the garden is dying / that the heart of the garden has swollen under the sun"<sup>21</sup>, when mortification is clouded in denial. The garden plays a significant role in Iranian poetry and culture<sup>22</sup>, and it can be linked to Iran itself, if we take into consideration the context of forced modernisation but also the poetical descriptions that seem not to refer to a specific, personal garden, but to an extended space. What is more, the topos is repeated in another text, where the poet seems to present her place of birth: "I come from the land of dolls, / from beneath the shadow of paper trees, / in a picture-book garden" (*Window*)<sup>23</sup>. The accelerated industrialisation and the lack of spirituality are referred in the next lines, where a connection is established between identity and memory: "that the mind of the garden is slowly, slowly / draining of green memories / and the gardens feeling / is some abstract thing / rotting in the solitude of the garden"<sup>24</sup>.

In this space threatened with extinction, four characters appear, each one of them dealing with a personal apocalypse: the father keeps saying "It's past my time"

while he is reading historical works; the mother whose life “is a prayer rug spread / on the threshold of the fear of hell”<sup>25</sup> is probably one of the women unwilling to accept westernization; the brother meditates and “sees the garden’s cure / lies in her destruction” while the sister lives “inside her artificial house / with the artificial goldfish / in the shelter of the love of her artificial husband”<sup>26</sup>, lying probably farthest from the sanctity of the garden. The poem can be also read as an expression of the distance between generations, which Farrokhzad refers to in an interview where she exposes how mentalities are determined by social and cultural circumstances. In the same interview<sup>27</sup>, but also in another poem (*On Leili’s Grave*) she endeavours to deride Majnun, a classical hero of Persian literature and a representative of thanatic love which has no correspondent in the contemporary world, dominated by psychological narratives.

All the characters in the poem *My Heart Grieves for the Garden* attempt nevertheless to save themselves, through history (father), faith (mother), love (sister) or philosophy (brother), while the outside violence echoes around them: “All day long, from behind the door / comes the sound of shattering and explosion / Instead of flowers our neighbours plant / machine guns [...] and the children on our street / fill their satchels / with tiny bombs”<sup>28</sup>. It is not just that people lost the dedication they put into growing vegetation, but life itself has been substituted by a cult of militarization that no longer sustains hope for the restoration of the garden. A similar feeling appears in the poem *Window*, in lines such as: “These constant explosions / and poisoned clouds / are they not the echo of

holy verses? / O friend, O brother, O fellow man, / when you reach the moon, / inscribe the death of the massacre of the flowers”<sup>29</sup>. Political violence eradicates any sense of sacredness or communion, and it prevents man from caring for the vegetal world. Under these circumstances, to affirm “I am connected with the sun”<sup>30</sup> becomes an act of bravery and resistance against the oppressive and nationalist discourse.

The ending of the poem brings a dark and pessimistic tone, built upon the denial of this withered world: “I – I fear the time / that lost its heart / I fear the thought of the idleness of these hands / I fear the embodied estrangement of all these faces”<sup>31</sup>. This denial acts as a catalyst for a social insurrection where the self can transcend its singular dimension into a universal register.

### *To Come Nearer to Life: To Transcend the Self*

Farrokhzad’s poetry has often been described as too sensual or too self-orientated, but even one of her most cited and analysed poem, *Window*, rejects this strict categorisation through lines such as: “A window is enough for me, / a window for a moment of awareness, and seeing, and silence”<sup>32</sup> or “I feel that time has passed / I feel that the moment is my share of the calendar’s pages”<sup>33</sup>. These poetic sequences illustrate the need of an intimate space, and the window seems to play the role of that *room of one’s own* that Virginia Woolf talked about, but it is more than that, for its liminal state places it at the border between public and private and this is actually the theme of Forugh Farrokhzad’s poetry. According to an interview, the window seems to be a symbol for poetry itself.

Asked why she writes, Farrokhzad answers that poetry is for her like a window, a means of connection with the universe, but also an interstitial space that situates her being within a universal framework, by opposing death or relating to otherness<sup>34</sup>.

Farzaneh Milani fights against the aforementioned tendency to sexualize Farrokhzad's poems and emphasises how social poems have been neglected by literary critics. She even claims that men eroticise women's poetry, thus refusing to analyse the text itself<sup>35</sup>. Although there are myriads of studies related to the carnal desires or the sexuality in Farrokhzad's poetry, she argues in a manifesto dedicated to the poetry of that time – where she criticises the superficial love in the texts of her contemporaries for not transcending the self – that love entails an ontology and even a cosmology. Farrokhzad also chastises the privileged position from which her contemporaries write and their lack of concern for marginalised subjects<sup>36</sup>. Therefore, it can be said that her poetry has a democratising function for it brings to light new ways of observing and decoding reality.

Besides, Farrokhzad's definition of poetry exceeds the intimist perspective that has often been assigned to her style. For her, writing is a way of accessing universality: "(Poetry is) to abandon this form of generalities and to come nearer to life, to mankind, and to human problems – to problems in which lie the roots of art, and from which art derives its life-blood"<sup>37</sup>. In fact, she claims that words have their own life and the artist's duty is to grant them poeticity, but this should not be equated with embellishment or artificiality, as she despises poets who beautify suffering, reject simplicity, and write alluring poems that

are not able to express abjection<sup>38</sup>. Such a vision is reminiscent of Baudelaire whom Farrokhzad had read in Persian translation extolling his aesthetic of ugliness.

Bearing this in mind, one of the most famous verses of Forugh Farrokhzad, *All my existence is a dark verse (Another Birth)*<sup>39</sup> can be interpreted bidirectionally, having both the meaning of life's poeticisation – life is a verse (which corresponds mostly to biographical interpretations), and going backwards (and respecting the original language which is read and written from right to left), that of poetry's vivification – verse is life. And it is precisely this impure and strenuous life – that she exalted in the aforesaid interview – evinced through the distressing image of "a rope with which a man hangs himself from a tree" or, on the contrary, through daily images of "a child returning from school"<sup>40</sup>. Consequently, the dark verse is not unfathomable (that would oppose the poet's claim to simplicity, expressed above), it just rejects stylisation.

Taken together, the simplicity (or even honesty) and exploration of abjection are useful in interpreting one of the most "shocking" poems of Farrokhzad, *O Jeweled Land* (which was the title of the national anthem during Pahlavi era<sup>41</sup>), a text that confirms Farrokhzad's affiliation to the engaged writer's era, as mentioned above. The poem begins with an irony addressed to citizenship: "Victory! / I registered myself / I adorned myself with a name, on an ID card / my existence distinguished with a number / So hail to #678, issued at Precinct 5, Resident of Tehran!"<sup>42</sup>, reiterated at the end of the poem. The poet interrogates, in a sardonic register, how a social identity is built and therefore subjugated to bureaucracy and criticises national heroes



or traits: "The kind bosom of the Motherland/ the pacifier of the past full of the glory of history". She also denounces patriotic or romantic poems, written in metrical structures, that do not represent reality thoroughly. The highlight of the poem is the verse "I WRITE THIS TO MAKE ASSES LAUGH"<sup>43</sup> which marks her rejection of a literary tradition aestheticising suffering, defining instead her poetic style through pungency and assuming laughter as an instrument of social revolt.

*(These People) Call Me a Mad Woman*<sup>44</sup>: **Confessional Poetry and New Orientalism**

**F**orough Farrokhzad is considered a women's rights activist (which is not entirely untrue), but such considerations do not take into account her double identity, split between occidental dreams and Iranian culture. Interpretations of Farrokhzad's poetry often overlook her local roots, pointing to a Western feminism that cannot encapsulate the ambiguity of her position, manifested both through a fierce criticism (as seen above) and, on the contrary, through feelings of love or admiration for her natal place, as seen in the following letter excerpt: "I love our Tehran, come what may. I love it, and it is only there that my existence finds a reason for living. I love that scorching sun, those oppressive sunsets, those dusty streets, and those unfortunate, ill-starred, lowborn, deprived people"<sup>45</sup>.

This tendency towards the minimisation of a subject is described by Fatemeh Keshavarz as a *New Orientalist narrative*, which was notably developed after September 11 attacks and consists of reductive

leanings, for "(i)t explains almost all undesirable Middle Eastern incidents in terms of Muslim men's submission to God and to Muslim women's submission to men"<sup>46</sup>. According to Keshavarz, the New Orientalist narrative fails to address the complexity of a culture, inscribing it instead to a monotonous perspective. This is the case of John Zubizarreta's study, who focuses on how autobiographical Farrokhzad's poetry is (reiterating the sexualisation tendency discussed earlier) and whose drawback is insisting only on how repressive Islam is for women<sup>47</sup>.

In her study on New Orientalism, Fatemeh Keshavarz mentions a notorious book, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, written by Azar Nafisi, an Iranian-born author living in America. Keshavarz criticises Nafisi for reinforcing stereotypes about women's submission and their cultural invisibility, by citing a Western literary canon and excluding Iranian writers (as Farrokhzad herself) from the references in her book. The New Orientalist narrative does not necessarily support colonialist domination, but it involves the same mechanisms of dismissing the colonised subject, as the old Orientalism theoreticised by Edward Said. Other characteristics are its gaps in the information sources, simplistic categorisations, silencing and totalising tendencies<sup>48</sup>.

As far as I am concerned, statements such as *Forugh Farrokhzad is Iran's Sylvia Plath* epitomise this New Orientalist narrative. In addition to associating the image of a poet from a literary centre with one that belongs to a marginalised and colonised area, the premises of textual comparison are also reductive. Firstly, the concept of confessional poetry is exported, and its significance extends over a poet who

does not even identify with it<sup>49</sup>. Secondly, the comparison is mostly biographically established, an insufficient aspect for providing a solid base of reference. After all, an extensive network of poets with similar biographies can be found. Nevertheless, I think that such comparisons influence the Western reception of Forugh Farrokhzad, because they operate after a logic of familiarity; in other words, readers who have never heard of this Iranian poet need to encounter something familiar before interacting with her texts.

As mentioned above, my paper has ethical implications, therefore I identify in that comparison a return to the Same. To put it more simply, would Forugh Farrokhzad be compared to Sylvia Plath if this analogy would not serve the Western narrative? I will make a brief extrapolation to better explain this: starting from a critic on forced integration of immigrants, which are accepted only by suppressing their differences, Alain Badiou claims that alterity is celebrated only when it becomes the same, when it is an Other compatible with occidental norms<sup>50</sup>. In this regard, I do not think that Forugh Farrokhzad's poetry would have become so famous outside of Iran if her ideas (acquired partly during her trips in German and Italy) had not been beneficial to this Western perspective, defined by emancipation associated with freedom of expression and feminism.

In fact, Farrokhzad's feminist struggle belongs to her ideal of universality, particularly as it is imbued with a strong sense of gender neutrality. When she was asked in an interview how feminine her poetry is, the poet answered that it is not important to acknowledge her female identity, but the human one and this comes as part of her

poetic vision, where being a writer equals being a human<sup>51</sup>. She also affirms that it is reductive to write about personal experiences, so she configures a poetic voice that transcends the self and articulates an autonomous human framework of feelings and thoughts.

It is worth mentioning that one of Farrokhzad's statements<sup>52</sup> about her artistic mission has contributed to the creation of this mythologised image of the genius consumed by creation. However, in her later years, she realises that to live *for* art involves more than a sacrifice and that poetry exists inherently everywhere, so a poet's duty is to find the means for expressing life in a manner that goes beyond individuality. Farrokhzad claims that a poet has the responsibility of exploring oneself in order to shape a larger existential framework:

I think a person involved in artistic work must first of all create and perfect himself, then emerge from himself and look at himself as one unit of being and existence, so that he can give all his perceptions, thoughts and feelings the tenor of universality<sup>53</sup>.

To live for art is, therefore, to live for life, for this ontic structure embedded in her poetry, that makes her able to exceed "this pained song" (*A Poem for You*)<sup>54</sup> and to understand both "the simple language of dandelions"<sup>55</sup> (*Those Days*), and "the terrified cry of a butterfly / that they crucified/ in a notebook with a pin" (*A Window*)<sup>56</sup>.

To conclude, Forugh Farrokhzad's conception of poetry, as evinced by all the texts analysed above, belies her framing within confessional poetry. Comparing her with Sylvia Plath is reductive if we take into



consideration the differences between the two literary registers, but also how such an association perpetuates stereotypes about Western superiority. Besides, this colonising tendency that occurs in Forugh Farrokhzad's critical reception mers the emancipatory politics of her poetry, which transcends confessionalism. Therefore, it is necessary to deconstruct these sexist or colonist interpretative prejudices so that the poetic voice emerges unconstrained. This is an imperative step in imagining and building a less oppressive literary world.

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## NOTES

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2. David Damrosch, "How American Is World Literature?", in *The Comparatist*, vol. 33, 2009, p. 13-19, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26237205>, Accessed 4 Jan. 2023 and Al-Mahfedi, Mohamed Hamoud Kassim, "Cultural Hegemonic Discourse: From Imperialist Eurocentrism to Homogenizing Americentrism", in *International Journal of Linguistics and Translation Studies* 1, no. 3, 2020, pp. 20-34, <https://ijlts.org/index.php/ijlts/article/view/94>, Accessed 3 Jan. 2022.
3. The term was coined by M.L. Rosenthal who used it in a study on Robert Lowell's poetry to describe the dissolution of the borders between textual and empirical identities (see M.L. Rosenthal, "Poetry as Confession", in *Our Life in Poetry: Selected Essays & Reviews*, New York, Persea Books, 1991, pp. 109-113). This will lead to defining confessional poetry as a poetry about the self. According to Julia Penelope Stanley, the term becomes associated with any feminine writing which, for this reason, is invalidated – Julia Penelope Stanley, "Fear of Flying?", in *Sinister Wisdom*, vol. 1, issue no. 2, 1976, p. 54-55, <http://www.sinisterwisdom.org/sites/default/files/Sinister%20Wisdom%202.pdf>, Accessed 3 Dec. 2022.
4. Rhian Sasseen, "Does Every Country Need to Have Its Own Sylvia Plath?", in *Literary Hub*, August 2020, <https://lithub.com/does-every-country-need-to-have-its-own-sylvia-plath/>, Accessed 29 Dec. 2022.
5. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Politics of the World-Economy*, Cambridge. New York. Port Chester. Melbourne. Sydney, Cambridge University Press, p. 116.
6. Forugh Farrokhzad, *Să dăm crezarea începutului de anotimp rece*, [*Let Us Believe in the Beginning of the Cold Season*], translated by Gheorghe Iorga, București, Tracus Arte Publishing House, 2015, pp. 5-24.
7. Forugh Farrokhzad, *Another Birth. Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad*, translated by Hasan Javadi and Susan Sallée, Emeryville, Albany Press, 1981, p. 70.
8. *Ibidem*, p. 87.
9. Pishbin Shaahin, "Forugh Farrokhzad and the Persian Literary Canon", in *Iran Namag*, vol. 1, no. 4, 2016, [https://www.academia.edu/31392780/Forugh\\_Farrokhzad\\_and\\_the\\_Persian\\_Literary\\_Canon](https://www.academia.edu/31392780/Forugh_Farrokhzad_and_the_Persian_Literary_Canon), Accessed 16 Feb. 2023.

10. Forugh Farrokhzad, *Another Birth. Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad*, ed. cit., p. 91.
11. Leila Rahimi Bahmany, "Forugh Farrokhzad and Her Madness", in *A Companion to World Literature*, Edited by Ken Seignourie, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781118635193.ctwl0268>, Accessed 12 Mar. 2023.
12. Reza Aslan (ed.), *Tablet & Pen: Literary Landscapes from the Modern Middle East. A Words Without Borders Anthology*, New York & London, WW Norton & Company, 2011, pp. 351-353.
13. Brad Hanson, "The Westoxication of Iran: Depictions and Reactions of Behrangi, al-e Ahmad, and Shariati", in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1983, pp. 1-23, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/162924>, Accessed 12 Feb. 2023.
14. Farzaneh Milani, *Veils and Words: The Emerging Voices of Iranian Women Writers*, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1992, p. 35.
15. *Ibidem*, p. 35.
16. *Ibidem*, pp. 20-46.
17. Her poetry also has a hybrid form. Asked in an interview if she was influenced by Western literature, Farrokhzad replies that she was interested by its content, but it was necessary to preserve the Persian metrical structure, due to its inherent musicality – see Farrokhzad, Forugh, *Another Birth. Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad*, ed. cit., p. 99.
18. Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 123-155.
19. Forugh Farrokhzad, *Another Birth. Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad*, ed. cit., pp. 85-86.
20. *Ibidem*, p. 79.
21. *Ibidem*.
22. Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*, translated from the French by John Buchanan-Brown, Penguin Books, London, 1996, p. 419.
23. Forugh Farrokhzad, *Another Birth. Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad*, ed. cit., p. 76.
24. *Ibidem*, p. 79.
25. *Ibidem*, p. 80.
26. *Ibidem*, p. 81.
27. *Ibidem*, p. 92.
28. *Ibidem*, p. 82.
29. *Ibidem*, p. 77.
30. *Ibidem*, p. 82.
31. *Ibidem*.
32. *Ibidem*, p. 77.
33. *Ibidem*, p. 78.
34. *Ibidem*, pp. 101-102. "Poetry is for me like a window that opens automatically whenever I go towards it. I sit there, look out, sing, cry, merge with the image of the trees, and I know on the other side of the window there is a space, and someone hears me, someone who might live two hundred years hence or who lived three hundred years ago. It makes no difference – it is a means of connection with existence, with existence in its broader sense. The good thing about it is that when someone writes poetry, that person can say: *I too exist*, or *I too have existed*".
35. Farzaneh Milani, *op. cit.*, p. 132.
36. Forugh Farrokhzad, *Să dăm crezare începutului de anotimp rece*, ed. cit., pp. 116-117.
37. *Ibidem*, *Another Birth. Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad*, ed. cit., p. 94.
38. *Ibidem*, *Să dăm crezare începutului de anotimp rece*, ed. cit., p. 115.
39. *Ibidem*, *Another Birth. Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad*, ed. cit., p. 62.
40. *Ibidem*, p. 62.
41. Arezoo Adibeik, "The «sun». shinning upon the «ever-lasting» country: a diachronic analysis of Iranian national anthems during the 20th century", in *Text & Talk*, vol. 41, no. 4, 2021, pp. 441-468, <https://doi.org/10.1515/text-2019-0219>, Accessed 19 Mar. 2023.

42. Forugh Farrokhzad, *Let Us Believe in the Beginning of the Cold Season: Selected Poems*, translated by Elizabeth T. Gray, Jr., New York, New Directions Publishing Corporation, 2022, p. 74.
43. *Ibidem*. In Sholeh Wolpé's translation, the same verse is: "I WRITE THIS TO DARE JACKASSES LAUGH" (Forugh Farrokhzad, *Another Birth. Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad*, ed. cit., p. 95). The translator explains how that expression is usually followed by another and together they have the meaning: "The author farts in the reader's beard". Wolpé interprets this phrase as a critique towards the reader who laughs when he does not understand a poem.
44. *Ibidem*, *Another Birth. Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad*, ed. cit., p. 10.
45. *Ibidem*, p. 116.
46. Fatemeh Keshavarz, *Jasmine and Stars: Reading More than Lolita in Tehran*, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2007, p. 6.
47. John Zubizarreta, "The Woman Who Sings No, No, No: Love, Freedom, and Rebellion in the Poetry of Forugh Farrokhzad", in *World Literature Today*, vol. 66, no. 3, 1992, pp. 421–426, <https://doi.org/10.2307/40148358>, accessed 13 Feb. 2023.
48. Fatemeh Keshavarz, *op. cit.*, p. 1, 9, 36 and 45.
49. Farrokhzad criticises the aestheticisation of suffering associated with confessional poetry and one of her main exegetes (Farzaneh Milani, *op. cit.*, p. 259) also rejects this interpretative method.
50. Alain Badiou, *Ethics. An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, translated and introduced by Peter Hallward, London & New York, Verso, 2001, p. 24–28.
51. Forugh Farrokhzad, *Another Birth. Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad*, ed. cit., p. 95 and p. 111.
52. "I have dedicated my life to art, and I can even say that I sacrificed it to art. I want to live for my art" (my translation). The original fragment is: "Mi-am consacrat viața artei și pot chiar spune că am sacrificat-o pentru artă. Vreau să trăiesc pentru arta mea", in Forugh Farrokhzad, *Să dăm crezare începutului de anotimp rece [Let Us Believe in the Beginning of the Cold Season]*, translated by Gheorghe Iorga, București, Tracus Arte Publishing House, 2015, p. 119.
53. *Ibidem*, *Another Birth. Selected Poems of Forugh Farrokhzad*, ed. cit., p. 111.
54. *Ibidem*, p. 16.
55. *Ibidem*, p. 28.
56. *Ibidem*, p. 76.